

Pathways

SERVING FAMILIES AND CAREGIVERS OF BRAIN
IMPAIRED ADULTS AND THE FRAIL ELDERLY

IT'S A BUSY WORLD. You fold the laundry while keeping one eye on your loved one and another on the television. You plan your day while listening to the radio and commuting to work, and then plan your weekend. But in the rush to accomplish necessary tasks, you may find yourself losing your connection with the present moment—missing out on what you're doing and how you're feeling. Did you notice whether you felt well-rested this morning or that forsythia is in bloom along your route to work?

Mindfulness is the practice of purposely focusing your attention on the present moment—and accepting it without judgment. Mindfulness is now being examined scientifically and has been found to be a key element in stress reduction and overall happiness.

What are the benefits of mindfulness?

The cultivation of mindfulness has roots in Buddhism, but most religions include some type of prayer or meditation technique that helps shift your thoughts away from your usual preoccupations toward an appreciation of the moment and a larger perspective on life.

Professor emeritus Jon Kabat-Zinn, founder and former director of the Stress Reduction Clinic at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center, helped to bring the practice

Benefits of Mindfulness

Practices for Improving Emotional and Physical Well-Being



of mindfulness meditation into mainstream medicine and demonstrated that practicing mindfulness can bring improvements in both physical and psychological symptoms as well as positive changes in health, attitudes, and behaviors.

Mindfulness improves well-being.

Increasing your capacity for mindful-

ness supports many attitudes that contribute to a satisfied life. Being mindful makes it easier to savor the pleasures in life as they occur, helps you become fully engaged in activities, and creates a greater capacity to deal with adverse events. By focusing on the here and now, many people who practice mindfulness find that

Inside this issue:

Benefits of Mindfulness, continued	2-3
California Governor Approved ask to expand and improve services for family caregivers	4
Apps for Family Caregivers	4
A Dose of Inspiration	4
Cruise Around the World: Thank You to our sponsors	5
Placer County Senior Peer Counseling Program	6
Thank You to our Generous Donors	7



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Benefits of Mindfulness . . . continued from page 1

they are less likely to get caught up in worries about the future or regrets over the past, are less preoccupied with concerns about success and self-esteem, and are better able to form deep connections with others.

Mindfulness improves physical health. If greater well-being isn't enough of an incentive, scientists have discovered that mindfulness techniques help improve physical health in a number of ways.

Mindfulness can: help relieve stress, treat heart disease, lower blood pressure, reduce chronic pain, improve sleep, and alleviate gastrointestinal difficulties.

Mindfulness improves mental health. In recent years, psychotherapists have turned to mindfulness meditation as an important element in the treatment of a number of problems, including: depression, substance abuse, eating disorders, couples' conflicts, anxiety disorders, and obsessive-compulsive disorder

How does mindfulness work?

Some experts believe that mindfulness works, in part, by helping people to accept their experiences—including painful emotions—rather than react to them with aversion and avoidance.

It's become increasingly common for mindfulness meditation to be combined with psychotherapy, especially cognitive behavioral therapy. This development makes good sense, since both meditation and cognitive behavioral therapy share the common goal of helping people gain perspective on irrational, maladaptive, and self-defeating thoughts.

Mindfulness techniques

There is more than one way to practice mindfulness, but the goal of any mindfulness technique is to achieve a state of alert, focused relaxation by deliberately paying attention to thoughts and sensations without

judgment. This allows the mind to refocus on the present moment. All mindfulness techniques are a form of meditation.

Basic mindfulness meditation—Sit quietly and focus on your natural breathing or on a word or "mantra" that you repeat silently. Allow thoughts to come and go without judgment and return to your focus on breath or mantra.

Body sensations—Notice subtle body sensations such as an itch or tingling without judgment and let them pass. Notice each part of your body in succession from head to toe.

Sensory—Notice sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches. Name them "sight," "sound," "smell," "taste," or "touch" without judgment and let them go.

Emotions—Allow emotions to be present without judgment. Practice a steady and relaxed naming of emotions: "joy," "anger," "frustration." Accept the presence of the emotions without judgment and let them go.

Urge surfing—Cope with cravings (for addictive substances or behaviors) and allow them to pass. Notice how your body feels as the craving enters. Replace the wish for the craving to go away with the certain knowledge that it will subside.

Mindfulness meditation and other practices

Mindfulness can be cultivated through mindfulness meditation, a systematic method of focusing your attention. You can learn to meditate on your own, following instructions in books or on tape. However, you may benefit from the support of an instructor or group to answer questions and help you stay motivated. Look for someone using meditation in a way compatible with your beliefs and goals.

If you have a medical condition, you may prefer a medically oriented program that incorporates meditation. Ask your physician or hospital about local groups. Insurance companies increasingly cover the cost of meditation instruction.

Getting started on your own

Some types of meditation primarily involve concentration—repeating a

phrase or focusing on the sensation of breathing, allowing the parade of thoughts that inevitably arise to come and go. Concentration meditation techniques, as well as other activities such as tai chi or yoga, can induce the well-known relaxation response, which is very valuable in reducing the body's response to stress.

Mindfulness meditation builds upon concentration practices. Here's how it works:

Go with the flow. In mindfulness meditation, once you establish concentration, you observe the flow of inner thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations without judging them as good or bad.

Pay attention. You also notice external sensations such as sounds, sights, and touch that make up your moment-to-moment experience. The challenge is not to latch onto a particular idea, emotion, or sensation, or to get caught in thinking about the past or the future. Instead, you watch what comes and goes in your mind and discover which mental habits produce a feeling of well-being or suffering.

Stay with it. At times, this process may not seem relaxing at all, but over time it provides a key to greater happiness and self-awareness as you become comfortable with a wider and wider range of your experiences.

Practice acceptance

Above all, mindfulness practice involves accepting whatever arises in your awareness at each moment. It involves being kind and forgiving toward yourself.

Some tips to keep in mind:

Gently redirect. If your mind wanders into planning, daydreaming, or criticism, notice where it has gone and gently redirect it to sensations in the present.

Try and try again. If you miss your intended meditation session, simply start again.

By practicing accepting your experience during meditation, it becomes easier to accept whatever comes your way during the rest of your day.

Cultivate mindfulness informally

In addition to formal meditation, you

can also cultivate mindfulness informally by focusing your attention on your moment-to-moment sensations during everyday activities. This is done by single-tasking—doing one thing at a time and giving it your full attention. As you floss your teeth, pet the dog, or eat an apple, slow down the process and be fully present as it unfolds and involves all of your senses.

Invest in yourself

The effects of mindfulness meditation

tend to be dose-related — the more you do, the more effect it usually has. Most people find that it takes at least 20 minutes for the mind to begin to settle, so this is a reasonable way to start. If you're ready for a more serious commitment, Jon Kabat-Zinn recommends 45 minutes of meditation at least six days a week. But you can get started by practicing the techniques described here for shorter periods.

Mindfulness Exercises

If mindfulness meditation appeals to you, going to a class or listening to a meditation tape can be a good way to start. In the meantime, here are two mindfulness exercises you can try on your own.

Basic mindfulness meditation

This exercise teaches basic mindfulness meditation.

- Sit on a straight-backed chair or cross-legged on the floor.
- Focus on an aspect of your breathing, such as the sensations of air flowing into your nostrils and out of your mouth, or your belly rising and falling as you inhale and exhale.
- Once you've narrowed your concentration in this way, begin to widen your focus. Become aware of sounds, sensations, and your ideas.
- Embrace and consider each thought or sensation without judging it good or bad. If your mind starts to race, return your focus to your breathing. Then expand your awareness again.

Learning to stay in the present

A less formal approach to mindfulness can also help you to stay in the present and fully participate in your life. You can choose any task or moment to practice informal mindfulness, whether you are eating, showering, walking, touching a partner, or playing with a child or grandchild. Attending to these points will help:

- Start by bringing your attention to the sensations in your body
- Breathe in through your nose, allowing the air downward into your lower belly. Let your abdomen expand fully.
- Now breathe out through your mouth
- Notice the sensations of each inhalation and exhalation
- Proceed with the task at hand slowly and with full deliberation
- Engage your senses fully. Notice each sight, touch, and sound so that you savor every sensation.
- When you notice that your mind has wandered from the task at hand, gently bring your attention back to the sensations of the moment.

A Harvard Health Article. Reprinted with permission from HelpGuide Your Trusted Guide to Mental Health and Wellness, <https://www.helpguide.org/harvard/benefits-of-mindfulness.htm>.

California Governor Gavin Newsom has APPROVED our ask to expand and improve services for family caregivers across the state of California!

We are thrilled to announce that our budget ask was approved by Governor Gavin Newsom, as a part of the 2019-20 State Budget! The one-time ask of \$30 million, \$10M/year over the next three years, will expand and improve caregiver support services across the state of California. Our budget ask was one of the recommendations of the California Task Force on Family Caregiving (CA TFFC). The budget item was approved for this fiscal year, beginning July 1, 2019. It will be disseminated between the 11 California Caregiver Resource Centers throughout the state. With this budget increase, the CRC system will upgrade and expand services to meet the increasing needs of caregivers.

This could not have happened without your help and determined grassroots advocacy, sending letters, signing

onto letters of support, making calls, and showing up at the state capitol! We are grateful to our colleagues who sent letters of support and testified on our behalf at the budget hearings: CA Collaborative on Long Term Services and Supports (37 organizational members), CA Association of Adult Day Services (CAADS), AARP, Justice in Aging, Multipurpose Senior Service Program Site Association, Alzheimer's Los Angeles, Alzheimer's Association, UC Davis School of Nursing, Cal PACE, The Youth Movement Against Alzheimer's, and the nearly 1000 other organizations and individual family caregivers that wrote letters of support, signed onto our budget ask, or made a call to your representative and Governor Newsom.

THANK YOU again for all of your continued support of California caregivers!

Apps for Family Caregivers

PANIC BUTTON

The Red Panic Button is a distress and safety app that sends alerts to family and friends whenever you are in danger or in need of assistance. Simply tap the button to send a text and an e-mail to everyone in your emergency contact list.



Pillboxie is the easy way to remember your meds. Other med reminder apps are either too complicated or just downright boring. Pillboxie is easy because it lets you *visually* manage your meds. Scheduling a reminder is as easy as dropping a pill into a pillbox.

Available for iPhone and iPad, \$0.99



Magnifying Glass with Light. As the name indicates, this simple app permits operators with less than perfect eyesight to zoom in and turn on the flashlight for ease of reading. This app is perfect for reading small menus, small print on mailers, or even small keypads.

A DOSE OF INSPIRATION

“The only control you have is over the changes you choose to make.”

NANCY L. KRISEMAN,
THE MINDFUL CAREGIVER: FINDING
EASE IN THE CAREGIVING JOURNEY

“The closest thing to being cared for is to care for someone else.”

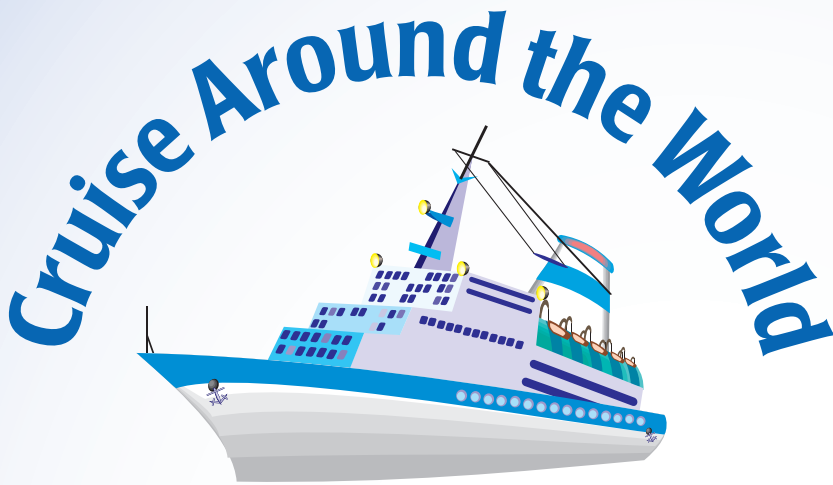
CARSON MCCULLERS,
THE SQUARE ROOT OF WONDERFUL

“Be determined to handle any challenge in a way that will make you grow.”

LES BROWN

“Care is a state in which something does matter; it is the source of human tenderness.”

ROLLO MAY, PSYCHOLOGIST



ON JUNE 19TH, Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center held our 14th Annual Cruise Around the World Cook-off and Fundraiser in Orangevale. This fun event supports the efforts of Del Oro, allowing us to expand much needed services to family caregivers in our community.

At the heart of the event is a cook-off competition between local senior care providers. There were two phases to the competition—professional judges and crowd favorites. The professional judge panel consisted of Keith Breedlove, Culinary Cruiser, Tina Macuha with Good Day Sacramento and Danny Luzzatti, a local Caterer. The panel of judges scored each participant on presentation of the food, taste, originality, and authenticity to the region or country the culinary partner chose. We are pleased to announce this year's winners:

FIRST PLACE—The Oars Senior Living, Representing Kentucky, USA with their Derby Egg

SECOND PLACE—Atria Senior Living, Representing Brazil with their Roasted Cornish Hen with Beans, Rice and Plantains

SECOND PLACE—Chateau Senior Living, Representing Mexico with their Green Chicken over Cilantro Lime Rice

The event attendees had a tie for the overall "Crowd Favorite!" Two facilities shared this title, **Atria Senior Living,** representing Brazil with their Roasted Cornish Hen with Beans, Rice and Plantains AND **Revere Court Memory Care** with Captain Thomas' Ceviche Cocktail, representing Baja California. Congratulations to all of our winners!!

Thanks to the generous support of our sponsors, culinary partners, and attendees, Del Oro raised just over \$46,000 to provide vital services to family caregivers in our community! We appreciate your support of our mission and goal to improve the well-being of family caregivers throughout their journey.

A Heartfelt Thank You to Our Sponsors

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 Cimino Care
 Craig Cares
 Help at Home Senior Care
 HomeInstead Senior Care
 Prairie City Landing

Bronze:

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 East Lawn Memorial Parks Mortuaries
 Empire Ranch Alzheimer's Special Care Center
 Granite Bay Villans
 Integra
 Life Options for Seniors
 Senior Care Coordinators
 Senior Care Solutions
 Somerford Place
 The Hummingbird Project
 Yolo Hospice

Placer county *Senior Peer Counseling* Program Looking for participants

Senior Peer Counseling is a free, voluntary, peer support, in-home program for Placer County residents aged 55 years or better, who are dealing with age-related adjustment issues.

WHEN IS THE LAST TIME SOMEONE REALLY LISTENED TO YOU?

As we age, life transitions can sometimes be painful or difficult to adjust to. The loss of a companion, medical diagnosis, physical disability, or retirement and relocation can be upsetting. Sometimes it is helpful to talk with someone near your age. A peer can help you address these transitional concerns in a safe, confidential, environment. Peer Counselors work with

people in the community on issues such as grief, caregiver stress, change in their sense of independence, family conflict, loneliness, situational depression or anxiety, change in health, or other age related concern.

Senior Peer Counselor volunteers provide in-home peer support for residents of Placer County aged 55 and better. Senior Peer Counseling is a free, confidential service. Phone: 916-787-8859



The Friendship Line

We support individuals who find connecting within the community challenging

TOLL FREE: 800.971.0016

Institute on Aging's 24-hour toll-free Friendship Line is the only accredited crisis line in the country for people aged 60 years and older, and adults living with disabilities. We also make on-going outreach calls to lonely older adults. While there are other organizations that respond to the needs of people who may be contemplating suicide, none provides the type of services that IOA's Friendship Line offers to respond to the public health problem of suicide among the elderly. Knowing that older people do not contact traditional suicide prevention centers on a regular basis even if they are considering suicide, we created the only program nationwide that reaches out to lonely, depressed, isolated, frail and/or suicidal older adults. Our trained volunteers specialize in offering a caring ear and having a friendly conversation with depressed older adults.

I feel lonely. Can I talk to you?

The Friendship Line is both a crisis intervention hotline and a warmline for non-emergency emotional support calls. Founded in 1973 by Dr. Patrick Arbore, Director of IOA's Center for Elderly Suicide Prevention, and accredited by the American Association of Suicidology, Friendship Line provides round-the-clock crisis support services including:

- **Providing emotional support**
- **Elder abuse reporting**
- **Well-being checks**
- **Grief support through assistance and reassurance**
- **Active suicide intervention**
- **Information and referrals for isolated older adults, and adults living with disabilities**

In addition to receiving incoming calls, Friendship Line also offers outreach to eligible callers. We connect with people on a regular basis, and help monitor their physical and mental health concerns. The call-out services act as an intervention to prevent suicide in the long term by improving the quality of life and connectedness of isolated callers. Any aging adult or person living with disabilities, who suffers from depression, loneliness, isolation, anxiousness, or may be thinking about death or suicide, can benefit from completely confidential phone calls with Friendship Line volunteers. Sometimes the road to happiness begins by simply saying hello to someone who cares.

For additional information or to schedule a presentation by Founder and Director Patrick Arbore, Ed.D., please contact Natalie Schroeder at 415.750.4137 or nschroeder@ioaging.org



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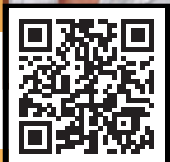


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