"The beautiful spring came; and when Nature resumes her loveliness, the human soul is apt to revive also."
--Harriet Ann Jacobs

Spring is here! Many of us may associate “Spring cleaning” with this time of year. A time to clear the “clutter” collected through the winter months and start fresh with the changing of the seasons. We invite you to broaden your imagination around the concept of “Spring cleaning” from the clutter in your home to include the clutter of the mind and body. For example, what habits did you pick up through the winter months that no longer energize you? What thought patterns have developed that no longer nourish you? What feelings have been weighing you down? Here are some quick ideas to help you “de-clutter” this Spring!

• Increase your fresh fruit and veggie intake.
• Drink more water. Consider adding a slice of lemon!
• Practice 5 minutes of Mindfulness Meditation to deepen self-awareness.
• Move your body outdoors! Take a walk, jump rope, garden, or stretch your body in the yard.
• Hold your hand over your heart and send yourself some love!
• Freshen up your environment with some Spring flowers.
• Make a nourishing soup.

This edition of the Caregiver Quarterly contains an array of information and tools that may inspire you to deepen your self-awareness, expand your self-care practices, or add to your “tool box”. Enjoy!
Effectively Communicating Your Own Needs
by Amber Lynch, LCSW

Research shows that mental, emotional and physical health is so important for long-term Caregivers because Caregivers tend to experience more health challenges. One reason for health concerns for long-term Caregivers is that Caregivers do not actively take care of their own needs as regularly as non-Caregivers.

The following is a process for effectively communicating your needs, using Non-violent Communication (NVC), developed by Marshal B. Rosenberg. The goal is to clearly express what you feel and need without blaming or criticizing. The goal is to shift from old patterns of defensiveness and aggressiveness into compassion and empathy for ourselves and others-strengthening relationships in the process. This shift requires communication from the heart.

Four Components
1. Observation: Observation without evaluation consists of noticing concrete things and actions around us. We learn to distinguish between judgment and what we sense in the present moment, and to simply observe what is there.

2. Feeling: When we notice things around us, we inevitably experience varying emotions and physical sensations in each particular moment. Here, distinguishing feelings from thoughts is an essential step to the NVC process.

3. Needs: All individuals have needs and values that sustain and enrich their lives. When those needs are met, we experience comfortable feelings, like happiness or peacefulness, and when they are not, we experience uncomfortable feelings, like frustration. Understanding that we, as well as those around us, have these needs is perhaps the most important step in learning to practice NVC and to live empathically.

4. Request: To make clear and present requests is crucial to NVC’s transformative mission. When we learn to request concrete actions that can be carried out in the present moment, we begin to find ways to cooperatively and creatively ensure that everyone’s needs are met. (continued on next page)
Small Moments of Self-Care
The Caregiver Support Program Daily Attention Diary
by Leah Christensen, LCSW

We wanted to make you aware of an amazing opportunity to participate in small moments of daily self-care. The National Caregiver Support Program has developed a self-care assessment and daily attention diary for Caregivers. As we all know, the amazing care that you provide your Veteran each day can take a toll on your health and well-being. The intention of the daily diary is to help offset the toll by helping you pay closer attention to you each day. Small moments of restoration can assist you in making self-care a daily priority. The hope is that these materials will assist you in feeling moments of restoration where you can turn your caring attention back to yourself.

We, the VA Portland Health Care System’s Caregiver Support Program staff, decided to try these daily self-care reflections for ourselves and found that:

- “It was a small amount of my time to invest and yet I got a lot out of it”
- “I felt more grateful”
- “I was more appreciative by taking these moments to acknowledge myself”
- “It felt energizing and uplifting”
- “I felt supported by pausing and taking a break. It was such a treat”

The daily attention diary provides 4 weeks of daily self-care reflections and activities that can be accessed on: http://www.caregiver.va.gov/National_Family_Caregivers_Month.asp.

If you are interested in receiving a daily diary reminder via email, please contact the mainline at 503.273.5210 or email Kyong.Yi@va.gov.

Effectively Communicating Your Own Needs (cont.)

An Example of a NVC request:
When I see that I haven’t spent time with my best friend in 3 months I feel frustrated/sad because my need for time with friends is not met. Would you be willing to support my having dinner with Ann next Wednesday?

*As you practice, remember to use I statements and non-judgmental feelings and statements. The more you practice, the easier it gets!

Once you have communicated your own needs, the next step is to put those needs into action. Whether it’s having respite, spending time with friends, requesting healthy communication, or simply taking a moment to yourself-getting your needs met requires your action and participation.

We encourage you to remember your needs are valid and you have every right to prioritize your needs. We invite you to share with us your efforts with using this model. Hopefully, you will have increased success with getting your needs and wants met. Your Caregiver Support Team supports you in your efforts!

Caregiver Support Program
VA Portland Health Care System
503-273-5210
Self-Compassion
By Judy Ulibarri, RN BSN

What is self-compassion?

We can all think of a time, or times, when we felt like we made a huge mistake, or did something we were embarrassed by.

Practicing Self-compassion is way for us to help “rebalance ourselves”. We are human beings, we will make mistakes, this is part of living. However, it is easy for us to get stuck in the feeling like we are bad, or somehow “less than”. Extending compassion to ourselves particularly when you feel inadequacy, failure, or general suffering, can be very healing.

Rather than continuing any negative self-talk simply pause...take a deep breath.

Put your hand on your heart or your cheek, and say to yourself, “It’s okay..., I am okay”

Be kind to yourself with the intention of self-compassion.

In the moment, take another conscious breath, and feel the ability you have to calm yourself.

You can offer yourself another way to think by repeating a phrase or a question ike...
“May I feel safe in this moment...
“May I accept myself, right here, right now?...
“May I be free of stress, or anxiety, right now?..
“Oh, sweetheart”...

Feel the sense of calmness these statements bring.
Chair Yoga

Seated Eagle Pose


Benefits: This arm and shoulder stretch targets the wrists and the space in between the shoulder blades, which is a difficult area to stretch.

Begin by sitting up straight in a chair. Roll your shoulder blades back and down, arms relaxed at your sides. Pull your belly button in to your spine to engage your abs, and keep your feet flat on the floor, if possible.

Extend your arms out in front of you at 90-degree angles, palms facing each other (not pictured). Place your right arm under your left and press the backs of your palms together. (If your arms and shoulders are tight, you might not get your arms as close as pictured, but you'll still feel the stretch.) Inhale and sit tall, then exhale and tuck your chin to your chest to stretch the back of the neck. Hold the pose for five breaths, then switch arms and stay another five breaths.

Recipe Corner

Cauliflower Coconut Stew

Courtesy of Mark’s Kitchen at www.drhyman.com

Ingredients:
2 T coconut oil
1 tsp cumin seeds
1 medium onion, finely chopped
3 ripe tomatoes, finely chopped
1 medium head cauliflower, stemmed, cut into bite-size florets
1 jalapeño, stemmed, seeded, chopped
1 C chopped kale
2 tsp ginger paste
1 T cumin powder
1 T coriander powder
1 tsp turmeric powder
1 can full-fat, unsweetened coconut milk
1 tsp sea salt
2 T chopped cilantro

Directions:
In a medium stock pot, heat coconut oil on medium heat for 30 secs.
Add cumin seeds and stir until they start to sputter. Add onions and cook for another minute, then add the tomatoes, stir and cook for a few more minutes until the tomatoes soften.
Add the rest of the ingredients and stir together. Cover the pan and simmer for about 15 mins, stirring every 5 mins to keep from burning.
Ladle the soup into 4 serving bowls and enjoy! Leftover stew can be stored in an air-tight container and saved for lunch the next day.
Introducing the PTSD Family Coach App

Living with a family member who has PTSD can be stressful. PTSD Family Coach is an app similar to PTSD Coach. PTSD Family Coach provides support for concerned family members of those with PTSD.

The app can help you learn about PTSD, how to take care of yourself, and how to manage your relationship with your loved one or children. PTSD Family Coach also has information on how to help your loved one get the treatment they deserve.

Features include:
• Information about PTSD and how it affects those who care about someone with PTSD.
• Tips to help families better support a loved one with PTSD, and themselves. The app includes information on how to find counseling.
• Facts about counseling for individuals or couples managing PTSD in a relationship.
• Tools to help family members manage stress.
• Self-created support network of people to connect with when in need.

Download the mobile app HERE
Free PTSD Family Coach download from:
| Android Coming Soon.

NOTE: PTSD is a serious mental health condition that often requires professional evaluation and treatment. PTSD Family Coach is not intended to replace needed professional care.

Who created PTSD Family Coach

PTSD Family Coach was created by the VA’s National Center for PTSD in partnership with the Department of Defense’s National Center for Telehealth and Technology. For more resources on PTSD for family and friends, please visit the VA’s National Center for PTSD website at http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/family/index.asp
Caregiver/Community Corner

Community Support Group
Heartwood Place
Woodburn, OR

When: Third Thursday from 2:00pm to 3:30pm
Where: 2325 N Boones Ferry Rd Woodburn, OR 97071

This support group meets the third Thursday of every month and is open to anyone who is affected by someone living with Alzheimer's or other forms of Dementia.

Come with questions... Leave with solutions!

Tours are available during this event!

Please call (503) 980-9990 for more information or if you would like to be reminded of the meetings monthly.

Heartwood Place is committed to people living with dementia and their families by presenting educational opportunities such as this, hosting support groups, connecting them with area resources and providing excellent care through award-winning dementia programs and a unique home-like approach to memory care.
Heartwoodplacemc.com

“This list of local resources is provided as a courtesy of VAPORHCS. None of these agencies or providers are affiliated with VAPORHCS and VAPORHCS does not endorse or recommend any agency or provider on this list. Nor does this list constitute a referral by VAPORHCS to any of the listed entities. Use of any of these services or providers is at your own risk.”

Please feel free to submit any community resources related to caregiving for future postings! Thank you!
Oregon Care Partners Offering Free Classes for Oregon Caregivers

Are you caring for an aging loved one? Oregon Care Partners provides free trainings on a wide variety of topics to help you with common caregiving challenges like caring for someone with Alzheimer’s or dementia, managing medications, or managing anger or other challenging behaviors. In-person classes are held around the state and led by caring professionals who understand the needs of family caregivers. Online classes are also available to take at your convenience. All classes are completely free of charge thanks to funding from the State of Oregon.

** SAVE THE DATE **

**OHCA Annual Caregiver Conference**
Family and professional caregivers – mark your calendars for the OHCA Annual Caregiver Conference, offered in both Medford and Salem in April. Attendees will gain insights into dementia-related challenging behaviors including surprising and inappropriate sexual behavior, best practices to understand and safely reduce psychotropic medication usage, and Person Centered Care skills to provide a positive environment for the person in their care. This conference is being offered in collaboration with Oregon Care Partners and is brought to you free of charge thanks to funding by the State of Oregon. Don’t miss this opportunity to gain valuable caregiver skills and network with fellow caregivers! Registration will open by April 1, 2017 at www.OregonCarePartners.com.

Two Conference Dates:
Tuesday, April 25, 2017 – Inn at the Commons, Medford, OR
Wednesday, April 26, 2017 – Salem Convention Center, Salem, OR
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Cost: FREE
CEUs: 4.5

Upcoming In-person Classes:
The following free, in-person classes are being offered in your area in March, April and May. To register for classes, or to take an online class, visit www.OregonCarePartners.com or call 1-800-930-6851.

Online Trainings
Oregon Care Partners offers more than 60 free online trainings that can be taken anytime, anywhere providing maximum flexibility and convenience for busy caregivers. Online trainings are self-paced and most take only an hour to complete. Four classes are available in Spanish and professional caregivers can earn free CEU credits for completing an online training. To browse the entire catalog of online trainings or to register for a class, please visit www.OregonCarePartners.com.
OEF/OIF/OND Veterans and Care Partners
SHOW US WHAT MATTERS TO YOU

The VA is seeking:

- OEF/OIF/OND Veterans Diagnosed with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
- Care Partners to a OEF/OIF/OND Veteran Diagnosed with TBI

We want to hear from you for a VA Photovoice Research Study!

As a participant, you may be involved in any or all of the following activities over 26 months:

- You will be given a camera and asked to share your photos and stories to educate others about TBI and Community Reintegration Needs, Challenges, and Resources
- This study is not a treatment for Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
- A one hour initial visit with 7 brief questionnaires
- One photo sharing and selection & interview with Veterans and Care Partners
- Follow-up interview with Veteran/Care Partner Pairs
- Small group discussion with Veterans and Care Partners and Final Survey

Veterans and Care Partners who participate in this study can receive one digital camera and up to $180 in compensation for their time and travel. You may or may not directly benefit from being in this study. Your participation, however, may benefit Veterans in the future. Participation in this study is for research purposes only and is not related to your health care treatment. If you are a Veteran of OEF/OIF/OND, at least 18 years old, and have a confirmed diagnosis of TBI, you are eligible for this study. If you are identified by an OEF/OIF/OND Veteran as a Care Partner, at least 18 years old and live within 30 miles of the participating Veteran’s home, you are eligible for this study. Care Partners may initiate participation in this study.

Research study title: “Communicating Impact of TBI on Post-Deployment Reintegration through Photovoice”
Principal Investigator at Portland: Sarah S. Ono, PhD
VA Portland Health Care System 3710 SW US Veterans Hospital Road
Portland, OR 97239
For more information contact the study team at 503-220-8262 x55315

Approved: March 31, 2016
Study ID: 3840