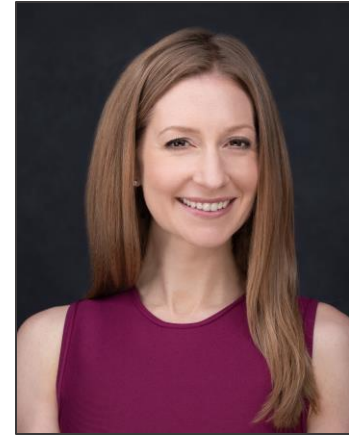


# Coping with the Stress of Caregiving

Celebrating a Second Chance at  
Life Survivorship Symposium

July 11-17, 2020



**Jamie Jacobs, PhD**

Massachusetts General Hospital

# 2020 Celebrating a Second Chance at Life Survivorship Symposium

## Coping with the Stress of Caregiving

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# Introduction

- **Overview of stress related to caregiving**
- **Negative effects of stress**
- **Three coping strategies**
  1. **Relaxation**
  2. **Active coping**
  3. **Self-care**

Are you...

Have you...

Taking care of a loved one

Being taken care of by a loved one

Ever provided care for someone else  
(a parent, child, friend, spouse)

**Congratulations...**

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**...on taking the next  
hour to focus on**

***YOU***



# The *Unmet* Needs of Caregivers

Caregivers have more unmet care needs than patients

Caregivers needs are considered secondary or overlooked

We need to better understand the needs of caregivers during and after transplant

# A day in the life...

- Personal care
- Mobility
- Transportation
- Communication with supports
- Housework and meal preparation
- Management and coordination of medical care
- Administration of medication and therapies
- Monitoring and managing of side effects
- Emotional support
- Managing finances
- Care for other dependents
- Maintain job or other responsibilities
- Self- care?????

*"I don't go out with my friends by myself as much as I used to because I don't want to leave him here by himself."*

# When we are stressed



- More susceptible to colds
  - More irritable
  - More difficulty sleeping
-



# Three Coping Strategies

1. Relaxation

2. Coping by  
Controllability

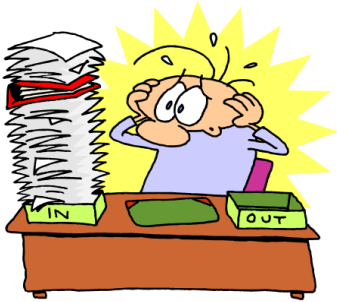
3. Intention  
for Self-care

The background features a dark green-to-black gradient. A white horizontal band is centered across the middle. Behind this band, three overlapping blue circles are visible, creating a Venn diagram-like pattern. A thin purple horizontal line is located at the bottom of the slide. On the left side, there are black L-shaped corner brackets.

# 1. Relaxation Exercises

# Stress Response

## Fight or Flight Response



- ↑ Adrenaline
- ↑ Cortisol
- ↑ Sick
- ↑ Inflammation
- ↑ Sleep issues
- ↑ Stress on body

# Relaxation Response

## Relaxation Response



- ↓ Adrenaline
- ↓ Cortisol
- ↓ Sick
- ↓ Inflammation
- ↓ Sleep issues
- ↓ Stress on body

# Goal:

Activate  
Relaxation  
Response

The diagram consists of two large circles connected by a right-pointing arrow. The left circle is red and contains the text 'Activate Relaxation Response'. The right circle is green and contains the text 'Dampen Stress Response'. The arrow is red and points from the left circle to the right circle. The entire diagram is set against a white background with a dark green header and a black L-shaped border on the left and bottom.

Dampen  
Stress  
Response

# Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)

## Hands and arms

Hold arms at a 45-degree angle and make fists.

## Face and neck

Raise eyebrows, squint eyes, wrinkle nose, bit down lightly, pull back corners of mouth, and pull head slightly down to chin.

## Chest, shoulders, back

Take a deep breath, hold it in, pull back the shoulders and puff out chest. Careful of back issues.

## Thighs, calves, feet

Lift your feet off of the floor, flex slightly, and turn toes inward.

A serene beach scene at sunset or sunrise, with a large white circle overlaid on the right side containing the text 'Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)'. The background shows a calm ocean reflecting the sky, with a dark rock formation on the left and a forested cliff in the distance. The sky is filled with wispy clouds, and the sun is low on the horizon, creating a soft glow.

Progressive  
Muscle  
Relaxation  
(PMR)

The background features three overlapping circles in shades of blue, centered horizontally. A white horizontal band runs across the middle of the image, containing the text. The overall color palette is muted, with dark green and grey tones in the background.

## 2. Coping through Controllability



# Two Ways to Cope

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What action can I take to resolve the situation?

**Action-oriented  
Coping**

If I can't resolve the situation, what can I do to manage the stress/discomfort?

**Emotion-oriented  
Coping**

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# Identify controllability: Snowstorm

Controllable	Uncontrollable
Stock up on supplies (food, water, batteries, shovel)	The fact that a snowstorm is coming and how much snow there will be
Get a hotel room or stay with a friend closer to work	What areas will get hit the hardest
Leave early from work to avoid dangerous conditions	Whether there will be power outages
Move your car off the street to avoid towing or snow plow damage	Whether there will be road closures and delays in transportation

# Identify controllability: **Caring for someone**

Controllable	Uncontrollable

# Controllable

# Uncontrollable

## Action-oriented coping

- **What action can I take to resolve the situation?**
  - Make a decision
  - Resolve a conflict
  - Seek information or advice
  - Set a goal
  - Engage in problem-solving
  - Request help

## Emotion-oriented coping

- **If I can't resolve the situation, what can I do to manage the stress/discomfort?**
  - Engage in enjoyable activities
  - Relaxation, deep breathing, or massage
  - Acceptance and self-soothing
  - Exercise
  - Listen to or play music
  - Take a walk, bike ride, or other exercise
  - Talk to a friend or relative
  - Write in a journal
  - Change how I think about it



# **3. Intention for Self-Care**

**(break up into small groups)**

# Intention for Self-Care: 6 Steps

1. What is something I used to like to do?

2. Can I incorporate it back into my life?

3. Do I need to do it differently? Be creative

4. What might get in the way?

5. How will I overcome that obstacle?

6. Make a plan

# Example 1:

1. What is something I used to like to do?

Workout at the gym

2. Can I incorporate it back into my life?

Maybe, but not at the gym

3. If not, can I do it differently? Be creative

Take a walk or jog around the neighborhood

4. What might get in the way?

Weather, can't leave my loved one

5. How will I overcome that obstacle?

Have a backup exercise video at home or on YouTube

6. Make a plan

This week, Tuesday, 30 minute walk in the morning, if raining, YouTube exercise videos and choose one in advance

# Example 2:

1. What is something I used to like to do?

Travel to new places

2. Can I incorporate it back into my life?

No, we cannot feasibly travel right now

3. If not, can I do it differently? Be creative

Watch a travel show on a country/city and order that country's cuisine for dinner while we watch

4. What might get in the way?

Not enough time

5. How will I overcome that obstacle?

Block out one night every other week or once a month

6. Make a plan

This week, Wednesday night, we will choose a show on Greece and eat food from a Greek restaurant while we watch



# Complete and share with small group

- **Take 5 minutes to complete on your own or with your loved one**
- **Share with friends**
- **Listen and give feedback to others, help brainstorm**
- **Set an intention**
- **Check-in with that person**

1. What is something I used to like to do?

2. Can I incorporate it back into my life?

3. Do I need to do it differently? Be creative

4. What might get in the way?

5. How will I overcome that obstacle?

6. Make a plan

# Share your intention:

1. What is something I used to like to do?

2. Can I incorporate it back into my life?

3. If not, can I do it differently? Be creative

4. What might get in the way?

5. How will I overcome that obstacle?

6. Make a plan

# Following through...

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**Set an intention to practice the self-care you identified**

**Check-in with your partner or friend next week**

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# Summary

1. Relaxation

2. Coping by  
Controllability

3. Intention  
for Self-care

**Thank you!**  
**Wishing you improved**  
 **coping.**



# Questions?



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