
CAREGIVER QUARTERLY

VA PORTLAND HEALTH CARE SYSTEM CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM

March 2016

PTSD Supports & Services (part III)

By Amber Lynch, LCSW

Caregiver Support Social Worker

In Part I of this series, we focused on the definition and symptoms of PTSD and provided web links for tools and treatments for Veterans experiencing PTSD. In our last Caregiver Quarterly we explored the common reaction of family members to include: sympathy, avoidance and depression. In Part III, we will cover anger and guilt, fear and worry, and physical health challenges that may occur for a family member of a Veteran experiencing PTSD, as well as tools and supports for family members caregiving for Veterans experiencing PTSD.

How PTSD Effects Family Members & What To Do

About It

(excerpt adapted from: The National Center for PTSD "Effects of PTSD on Family")

Living with PTSD can be difficult for Veterans and families. It is important to recognize the common reactions you may experience as a family member to know you are not alone and that help and support are available.

Anger and guilt: If you feel responsible for your family member's happiness, you might feel guilty when you can't make a difference. You could also be angry if he or she can't keep a job or drinks too much, or because he or she is angry or irritable. You and your loved one can work on getting past this anger and guilt by understanding that the feelings are no one's fault. There are many tools to address anger (time-outs, MH therapy, healthy outlets, etc.). Note: If anger leads to violent behavior or abuse, it's dangerous. Go to a safe place and call for help right away. Make sure children are in a safe place as well.

Fear and worry: Knowing that something terrible can happen seemingly "out of the blue" can make people anxious and even fearful. This is especially true when a family member with PTSD feels unsafe and often reminds others about possible dangers. Very often, trauma survivors feel "on edge" and become preoccupied with trying to stay safe. They may want to get a guard dog, or put up security lights, or have weapons in the house in order to protect themselves and their family members. When one person in a family is very worried about safety, it can make everyone else feel unsafe too.

continued on page 2

Resources for Caregiving for Loved One with Dementia

If you are caregiving for someone with dementia, please consider these upcoming workshops.

The Savvy Caregiver program:

6 week series designed for unpaid caregivers caring for a loved one with dementia

Workshops Include:

- ✓ Dementia 101 including types of dementia and how dementia is diagnosed
- ✓ Understanding impacts on your loved one
- ✓ Tips on how to provide the best care
- ✓ Overview of the stages of dementia
- ✓ Behavioral management strategies

Location: Center for 50+

2615 Portland Rd NE Salem, OR

Dates: March 31, April 7, 14, 28, May 5

Time: 11am – 1pm

Dementia Education Workshops:

Dementia 101: Introduction to Dementia

Attend a workshop to learn:

- ✓ What dementia is and how it is diagnosed
- ✓ The different types of dementia including Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia, Lewy body dementia, and frontotemporal dementia
- ✓ Eight cognitive losses in dementia: memory, judgment, attention, perception, reasoning, organization, abstraction, and language
- ✓ How cognitive losses impact the person with dementia and strategies to adapt to these changes

Class Location	Class Dates & Times
Hillsboro CBOC Hillsboro, OR	Thursday May 19th 10 a.m. – 12:00 noon
West Linn CBOC, West Linn, OR	Tuesday, June 7th 10 a.m. – 12:00 noon
VA Portland Health Care System, Portland, OR	Tuesday, June 21 st 10 a.m. – 12:00 noon

To register and for more information about either opportunity, please call Kristi Ketchum:
(503) 220-8262 ext. 58594 or (800) 949-1004 ext. 58594

Caregiver Support Program Mission Statement:

To promote the health and well-being of family Caregivers who care for our nation's Veterans, through education, resources, support, and services.

continued from page 1

However, something that helps one person feel safe – like a loaded weapon under the bed – may make another person feel unsafe.

Family members can also experience fear when the trauma survivor is angry or aggressive. Trauma survivors can become angry and aggressive automatically if they feel they are in danger. Trauma survivors may also become angry and aggressive because they are frustrated that they have trauma symptoms, or because they learned to be aggressive as a way to protect themselves in the trauma situation. No matter what the reason for the anger and aggression, it can naturally make a family member fearful.

Health problems: Everyone's unhealthy habits, such as drinking or using drugs, smoking, or not exercising, can get worse when coping with stress, including a family member's PTSD symptoms. Family members may also develop other health problems when constantly worried, angry, or depressed. Sleep can become a problem for family members, especially when it is a problem for the trauma survivor.

Tools and Supports for Family Members Caregiving for Veterans experiencing PTSD: It can be very helpful to recognize feelings of anger and guilt, fear and worry, as well as common health problems, including sleep problems, are normal responses to living with a loved one who experiences PTSD. It is highly recommended to reach out for help from your support network, which can include family members, friends, co-workers, neighbors, members of your religious or spiritual group, support groups, and health professionals- those who can offer you much needed emotional support. Engagement in individual and family therapy can help you and your Veteran learn more about PTSD, gain skills for healthier communication, and learn tools to cope with tough emotions. Learn and practice relaxation exercises (muscle relaxation or breathing exercises, meditation, time in nature, swimming/stretching/yoga, prayer, listening to quiet/calming music). As always, take good care of yourself: get enough rest, eat whole foods, get moderate exercise (even if just a few minutes a day), address your own mental and physical healthcare needs.

Goal Setting in the New Year

By Kyong Yi, LCSW

Caregiver Support Social Worker

Did you make a New Year's resolution this year? Or have you resolved to never make a New Year's resolution again? You are not alone. Many people get demoralized when, year after year, their well-intended resolutions fall off after only a few weeks or maybe even just a few days. What happens between setting our intentions and putting them into action that cause so many of us to fall short of our goals? The problem may not be in our action plan but in the goals we choose to set in the first place.

It is common when making resolutions and goals to think about what we “should do” rather than what we really want to do. Or, we think about what we “should stop doing” rather than what we really want to achieve. When we listen to the “shoulds” in our own heads, or what we hear from others around us, we often end up setting goals to which we are not entirely committed.

Making sustained change, even positive ones, is challenging for everyone. We are most successful at achieving goals that are consistent with the values that are most important to us. For those Caregivers who attended the Unsung Heroes Conference in 2015, this may sound familiar. Dr. Jennifer Hightower gave an inspiring and very practical presentation on values and goals setting, “Make it Count: Strategies for Living your Values”. As part of her presentation she provided two worksheets on evaluating “Your Values” and “The Willingness and Action Plan”.

Miss the Unsung Heroes Conference? Not to worry, the Caregiver Support Program staff can provide you copies of the materials and help you complete the worksheets.

If you are interested in developing your value-based goals, call Amber at (503) 220-8262 ext. 57460 or Kyong (503) 220-8262 ext. 58922. You don't need a new year to resolve to achieve a new goal!



UPCOMING EVENTS

Strategies to Enhance Resilience & Restore Balance

Facilitated by the VA Caregiver Support Line

A telephone education group focused on strategies to enhance resilience and restore balance.

March 8th, 16th, 23rd: Tempering the Tyrant: Finding Anger's Rightful Place

April 12th, 20th, 27th: Standing on Solid Ground: Finding your Path along the Challenging Road of Caregiving and Mental Illness

May 10th, 18th, 25th: Good Grief: Finding Hope in the Necessary Losses of Being a Caregiver

Caregiver Support Drop-In Group

VA Portland Health Care System Bldg. 100 5D 122

1st and 3rd Mondays of each month, 1-3pm

Caregiver Wellness Café

VA Portland Health Care System: Salem Clinic

4th Wednesday of each month, 1-2 pm

& VA Portland Health Care System: Vancouver Clinic 1st Thursday of each month, 10-11 am

Gentle Yoga for Family Caregivers & their Veterans

VA Portland Health Care System Bldg. 100 5D 122

2nd & 4th Mondays of each month, 1:00-2:15

VA Caregiver Support Program Website

Includes Caregiver toolbox, diagnosis care sheets, everyday tips & checklists, Caregiver connections, Caregiver Support Line presentations and more!

www.caregiver.va.gov

Please RSVP to the Caregiver Support Program for all upcoming events by calling

(503) 273-5210.

Let's Get Cooking!

Maple Glazed Banana Bread

Submitted by Laura

Ingredients

Bread:

- 1/2 c butter, softened
- 1 c sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 c all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 3-4 medium or large bananas
- 2 Tbsp. brown sugar
- 1 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon

Bread Instructions: Preheat the oven to 350. Grease one 9x5 pan or two 8x4 pans. In a small bowl, mash bananas, brown sugar, vanilla extract, and ground cinnamon. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar together until light and fluffy. Add in eggs and beat until mixed. To the wet ingredients, sift in flour, baking soda, and salt. Stir until just combined. Pour in mashed bananas, and mix until combined. Bake at 350 for 35-40 minutes (for two 8x4 pans) or until cake tester comes out clean with just a few moist crumbs stuck to it. Allow to cool for 10 minutes. Move to a wire cooling rack.

Glaze Instructions: Melt butter, maple syrup, vanilla extract, and cinnamon over low heat. Once melted together, pull off the heat. Sift in powdered sugar, and whisk until combined. Allow to cool for 8-10 min. so glaze can thicken. Once thickened, give glaze a quick stir and pour over breads. Allow to harden completely before cutting into slices.

Thank you, Laura! If you have a recipe you would like share, please send to: Amber.Lynch@va.gov

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 40 minutes

Yield: 12-15 slices

Maple Glaze:

- 1/4 c butter
- 1/2 c pure maple syrup
- 1 c powdered sugar
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon

Healing Touch Drop- In Clinic for Veterans and Caregivers

Mondays from 12-4 at VA Portland, Building 104 – Specialty Clinic.

An offering from NW Pain Clinic in partnership with Caregiver Support Program and Integrative Health and Wellness. Healing Touch is non-invasive, and utilizes gentle touch to assist in balancing your mind and body.

Potential benefits: reduce stress, decrease pain, strengthen immunity system, create a sense of well-being, and promote a better night's sleep.

Contact Maria Loebach, RN at 503-729-0781 or Judy Ulibarri, RN at 503-278-0147 for more information.

CAREGIVER CORNER

Welcome to the Caregiver Corner!

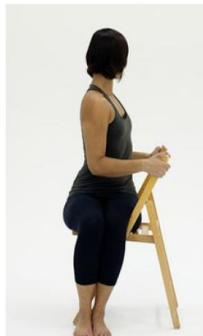
We have learned time and time again that often the best resource for Caregivers are OTHER CAREGIVERS! Our Caregiver Support community is full of talented, resourceful and dedicated Caregivers who are tapped into a vast network of community supports and services. The Caregiver Corner is your space to share the resources, services and events you have found helpful and would like to share with the Caregiver Support Community. Resources provided in this space will be directly from other Caregivers and not affiliated with or endorsed by the VA Portland Health Care System.

We welcome you to submit resources and events to any of the Caregiver Support Program staff or by calling the Caregiver Support Program mainline at (503) 273-5210.

Chair Yoga

Chair Spinal Twist - Ardha Matsyendrasana

<http://yoga.about.com/od/yogasequences/tp/Chair-Yoga-Poses.htm>



Come to sit sideways on the chair, facing to the left.
Twist your torso toward the left, holding onto the back of the chair.
Lengthen your spine on each inhale and twist on each exhale for five breaths.
Move your legs around to the right side of the chair and repeat the twist to the right side.

please consult your primary care provider before starting any new exercise practice



VA | Defining
HEALTH CARE | **EXCELLENCE**
in the 21st Century