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MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY CLINICS NEWSLETTER



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Steps to Developing Caregiver Resilience

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There is no guidebook for becoming the caregiver of a loved one. When faced with receiving challenging news related to our loved one's health, how do we move from the shock of our current situation to developing caregiver resilience for the benefit of ourselves and our loved ones? Here are a few key takeaways from recent articles on the subject:

Coutu in *How Resilience Works* suggests that searching for meaning supports our ability to be resilient in challenging situations. Moving beyond the "why me" and exploring what opportunities may be presenting themselves as a result of our current situation helps to foster fortitude to face our challenges. As an example, we may be able to raise money for research or volunteer for an organization related to the diagnosis of a loved one.

Taking time to renew yourself allows you to continue to "show up" for the demanding work of caregiving. By developing self-reflection skills, such as journaling, we can shift the way we think about our loved one's condition and foster a more resilient inner dialogue. Changing the way we think and speak to ourselves about the situation will also help provide the stamina and perseverance we need to support our loved ones and foster resiliency.

Allison's *In the Face of Change and Crisis, the Resource We Need Most is Our Resilience* suggests the following questions that encourage "action and learning in the face of loss" while helping us focus on factors that are within our control:

- What is the new reality?
- What next milestone are you working toward?
- What can you do immediately to support the people who are affected the most?

The next steps focus on what positive influence our actions might have on the future by asking:

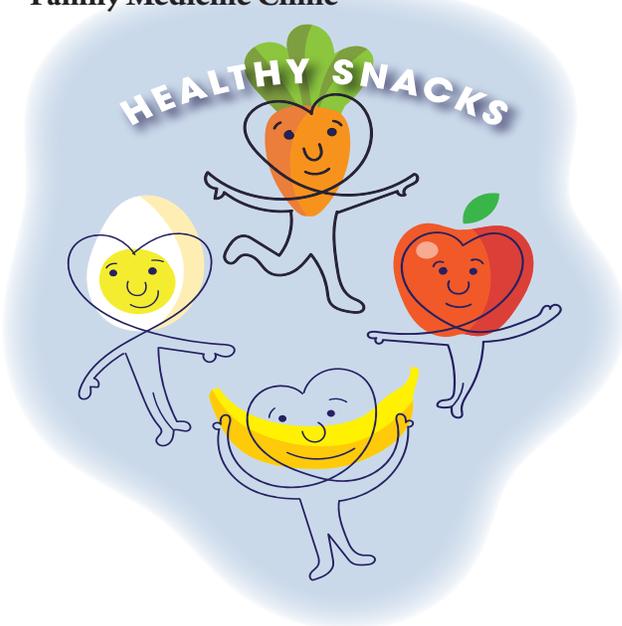
- What is your new vision?
- What do you wish to let go of that is holding you back?
- What will you celebrate?

Allison reminds us that it is essential to use words to create a positive emotional climate with your support system. Resilient caregivers manage the energy, outlook, engagement, and cohesion of their support network through their words and actions. Taking time to plan out a strategy for managing the emotional climate of your home is as important as establishing the next item on your to-do list.

Sources: Allison, E. (2011). *In the Face of Change and Crisis, the Resource We Need Most is Our Resilience*. *Educational Leadership* p. 79-82. | Coutu, D. (2002). *How Resilience Works*. *Harvard Business Review*, p. 46-55

Snacks Matter

**Susan Dibblee, PA-C, Physician Assistant,
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We live in a busy world where healthy eating isn't always a priority. However, snacks can play an important role in helping us to get the nutrients and energy we need, while also curbing urges to overeat at mealtime.

Plan a half hour each weekend for prepping and packing up your snacks so they are easy to grab and go during the week. Healthy snacks help stabilize glucose levels, but just be aware of serving sizes since some snacks, such as nuts, dried fruit, and cheese, can be calorie dense. Happy snacking!

Some easy to prep snacks that are suitable for adults and children over the age of three are:

- Peanut butter roll-ups made with sugar-free peanut butter on a whole grain tortilla
- Hardboiled egg, tuna, or cheese on thin, whole grain cracker
- Small cups of unsweetened fruit or applesauce with walnuts
- Romaine lettuce dipped in sesame oil and low sodium soy sauce
- Roasted nuts or seeds, such as pistachios, pumpkin seeds, or sunflower seeds
- Celery or carrots dipped in hummus
- Apple slices served with peanut butter
- Cut up veggies, such as broccoli, red peppers, or sugar snap peas, with a low-fat salad dressing or Greek yogurt
- Popcorn with a spray of olive oil and a sprinkle of dried spices like garlic or cumin
- High in fiber, no sugar added cereal, such as Shredded Wheat or Grape Nuts, sprinkled on Greek yogurt

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