

Adult Day Self-Care Newsletter

August 2022

Letting Go

August is a popular vacation month—a time to let go of daily routines, stress, and tension. Taking some time to be in the sun, in nature, or near water somewhere is refreshing, providing renewal and a new outlook. But sometimes it's hard to let go. If our jobs require us to pay attention, make decisions, and otherwise be in control, it's difficult to shift gears and relax. Mindfulness can help. Sometimes called “the practice of letting go,” mindfulness is about focusing on the present moment, without judgment. This can be difficult because sitting quietly allows random feelings and thoughts to scamper through our minds. Some of those feelings and thoughts will not be pleasant. Some will be about the guilt we feel for falling short, for what we could have done or should have done in the past. Some will be about the anger we feel because other people have done something that hurt us. Again, mindfulness practice can help us learn to let go of some of those thoughts and feelings. At COPSA, we know that some thoughts and feelings are very challenging to let go. Through our work supporting caregivers, and through our own personal experiences, we know that it can be hard to get past some hurts. In this issue, we offer some thoughts and resources for reflection and sharing around guilt and forgiveness. We hope you find these helpful. As the summer winds down, we wish you the time and space you need for self-care, self-compassion, and recovery from the many stresses of life.

Caregiver Guilt

Guilt is common for family caregivers, especially around long-term care placement and end-of-life decisions. Guilt can get mixed up with shame, anxiety, and anger, as family members struggle with how they think they should feel. They imagine they're supposed to feel loving and grateful when, in reality, they just feel tired and irritable.

Little has been written about professional caregiver guilt, but recent pandemic experiences suggest that it may be common. Adult Day Center staff, like other providers, have had to balance their own health and safety with the needs of people they're paid to help. Stress makes it hard to be caring and patient every day. Loss of work time or added work tasks and hours contribute to feeling angry and helpless. All these experiences may lead to guilt. It's important to acknowledge and address these feelings, while providing ongoing support and training for staff on how to manage them.



New Resource for Wellness at Work

The [Wellness Training Learning Collaborative](#) (W-TLC) supports healthcare worker wellness, recognizing the ongoing challenges of this work and the various consequences of the pandemic. You will find resources on individual wellness, improving organizational wellness, and how healthcare workers can help each other through peer support.

Forgiveness

Becoming more forgiving means giving up resentment and overcoming destructive responses towards someone who injured you. Forgiveness often requires a new view of the offender that includes understanding and compassion (which seems undeserved).

Self-Compassion: Acknowledge the injury done to you. Be kind to yourself in small ways every day. Talk to yourself as you would to a friend.

Forgiving Yourself: Accept whatever you did or didn't do that might relate to the injury. Take responsibility and let it go. Everyone makes missteps in life. Hopefully, we learn from them.

Forgiving Others: Forgiveness does not require forgetting, accepting, excusing, or reconciling. It does not mean the injury was OK. Instead, it's about giving up the resentment and rage that eat away at you. It's about sending out kindness because you accept that the other person is human, complicated, and (probably) has also experienced hurts. Recognize that forgiveness takes time and work—it requires making a commitment. Practice. Start small by extending warm thoughts and forgiveness for small offenses (like the person in the super-market express line with a big cartful of stuff).

Research* consistently shows that forgiveness has positive benefits on emotional well-being and physical health. Self-forgiveness and forgiveness of others may even reduce the risk of later cognitive impairment! Forgiveness can reduce the emotional and spiritual burdens experienced after being hurt in some way. By forgiving, you may be able to reconnect or repair a valued relationship. Even if you do not have a relationship with the person who injured you, forgiveness may improve your relationship with others.

* References are available on request.

For More Information

If you are interested in learning more about the topics in this issue, we have included some references and resources here.

[Melody Beattie](#) offers wise words related to letting go (on her blog and in her books).

Jon Kabat-Zinn, well-known for his work on the practice of mindfulness, offers a [3-minute video](#) on Letting Go.

Other talks and meditations to help with practice for mindfulness, letting go, and forgiveness can be found on the free [Insight Timer](#) app.

Kristen Neff offers info on [self-compassion](#).

Take the [Forgiveness Quiz](#), developed by the Greater Good Science Center, which covers many important topics, as well as [forgiveness](#).

Dr. Everett Worthington offers [free workbooks on forgiveness](#), presenting a process called REACH, which stands for the five steps in his process.

As always, you can access the Self-Care resources on our website for free.

Self-Care for Professional Caregivers
www.care2caregivers.com/self-care

Upcoming Caregiver Education 2022

“Forgiveness & Caregiving”

August 24, 2022 1:00pm

Click [HERE](#) to register

For more info email Mary Catherine:
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or call Care2Caregivers at 890-424-2494



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visit our website www.care2caregivers.com for information on caregiver support groups