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*How are
you really?*

No One Cares Alone

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“ Daring greatly means the courage to be vulnerable. It means to show up and be seen. To ask for what you need. To talk about how you're feeling. To have the hard conversations. ”
-Brene Brown

Introduction

These are trying times. We continue navigating as best we can during this unprecedented time of stress and disruption to our daily lives. Many of our plans and routines have been completely turned around and uncertainty is the new certainty. In many ways we, as caregivers, are personally isolated as we provide care for each other and for our patients. No one should feel like they are alone in this. Caring for others is what we do best. It is in our DNA as caregivers. Together, let's take this opportunity to ensure that no one cares alone; especially our fellow caregivers.

We will weather this storm together and grow stronger as a result. As our *"No One Cares Alone"* peer support commitment grows you will see many ways to participate, the easiest of which is to check in with yourself first and then check in with your fellow caregivers. Remember, "There is no exercise better for the heart than reaching out and lifting others up."

This toolkit contains information about peer support, how to connect with other caregivers, and resources available to you, your family and your peers. Use this toolkit to learn more and discover what is most relevant to you.

"Through sharing common experiences and feelings, people gain strength, support, clarity and hope."

What is Peer Support?

Peer support is voluntary. The most basic value of peer support is that you freely choose to participate. The voluntary nature of peer support makes it easier for us to build trust and connections with one another.

Peer support is non-judgmental. In peer support, we connect with people who have experiences, beliefs, or ways of life that may be different from our own, despite the things we have in common. Being non-judgmental means approaching each other with openness, curiosity, and genuine interest.

Peer support requires honest and direct communication. Each of us can say what is on our mind in a respectful way. Learning how to speak honestly but with compassion about difficult issues is a key part of developing relationships with our peers

Peer support is respectful and empathetic. Each person has something important and unique to contribute. We value and treat each other with kindness, warmth, and dignity. We accept each other and are open to sharing with others from other ethnicities and cultures, sexual orientations, educational levels, and religions. We honor and make room for everyone's opinions and see each other as equally capable of contributing.

Peer support requires active listening. Truly listening involves hearing what the person is saying and paying attention to their non-verbal communication as well. Make sure you aren't just listening in order to respond. Try to remember a few key points about your peer so you can bring it up in your next conversation.

Put it into Practice.

1. “Connection. The energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgement; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationships.” Brene Brown.

Practice: Go out of your way to show kindness to a co-worker today.

2. “Daring greatly means the courage to be vulnerable it means to show up and to be seen. To ask for what you need. To talk about how you’re feeling. To have the HARD conversations.” Brene Brown.

Practice: Be willing to share how you are “really doing”. Sharing your struggles will not only lead you to a place of peace and joy but it can help form a connection and find common ground. It is healing to know that others are sharing the same struggles as you.

3. “People are never too young or too old to look for human connections,” John Turturro.

Practice: You have something important and unique to contribute. Value and treat others with kindness, warmth, and dignity. Accept others and be open to sharing with others from different ethnicities and cultures, sexual orientations, educational levels, and religions. Honor and make room for everyone’s opinions and see others as equally capable of contributing. This means making a genuine effort to imagine how the other person feels, what might have led to those feelings, and how you would want someone to respond to you in that situation. Go out of your way to show kindness to a co-worker today.

4. “Social connection is such a basic feature of human experience that when we are deprived of it, we suffer.” Leonard Mlodinow

Practice: Human connection is a basic human need. Be intentional about making a connection with a co-worker today.

5. “The most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to Listen . Just listen. Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention...a loving silence often has far more power to heal and connect than the most well-intentioned words.

“Rachel Naomi Remen

Practice: Next time you ask “How are you doing” make sure that you really mean it. We often use that phrase to open a conversation, but we don’t pause and listen to the response. When we truly feel care and concern for our peers it will come across in our voice and body language and may help prompt an open and honest response. Give it a try, what was different in how you asked? Did you really listen?

6. “You are imperfect, you are wired for struggle, but you are worthy of love and belonging.” Brene Brown

Practice: What can you today to love yourself and show love to others?

7. “Your ear is a far better tool to express kindness and love than your mouth.” Rick Warren

Practice: Love and kindness start with listening. Whether you’re trying to fight injustice in society or maintain peace and civility at home or at work, don’t be too quick to speak. First, listen. Notice - Are you being too quick to reply in your interactions today?

Put it into Practice.

8. “People who need help sometimes look a lot like people who don’t need help.” Glennon Melton

Practice: You never know what someone is feeling inside, try not to make assumptions. Today try having a conversation with someone you haven’t spent much time with.

9. Through sharing common experiences and feelings, people gain strength, support, clarity and hope.

Practice: Learn something new about one co-worker today.

10. “In a world of algorithms hashtags and followers, know the true importance of human connection.”

Practice: In this age of technology we often have our phone in our hand or a computer screen in front of us. When you are having a conversation with a peer or loved one try to make sure you do away with any of these distractions. Resist the urge to check your text messages or emails and try to stay engaged. Show that you are actively listening by using appropriate eye contact and asking relevant questions. **Working virtually?** Try turning your video on and resist checking your email during calls.

11. “One of the most important things you can do on this earth is to let people know they are not alone.” Shannon L. Alder

Practice: Share in someone’s joy or sorrow today, let them know that you are here to listen if they ever want to talk – in good times or in bad.

12. “No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another.” Charles Dickens

Practice: Let a co-worker know you are here for them – really listen to what’s on their mind.

13. “There is no exercise better for the heart than reaching down and lifting people up.” John Holmes

Practice: Try to make a co-worker smile today.

14. “A kind gesture can reach a wound that only compassion can heal.” Steve Maraboli

Practice: Offer a genuine compliment to a co-worker who seems down today.

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Get Connected

Making Connections

Call to Action- connect with your fellow caregivers to find common ground and support.

No matter if you are working along side your team or virtually, there are countless ways to make meaningful daily connections. How can you connect with a co-worker?



No One Cares Alone Challenge: July 6th – Aug. 5th

This 30-day challenge encourages you to discover and enjoy new ways to create social connections while checking in on one another. This month try to be intentional with making daily connections with your colleagues.

Receive 10,000 points for answering YES 20 out of 30 days

“In a world of algorithms hashtags and followers, know the true importance of human connection.”

Ideas

How can you provide support?

- Check-in with yourself first (*How am I doing?*)
- Check-in with a colleague (*How are you doing?*)
- Give yourself a break from the crisis: talk about other things and turn off media channels
- Smile at a colleague (even behind the mask, your eyes still smile)
- Laugh together
- Turn on your camera for video calls and encourage your team to do so, as well
- Text or call to check-in
- Schedule a virtual Healthy Hour with your co-workers
- Share your story
- Take a socially distanced walk together
- Share a virtual lunch or coffee date

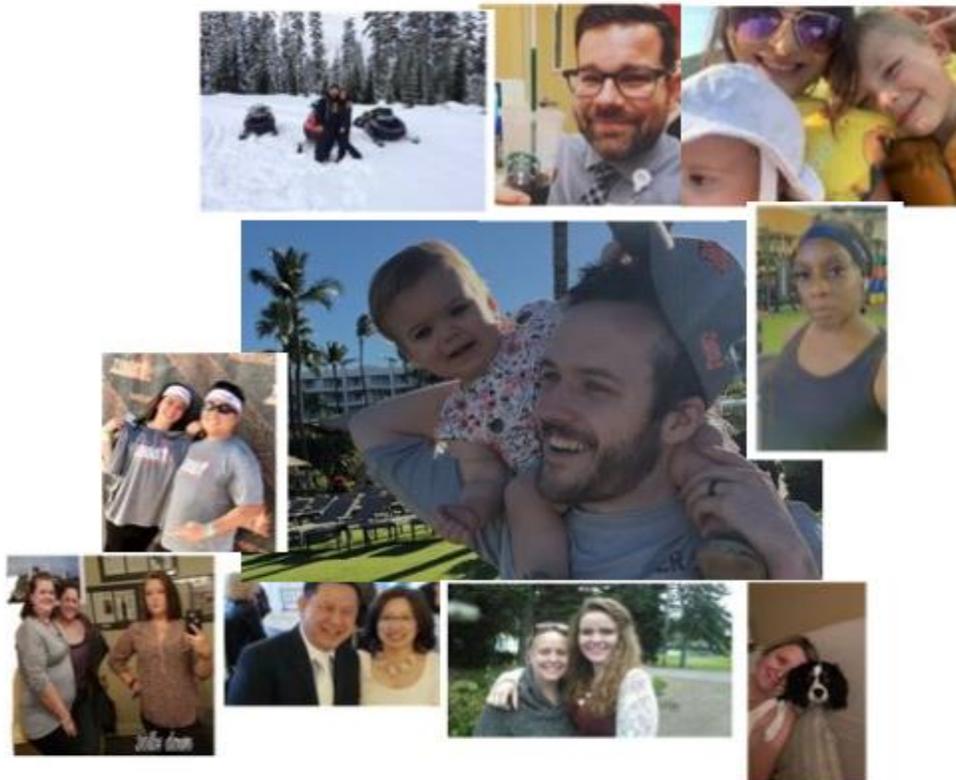


What's Your Story?

We invite you to share your story whether it comes from times of struggle or success. Sharing stories from a challenging time can greatly help others. Sharing this type of story will help others realize they aren't alone. Telling a personal story can connect you to others and can help build relationships. Listening to the stories of others can help promote healing for both the teller and the listener. Story sharing is an important way to show support and care for your co-workers.

Tell us about peer support activities that have been helpful for you. Have you found a public group or social activity that gives you support? If it is something that other caregivers could also join, let us know. Together, we can help caregivers connect and support each other. Share your story here with any available details on how others might also engage.

Submit your story at: mychoosewell.org/Share-Your-Story



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Resources

Resources

Caregiver Assistance Program:

Sometimes, keeping our lives in balance is difficult and we need support to restore our equilibrium. In these times, our Caregiver Assistance Program is there for you at no cost. Check out the free services offered.

[Click here to learn more](#)

- Optum: 844-875-5716
- Lyra (Alaska Only): 844-311-6223

Mental Health Resources:

Rate your stress. Connect with resources.

[Click here to learn more](#)

Reflections:

Starting your meeting off with a reflection can be a powerful way to get your fellow caregivers centered and bring them to the present moment. Incorporate one of the provided slides into your meetings. The slides are ready to be copied and pasted into your meeting presentation.

[Click here to download](#)

Key Contact Numbers:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Free & Confidential, Available 24/7

Crisis Text Line:

Text HOME to 741741, 24/7 Crisis support in the US

Helpful Websites:

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: www.afsp.org

Mental Health America:

<http://mentalhealthamerica.net>

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): www.nami.org

National Institute of Mental Health:

www.nimh.nih.gov

Postpartum Support International:

www.postpartum.net

Well Being Trust:

<https://wellbeingtrust.org/>