



TAKING TIME FOR SELF-CARE



Caregivers can often overlook their own needs and wellbeing. Looking after your mental and physical fitness is not only important for your health – it also allows you to be at your best for your family and those in your care. Here are a few ways to look after yourself, especially in challenging times.

Breathwork

Intense emotional and physical responses to grief and trauma may cause rapid, shallow breathing, which takes place high in the chest. This can heighten physiological reactions of anxiety, panic and feelings of suffocation. In contrast, deep, slow, regulated breathing from the abdomen (“belly breathing”) can help calm the mind and relax the body. Working on breathing techniques can be a simple way to improve health.

Benefits of breathwork:

- Reduces blood pressure and heart rate
- Can relieve symptoms of post-traumatic stress
- Improves physical and emotional health
- Calming
- Promotes better sleep

Start now

Download a free breathing app on your phone or device. Attend a yoga class in your community that emphasizes grounding breathwork.

You can also find a variety of resources on breathwork and healing at [Healing Journey's website](#).

CONTINUED...

1



TAKING TIME FOR SELF-CARE

Group Support

Joining a network of other community members who have lived through similar life-changing events can be invaluable. A supportive group environment with others who are traveling the same path allows all feelings to be shared and released. Once feelings are acknowledged and validated by others, positive change can begin to occur.

Benefits of joining a support group:

- An ideal place to process feelings openly in a safe environment
- Emotional, social and/or spiritual support
- Camaraderie throughout the personal growth and healing journey

Getting Involved

To find a group that best supports your healing journey, here are some ideas:

- Find a local group: Connect with others in person by attending a local support group
- Virtual options: Facebook groups now have live streaming options for their communities
- Build your own: Gather others to form your own support group

Organizing Your Support

(modified from “A to Z Healing Toolbox, A Practical guide for Navigating Grief and Trauma with Intention”, by Susan Hannifin-MacNab, p.164)

Just as lives are forever altered by grief and trauma, many once-stable relationships are at least temporarily changed. Relationships with friends, family, colleagues and other community members can strengthen, weaken or be suddenly conflicted. In addition, new people may appear in your life to support, guide or mentor. By determining who can provide support, where their strengths lie and if the relationship can be supportive at all, you can benefit the healing power of those who want to help.

Benefits:

- Helps release any unrealistic expectations you may have of family, friends and colleagues
- Help others support you more effectively
- Could provide a break from people who may release negative energy

CONTINUED...

2



Here are a few examples. Choose tactics that resonate with you.

- 1) BE:** Determine who the BE-ers are in your new life and ask them to be with you. These are the people who can sit, cry, listen, hug and hold nonjudgmental space for your feelings.
- 2) DO:** Determine who the DO-ers are in your new life and ask them to do things for you. These are the people who can make meals, do chores, shuttle kids, run errands, organize events, care for pets and more.
- 3) SHELF:** Determine who the SHELF-ers are in your new life and let them know you need a break. These are the people who question you, hurry you or leave you feeling drained or depleted.

Make a list

Grab a pen and paper and write down who is in your life, and categorize them as BE-ers, DO-ers, or SHELF-ers.