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How To Care for the Caretaker

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About Grow A Strong Family, Inc.

GASF is a social service agency which provides customized family life education services to the family members of those individuals with mental illnesses.
Our primary mission is to offer a comprehensive menu of evidence-informed services to improve the health and wellbeing of our clients including but not limited to:

- ▶ *Coaching services*
- ▶ *Skills-based seminars/webinars/support group*
- ▶ *Pet Therapy*
- ▶ *Social Media presence on Facebook*
- ▶ *Maintaining and updating our GASF webpage including providing free educational Blogs & Resources*
- ▶ *Collaborating with community-based agencies*



This webinar

- ▶ Chronic Mental Illness and its effect on the family
- ▶ Strategies for caretakers
- ▶ Self-care



Your Family Uprooted by Mental Illness

- ▶ Any diagnosis of a chronic illness, including mental illness, puts high demands on you and imposes unanticipated adjustments.
- ▶ Mental illness in a family member creates a shift in the perceptions of the family and how it functions.



Some common ways that family members may react

- ▶ Inability to accept uncertainty
- ▶ Pessimism
- ▶ Negative self-talk
- ▶ Unrealistic expectations
- ▶ Perfectionism
- ▶ Lack of assertiveness



BREATHE!

- ▶ We all know how to breathe, but getting the most from each breath during a stressful time can:
 - ▶ relax your muscles,
 - ▶ decrease your heart rate, and
 - ▶ eventually lower your blood pressure



Change the internal dialogue

- ▶ When you think, "Must," try thinking, "Prefer."
- ▶ When you think, "Guilt," try thinking, "Remorse."
- ▶ When you think, "Should," try thinking, "Choose to."
- ▶ What are some other thoughts you have? What is the exchange?



Word Exchange Table

Incorrect	Correct
<i>Instead of thinking:</i>	<i>Try thinking:</i>
Must	Prefer
Should	Choose to
Have to	Want
Can't	Choose not to
Ought	Had better
All	Many
Always	Often
Can't stand	Don't like
Awful	Highly undesirable
Bad person	Bad behavior
I am a failure	I failed at



Change the Statements

Incorrect	Correct
<i>Instead of saying:</i>	<i>Exchange with:</i>
I have to do well.	I want to do well.
You shouldn't do that!	I prefer you not do that.
You never help me.	You rarely help me.
I can't stand my job!	I don't like my job.
You are a bad person.	That behavior is undesirable.
I'm a loser.	I failed at this one task.
I need appreciation.	I want appreciation, but don't need it.



Emotional Vocabulary Exchange

Incorrect	Correct
<i>Instead of saying:</i>	<i>Exchange with:</i>
Anxious	Concerned
Depressed	Sad
Angry	Annoyed
Guilt	Remorse
Shame	Regret
Hurt	Disappointed
Jealous	Concern for my relationship



Let's Move!

- ▶ Stretch!
- ▶ Dance!



Laughter!

- ▶ Research has shown that laughter is a great way to reduce stress!
- ▶ What or who do you think is funny?



Coping Strategies

- ▶ Simplify your life
- ▶ Schedule time for yourself
- ▶ Plan Ahead / Prioritize
"If you fail to plan, you plan to fail."
- ▶ Ask for WHAT you need... (from family, work, friends etc) and
- ▶ Delegate!
- ▶ Avoid "can't" when you really mean, "won't!"



Strategies

- ▶ Time manage
- ▶ Learn to say, "NO!" (You CAN say, "I'll get back to you & buy yourself time to think)."
- ▶ You can also say "NO" by saying "Yes!" to something else. Be positive.
- ▶ Appreciate



Helpful Self-Statements

- ▶ "I know I can do this."
- ▶ "One step at a time. CALM DOWN!"
- ▶ "This is difficult - And each step I take is a step forward."



More Coping Strategies

- ▶ Eat nutritiously
- ▶ Try something new
- ▶ SLEEP - (8hrs/night)
- ▶ BREATHE deeply and often!



More thoughts...

- ▶ Look at your expectations. Are they reasonable?
- ▶ Deal with problems as they appear.
- ▶ Let it GO!
- ▶ Make time for FUN!
- ▶ Develop & maintain supportive relationships
- ▶ Stay healthy!



Avoid!!!

- ▶ Should
- ▶ Ought
- ▶ Must
- ▶ Have to



Serenity Prayer

Grant me the Serenity
 To accept the things I cannot change,
 Courage to change the things I can,
 And the Wisdom to know the difference.



Serenity Prayer Grid

ACCEPTANCE	Things I cannot change...	How can I accept the things I cannot change?
COURAGE	Things I have control over...	The steps I can take are...



Give yourself permission and accept...

- ▶ Some things are out of my control
 - ▶ Life happens...
 - ▶ It's not all or nothing
 - ▶ We are not meant to be perfect
- ▶ Be willing to be willing!
- ▶ *Live your life one day at a time. Make today the best day!*



One thing I will do to take care of myself is ...

- ▶ Today...
- ▶ Tomorrow...
- ▶ The next day...



Helpful Resources

- ▶ Byron Katie: <http://www.byronkatie.com/>
- ▶ SARK: <http://planetsark.com/about-sark/>
- ▶ Sheri McGregor: <http://www.rejectedparents.net/about-helping-parents-of-estranged-adult-children/>
- ▶ Melodie Beattie: <http://melodybeattie.com/>
- ▶ Toni Bernhard: <http://www.toniberhard.com/>
- ▶ Mindfulness Meditation: <http://marc.ucla.edu/body.cfm?id=22>
- ▶ Adult Coloring: <http://www.the-open-mind.com/29-printable-mandala-abstract-colouring-pages-for-meditation-stress-relief/>



When best laid plans fail!

- ▶ Stick to your "normal" routines as much as you can
- ▶ Eat and drink in moderation
- ▶ Plan on exercise; build in "nature" time.
- ▶ Make sure you have a Plan B and a Plan C in place for the unexpected
- ▶ Keep music that you love on hand and listen to it when needing to
- ▶ Prioritize your time, activities, and commitments (do what you want to and can)
- ▶ Take good, loving care of yourself!



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Looking For More Information on Grow A Strong Family?

- ▶ Visit GASF online:
 - <http://growastrongfamily.org/>
- ▶ Email: GASFinc@outlook.com
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