



RESILIENCE

In Times of Uncertainty

TOOLKIT

 **giveanhour**
Mental Health. For Life.

Table of contents

3	Establishing Healthy Habits	14	Dealing with Change
4	Healthy Habits of Emotional Wellbeing	15	The Five Signs of Emotional Suffering
5	Healthy Habits Definition Sheet	16	Five Signs Definition Sheet
6	Establishing Sleep Health	17	Mental and Physical Health The Connection
7	Suicide Prevention	18	How to Cope When There's no Immediate Fix
10	Helplines and Resources	19	Empathy and Active Listening
11	Mental Health Response Card	20	Tips for Military & Veteran Caregivers
12	Connect to Hope		



SELF-CARE: ESTABLISHING HEALTHY HABITS

Prioritizing self-care can be a challenge, especially if the term "self-care" is a turn off or for "it's not for me"! Self-care is for everyone and is essential to prevent burnout. The healthier you are, the more energy you will have. One way to stay healthy is to practice this key habit. Self-care does not look the same for every person. Try incorporating one of these tips each month and with practice, taking care of yourself will become second nature.



Learn & practice stress reducing techniques



Attend to your own healthcare needs



Get adequate rest and nutrition



Exercise regularly



Seek and accept the help of others



Take time off without guilt



Participate in enjoyable activities



Seek counseling when needed



Practice common humanity: through shared experiences, i.e. peer support, online support groups



Set obtainable goals



Practice self-kindness



Practice mindfulness: identify and acknowledge your thoughts, emotions, feelings, and challenges

THE NUMBERS

- 30% of Americans set aside time for self-care
- Men are more consistent with self-care than women
- A survey shows that 74% of people take care of their bodies as a form of self-care, while 57% think of self-care as taking a mental break. Both are self-care!

*Birchbox

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Practice the Healthy Habits of Emotional Wellbeing



Healthy Habits

of Emotional Wellbeing

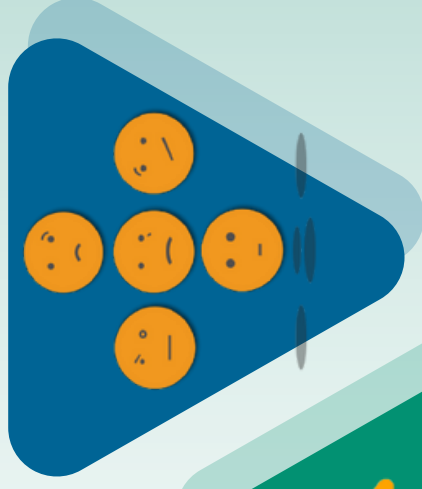
TAKE CARE
OF YOU



ENGAGE &
CONNECT WISELY



KNOW THE FIVE
SIGNS OF SUFFERING



CHECK IN & GET
CHECK UPS



RELAX



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The *Healthy* Habits of Emotional Wellbeing

It is important to recognize when someone is in emotional pain. It is equally important to learn basic habits that keep up emotionally healthy.

What are the Healthy Habits of Emotional Wellbeing? They are habits that everyone can learn, habits that allow each of us to identify and practice that works for us.



TAKE CARE OF YOU

Eat, sleep, and be active. We don't often think about how important these basic activities are for our mental health -- but they are critical.



CHECK IN AND GET CHECKUPS

We get check-ups for our physical health. We see our dentist to take care of our teeth. It's time to take responsibility and get check-ups for our emotional wellbeing. Talk with your doctor, a counselor, a faith-based leader....and your family and friends to make sure you, and those you love, are doing well emotionally.



ENGAGE AND CONNECT WISELY

Pay attention to your relationships. We can't be healthy if our relationships are not.



RELAX

Learn ways to reduce the stress that we all face -- and practice what works for you: meditate, run, knit, dance, sing, write, love...



KNOW THE FIVE SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL SUFFERING

The Five Signs are change in personality, agitation, withdrawal, decline in personal care, and hopelessness. Someone may exhibit one or more signs. Many conditions can result in emotional pain. If you see them in someone you love, reach out, connect and offer to help.



Establishing Sleep Health

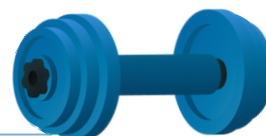
Sleep deprivation leads to poor performance & weakened cognitive abilities. Learning to sleep well in stressful environments and when anxiety is high, although challenging, is possible & can help maximize wellness. It is a skill worth developing and prioritizing.

DEVELOP SLEEP READINESS

Train your circadian rhythm by implementing routines. Avoid electronic devices, find your favorite pillow, listen to music or take a shower before bed.

EXERCISE

Work out at least 30 minutes early in the day to fall asleep faster at night. This will help reduce night time awakenings.



WATCH WHAT YOU EAT

Stop eating 2-3 hours before bed. Limit caffeine, sugar or other digestive stimulants.



NAP STRATEGICALLY

When predictable nighttime sleep is unavailable, short 30 minute power naps have been found to increase alertness & performance.

GET COMFORTABLE

You spend 1/3 of your life in bed, so you should be comfortable. Consider upgrading or replacing your mattress and/or pillows.

Good Night !!



GO TO BED SLEEPY

If you aren't asleep in 20-30 mins, get out of bed & do something else.

MAKE SPACE

If thoughts keep you from sleeping, jot them down to relieve your mind.



BANK YOUR SLEEP

If you're on night shift, plan to get 10 hours of sleep a night for week prior to expected sleepless nights.



SUICIDE PREVENTION

- Who is the one person you can count on when you're emotionally suffering?
- What do you do when you're emotionally suffering?
- Where do you go when you are seeking relief from emotional suffering?
- When you're emotionally suffering, do you find it difficult to feel like yourself again?
- How would those around you know you're emotionally suffering?

RISK FACTORS

- Mental health conditions
 - Depression
 - Substance use problems
 - Bipolar disorder
 - Aggression, mood changes and poor relationships
 - Anxiety disorders
- Serious physical health conditions including pain
- Traumatic brain injury
- Access to lethal means including firearms and drugs
- Prolonged stress, such as harassment, bullying, relationship problems or unemployment
- Stressful life events, like rejection, divorce, financial crisis, other life transitions or loss
- Exposure to another person's suicide, or to graphic or sensationalized accounts of suicide
- Childhood neglect or trauma

WARNING SIGNS

If a person talks about:

- Killing themselves
- Feeling hopeless
- Having no reason to live
- Being a burden to others
- Feeling trapped
- Unbearable pain
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Isolating from family and friends
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Visiting or calling people to say goodbye
- Giving away prized possessions
- Aggression
- Fatigue
- Loss of interest
- Persistent irritability
- Humiliation/Shame
- Agitation/Anger
- Relief/Sudden Improvement

Are you feeling hopeless about the present or future?

If yes ask – Have you had thoughts about taking your life?

If yes ask – When did you have these thoughts and do you have a plan to take your life?

Have you ever had a suicide attempt?



"Sometimes your presence alone can be supportive enough for someone who is suffering from depression, what you may think is a simple action can actually be a large gesture. A major component of helping people is just showing up, the most important thing to say is in your actions as well as your words. It lets that person know that you are not giving up. It shows that you're there for them."



IDENTIFYING AND ENCOURAGING PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Who are the people in your life that give you fuel for life, help you feel better, or lift your spirits (e.g. friends, neighbors, co-workers, family members, faith communities, school, social groups)? It seems like your (person) is a bright spot in your life. Can we call them together now? If not, can we make a plan for when you will connect with them next?

I can tell how important exercise is in your life, but you mentioned you forget about it when you are feeling down. What ideas do you have around how you can get back to working out?

Is there a medical professional that you trust? Can we make a plan for when you will contact them and I will follow up to make sure you were able to connect?

You mentioned being involved with a social group/activity in the past. What kind of support would be most beneficial for you right now?

RESPONDING IN THE MOMENT

I am sorry you are in so much pain, but thank you for trusting us with how you are feeling. This is not your fault and you are not alone. Your feelings are valid, and I am here to help you.

You are important to us. Your life is important to us. I don't have all the answers, but I will stay with you while we find some solutions.



Have you had thoughts of hurting yourself or others? Are you thinking about ending your life? Do you have a plan to die? Are you thinking of killing yourself in the next day or so?" "How strong are those urges?"

Explore ambivalence between reasons to die and reasons to live. Pay attention to how they describe the outcome.

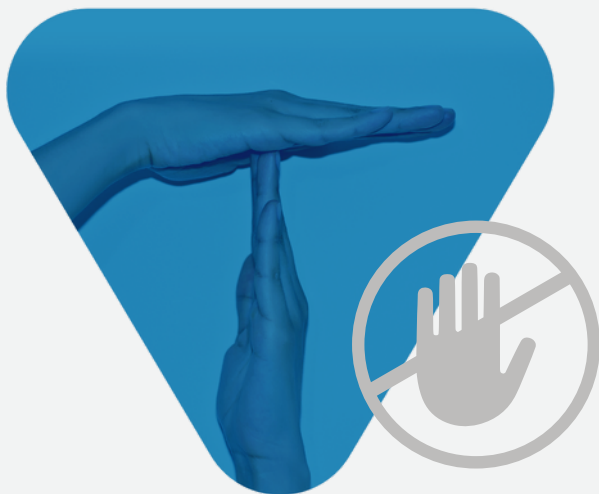
- "I'm dead, it's over." indicates a **higher risk of suicide death**.
- "I think I'd end up in hospital." indicates a moderate risk of suicide death.
- "I don't want to die, I want my suffering to end." indicates a lower risk of suicide death.



WAYS TO BE HELPFUL TO SOMEONE WHO IS THREATENING SUICIDE OR ENGAGING IN SUICIDAL BEHAVIORS

Not everyone who expressed suicidal thoughts is at imminent risk to act on their thoughts. Many more people have suicidal thoughts than act on them. Do your best not to express panic as you speak.

- **Be Aware:** Learn the risk factors/warning signs for suicide and where to get help
- **Be Willing to Listen:** Allow expression and accept their feelings; be patient
- **Be Available:** Show interest, understanding, and support
- **Be Direct:** Talk openly and matter-of-factly about suicide, what you observe, and about your concerns are regarding their well-being
- **Be Non-Judgmental:** Don't debate right or wrong or whether the person's feelings are good or bad; don't give a lecture on the value of life



Don't

- Dare them to engage in suicidal behaviors
- Act shocked
- Ask "why"
- Be sworn to secrecy
- Offer reassurances that any one alternative will turn things around in the near future; rather offer hope that alternatives are available



Take action:

- Remove lethal means of self-harm such as pills, ropes, firearms, and alcohol or other drugs
- Get help from others with more experience and expertise
- Be actively involved in encouraging the person to see a mental health professional as soon as possible and ensure that an appointment is made

Helplines and Resources



National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
(Veterans Press 1) <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

Crisis Text Line: Text 'signs' to 741741 from anywhere in the US and you can anonymously talk to a professional who can help, 24/7.

Overseas Resources:

http://www.iasp.info/resources/Crisis_Centres/

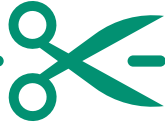
<https://www.crisistextline.org/international/>

Sample Community Resources

- "Crisis Centers", 911 or Emergency Room
- City or County "Mobile Crisis Response" teams
- Non-emergency Police line (wellness checks)
- "CIT trained" first responders (911)
- Friends and Family nearby who can sit with someone
- Pastoral or Faith based counselors/facilities



Print this out and put it in your wallet.



MY MENTAL HEALTH RESPONSE CARD

My support person is:

Their phone
number/email is:

When I'm having a
hard time I will:



I will not wait to reach out for help



MY MENTAL HEALTH RESPONSE CARD

My support person is:

Their phone
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I will not wait to reach out for help



Connect to *Hope*

ACCESSING MENTAL HEALTH CARE



Seeking therapy is always a good thing. Therapists listen to your story and help you make connections. They may offer guidance or recommendations when you feel lost. A good therapist will not tell you what to do, but empower you to take action on your own. People often know exactly what to do when they have a physical illness, but do you know when, who, and how to find care for a mental concern? There is no single, correct approach in finding care. Connecting with the right provider may take some time. With patience & perseverance, these tips will help you find your provider.

WHEN TO SEEK CARE

- Anytime! Maintenance is essential to your mental health
- You feel like you can't do normal daily activities you previously were able to accomplish
- Thinking about or coping with an issue is taking more than one hour of your day
- You have a major life event (birth, death, job change, breakups, family struggles)
- You need help coping with symptoms of an illness that may not respond to treatment right away
- You've developed habits to cope with your emotional health that are impacting you physically in a negative way

WHO TO CHOOSE

- If you have a mental health condition that may benefit from medication, consult a mental health doctor, such as a psychiatrist or mental health nurse practitioner who has experience treating your condition (MD, DO, PMHNP, APN)
- If you're seeking help with emotions, behaviors, and patterns, consult with a therapist, counselor, or psychologist. Like medical doctors, these professionals have specialties, so find one who knows about your specific issue (credentials include LCSW, LPC, LMFT, PhD)

HOW TO FIND CARE

Common places to find mental health providers:

- Ask your insurance company for a list of in-network providers or your company's employee assistance program (EAP)
- Ask trusted family or friends for recommendations
- Search nonprofit, government or mental health organization websites that have lists of providers
- Contact local or national mental health organizations
- General internet search for "psychiatrist" or "therapist" in your city

Consider consulting your physician. Some physical health issues may cause symptoms similar to mental health illnesses. A physician can navigate this concern.

WHAT TO ASK PROVIDERS

Before the first session:

- Do you have experience helping individuals with concerns like mine?
- Do you accept my insurance? If I don't have insurance, do you have a sliding scale for payments?
- What kinds of therapy do you offer?
- Do you have a regular opening that fits my schedule?

After the first session:

- Do you think we are a good fit?
- What will my treatment plan or our sessions look like?
- How often do you think I should come?
- Will we make goals together? How will we measure success?
- How do I reach you in an emergency?

****If you, or someone you love, is in immediate danger, call 911
or go to your nearest emergency room right away****

REMEMBER: YOU ARE IN CONTROL OF YOUR THERAPY RELATIONSHIP. ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF AND SEEK ANOTHER CARE PROVIDER IF YOU DO NOT FEEL LIKE IT IS A GOOD THERAPUTIC FIT. ONE SIZE DOESN'T FIT ALL!

Change is a constant in life that everyone experiences. It is an interruption of a comfortable pattern that has been mentally extended to the future. When the unexpected happens, this can cause feelings of vulnerability and loss of control. Whether it be from an expected or unexpected life event, it is common to feel disoriented and violated when a change has occurred. Change can be activating and may feel risky or unsafe even if it's not. Incorporating ways to navigate forward is crucial.

Ground and Anchor

Focus on the familiar, like a regular routine, your favorite TV show, or comfort. Stay in the present and that will help the past stay in the past.

Surround Yourself with Trust

Is social media aggravating your feelings? Take a break. Hang out with people who understand. Talk to your support person or a mental health professional.

Name it

Acknowledge your feelings. Write them down. Say them outloud. Share them. Denying the change is like fighting the current. Flow with it, look for encouragements in the new direction you are taking.

Stick to Healthy Meal, Exercise, and Sleep Routines

Rebooting and refueling our bodies helps us have the strength and energy to address the rest. Reinforcing the physical-you reinforces the mental-you.

Gain Perspective

Evaluate how much control you have over the situation. Take back the control by focusing your feelings and your reactions. Focus on your values and tell the fear to take a hike. Fight the worry, hate, or despair and remind yourself that you are in charge of your reaction.

Training your brain that change is ok and YOU are ok will help you cope.

Know the *Five* Signs of Emotional Suffering



Personality
Changes



Uncharacteristically
angry, anxious,
agitated, or moody



Withdrawal or
isolation from other
people



May neglect self-care
& engage in risky
behavior



Overcome with
hopelessness &
overwhelmed by
circumstances

THESE ARE FIVE SIGNS THAT MAY MEAN SOMEONE IS IN
EMOTIONAL PAIN & MIGHT NEED HELP.



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The *Five* Signs of Emotional Suffering

Often our friends, neighbors, co-workers, and family members are suffering emotionally and don't recognize the symptoms or won't ask for help. If you recognize that you or someone else needs help, reach out, show compassion and a willingness to find a solution when the person may not have the will or drive to do it alone.

Here are five signs that may mean someone is in emotional pain and might need help:



PERSONALITY CHANGES

You may notice sudden or gradual changes in the way that someone typically behaves. People in this situation may behave in ways that don't seem to fit their values, or the person may just seem different.



UNCHARACTERISTICALLY ANGRY, ANXIOUS, AGITATED, OR MOODY

You may notice the person has more frequent problems controlling his or her temper and seems irritable or unable to calm down. People in more extreme situations of this kind may be unable to sleep or may explode in anger at a minor problem.



WITHDRAWAL OR ISOLATION FROM OTHER PEOPLE

Someone who used to be socially engaged may pull away from family and friends and stop taking part in activities that used to be enjoyable. In more severe cases the person may start failing to make it to work or school. Not to be confused with the behavior of someone who is more introverted, this sign is marked by a change in a person's typical sociability, as when someone pulls away from the social support typically available.



MAY NEGLECT SELF-CARE AND ENGAGE IN RISKY BEHAVIOR

You may notice a change in the person's level of personal care or an act of poor judgment. For instance, someone may let personal hygiene deteriorate, or the person may start abusing alcohol or illicit substances or engaging in other self-destructive behavior that may alienate loved ones.



OVERCOME WITH HOPELESSNESS AND OVERWHELMED BY CIRCUMSTANCES

Have you noticed someone who used to be optimistic and now can't find anything to be hopeful about? That person may be suffering from extreme or prolonged grief, or feelings of worthlessness or guilt. People in this situation may say that the world would be better off without them, suggesting suicidal thinking.

MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH: THE CONNECTION

TARGET: Look & Feel Good

OUTCOME: Help Ourselves & Others

There is no denying the connection between the mind and body. However there is a disparity between this acknowledgment and the generalized attitude and reaction to mental and physical health. When physical issues happen, we treat them. When mental issues happen, it's an entirely different story. Denial. Complete disregard. Stigma. Double standards. Guilt. Shame. Miseducation. These are some reactions of how mental health is treated compared to physical health. In order to live a healthy, happy life this has to change.

TIPS TO SUPPORT MENTAL & PHYSICAL HEALTH

Plan for success

Assign yourself short term goals to knock out during the week. This can be anything from preparing healthy snacks to fuel your body to setting a reminder to go to bed on time or nap if you know you won't be able to get a full nights rest. Be intentional.

Stay present and practical

Focus on the starting line instead of the finish line; everyday has different successes. Be kind to yourself and when you notice things aren't going as planned, reexamine and reassess. Focusing on the now allows you to move forward instead of staying stuck in the past.

Set boundaries

There will always be action items. Taking care of yourself and setting boundaries between work and personal life is integral in maintaining balance and overall health. Saying no and accepting help are both signs of strength.

Start one new habit each month.

Add a vitamin. Change your protein intake. Add an activity. Each month reevaluate your change and decide if you want to keep it or ditch it.

Set a check-in alarm

Every hour, take 4 mins to take deep breaths and check in with your body. Where are you feeling tension? Are you hungry? Are you tired? After checking in with yourself, take action to feel better.

Focus on you, not others

Do what works for you. The comparison game is draining so reframe what you tell yourself. Be your own advocate just like you advocate for others. Also, what works for you today may not work for you next month so it's okay to make a change.

Schedule time for you


Self care isn't an option and looks different for everyone. Schedule in your selfcare just like you do a work meeting. Make at least one appointment each week and commit to it. Participating in activities that make you happy give you the much needed brain break you need to function at high capacity during the rest of your week.

- Poor mental health is a risk factor for chronic physical conditions.
- People with serious mental health conditions are at high risk of experiencing chronic physical conditions.
- People with chronic physical conditions are at risk of developing poor mental health.

*WHO

Reducing the risk factors related to mental & physical health can be overwhelming but are manageable. Key aspects of prevention include increasing physical activity, prioritizing nutritious foods, fostering social support, as well as acknowledging & taking action to support overall health.





Feeling helpless when you're a helper is disheartening, frustrating, and draining. This is especially true when an issue cannot be easily solved or the outcome is not within your control. You may be part of the solution in an imperfection situation. Learning ways to mitigate these mixed feelings is essential for your mental and physical health.

How to Cope...When There's No Immediate Fix

Establish Healthy Coping Mechanisms

Develop a "letting go" routine. It's easy to get preoccupied with the "failure". It can feel demoralizing to think there's nothing you can do. When we look at the big picture, things that go right often outnumber the things that go wrong. Consider journaling each small win as you help someone. Even if the result isn't what you want, you can feel good about what you did accomplish.

Prioritize work-life balance

Create a dedicated workspace - when you walk away from it, the work is over. Close or silence apps when your shift is over, no exceptions. Calendar fun activities as if they are work meetings.

Ignoring the pain won't make it go away

Ignoring your pain or keeping it from surfacing won't make it go away, it will only make it worse. Manage grief and pain by acknowledging it and making strategies to actively deal with it. Consider that your go to strategy needs to change and the reason why the problem isn't fixed, isn't because of you!

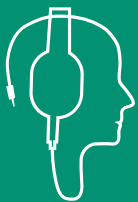
You don't need to "Stay Strong" for others.

Crying doesn't mean you are weak. You don't need to "protect" your family, friends, or colleagues by putting on a brave front. Showing your true feelings can help them and you to manage and process your feelings. Their perspective may offer you an objective response to help ground you in the here and now.

Managing Expectations

The human mind is incredibly averse to uncertainty and ambiguity. We respond to uncertainty or lack of clarity by generating plausible explanations. These expectations need to be managed as they're not based in reality.

- Relinquish your search for reasons, and what-ifs. Trying to force answers can lead to more frustration and confusion than when you started. We don't own events or their reasons. We own what we do with them.
- Let go of the expectations of others and of the pressures that you put on yourself- these are not an accurate representation of you.
- Expectations can be contradictory. It is statistically impossible to please everyone. Don't allow the voices of others drown out your own.
- It's Okay to not be Okay right now.



EMPATHY AND ACTIVE LISTENING

BE ACTIVE LISTENER

Sympathy & Empathy

The difference between sympathy and empathy? When you're sympathetic, you might feel pity for the other person's situation and there's still a distance between you and their experience. When you're empathetic, you don't just know how someone else feels...you understand how they feel, and you feel it with them. Or, simply put, empathy "implies feeling with a person, rather than feeling sorry for a person."

When we express empathy, it facilitates genuine human connections like nothing else can. When another person perceives you as empathetic, they feel understood, respected, and valued.

Empathetic Statements

- It sounds like you did everything you could
- I can see how difficult this has been
- The whole thing sounds so discouraging
- I can totally see why you would be upset
- This is so hard
- I can't believe how well you're holding up considering how much stress you're under



Active Listening (ie: Sitting in the Sh!t)

An empathetic person listens first and only speaks after they've carefully heard. We call this active listening.

- Active listening involves affirming what the person is saying with feedback like visible nodding and occasional verbal responses like "uh-huh," and asking clarifying questions that show you're paying close attention. Active listening involves avoiding the urge to immediately jump in and try to help. You may not feel like listening is doing much, but it can. One of the most important things is being able to sit with someone in that darkness. It can be incredibly helpful when someone understands the space someone is in and not being afraid to be there with them.
- Commit your undivided attention to the conversation. That means no side conversations, interruptions or unfocused body language. Communicate this undivided attention by maintaining steady eye contact or leaning in towards the person.
- Let the speaker actually speak. Sitting in silence is hard, but giving someone time to finish their thought or avoid interruption is key. Avoiding the urge to immediately jump in and try to help.
- Summarize your understanding. Once the speaker has finished talking, reflect their experience back to them by saying things like, "So, what I'm hearing from you is that the hardest part of what you are experiencing is..." Then ask, "Have I understood this correctly?"
- Allow the other person to rant. When someone's having troubles they may be emotionally flustered. That's okay. Give them the space to feel that. Let them talk from their heart and share how they feel; often, this will lead to them discovering their own solutions.

Tips for Military & Veteran *Caregivers*



Caregivers, often behind the scenes and with little recognition, shoulder a broad spectrum of responsibilities ranging from everyday home tasks to managing total emotional, mental, and physical care of their loved one as they navigate a complex medical system. Caregivers often find themselves working beyond their limits to provide care. While you're going above and beyond, it's important to take care of yourself.

Self-Care

Build time for self-care into your calendar. Make a list of your top 3 self-care activities and practice one a day.

Give yourself grace. While military caregivers are resilient, resourceful, and strong, it is normal to have feelings of guilt, irritability, or anxiety.

Move your body each day. Go for a walk, if the weather allows, if not, move about indoors and stretch for 10-minutes a day.

Take a time out and limit your media and social media consumption.

Managing Uncertainty

Establish a new routine. Set small daily goals and aim for consistency rather than perfection.

Seek out humor/ Laughing is a good prescription for an anxious mind.

Fact-check your thoughts. Recognize thinking that causes unnecessary stress or anxiety.

Staying Connected

Recruit a wing-person. Schedule hangouts, game nights with friends and family to help keep your spirits up.

Connect with virtual caregiving support. Talking with others who are in caregiving roles can generate ideas and provide a sense of support or community.

Take advantage of telehealth opportunities for yourself and loved ones. Give an Hour is here to help!

NOT A MILITARY OR VETERAN CAREGIVER?

Learn about how you can support Military Caregivers in the Guide. "Caring for the Military Caregiver: A Guide to Providing Mental Health Care to America's Hidden Heroes."