

October 2024

The Empowered Caregiver



Together With You on Your Ceresti-Care Partner Journey



FEATURED ARTICLE

Understanding and Supporting Mental Health: A Guide for Caregivers

October is an important month for mental health awareness, highlighted by National Depression Screening Day on October 5. As caregivers, your role is vital, not only in the physical care of your loved one but also in supporting their mental and emotional well-being. Here's what you need to know about depression and how you can help those in your care.

Recognizing the Signs of Depression

Depression is more than just feeling sad or having a bad day. It's a serious condition that affects how a person feels, thinks, and handles daily activities. Some common signs of depression include:

- **Persistent Sadness:** Feeling sad or empty most of the time.
- **Loss of Interest:** Losing interest in hobbies or activities that were once enjoyed.
- **Changes in Appetite:** Significant weight loss or gain.

- **Sleep Issues:** Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much.
- **Fatigue:** Feeling tired all the time, even after a full night's sleep.
- **Difficulty Concentrating:** Trouble focusing, remembering, or making decisions.
- **Feelings of Worthlessness:** Harsh self-criticism or guilt.
- **Thoughts of Death or Suicide:** Thinking about or attempting suicide.

If your loved one shows any of these signs for more than two weeks, it's important to seek help from a healthcare professional. Here are some ways you can help:

- **Listen and Validate Feelings:** Encourage them to talk about their feelings and listen without judgment. Let them know it's okay to feel this way.
- **Encourage Professional Help:** Suggest they speak with a doctor or mental health professional. Offer to help them find resources or make appointments.

FEATURED ARTICLE

Continued from Page 1

- **Create a Supportive Environment:** Help create a calm, safe space. Reduce stressors and provide a structured routine.
- **Promote Healthy Habits:** Encourage physical activity, healthy eating, and regular sleep. Sometimes, small changes can have a big impact.
- **Stay Connected:** Isolation can worsen depression. Help them stay connected with friends and family, even if it's through phone calls or video chats.
- **Be Patient:** Recovery takes time. Be patient and offer consistent support, even when progress seems slow.

Taking Care of Yourself

As a caregiver, it's crucial to take care of your own mental health too. Here are some tips:

- **Know Your Limits:** It's okay to ask for help from other family members or professionals. You don't have to do everything alone.
- **Take Breaks:** Make time for yourself. Even short breaks can help you recharge.
- **Find Support:** Join a caregiver support group where you can share experiences and gain insights from others in similar situations.
- **Practice Self-Care:** Engage in activities that you enjoy and that help you relax. This might include reading, exercising, or spending time with friends.
- **Screening and Prevention**

National Depression Screening Day is a reminder of the importance of early detection. Screenings are a quick way to identify symptoms of depression and take action early.

Many organizations offer free, anonymous screenings online or in person. Taking a screening can be the first step toward getting help.

By understanding depression and how to support those who suffer from it, you play a crucial role in their journey to recovery. Your empathy, patience, and support can make a world of difference in their lives.

Remember, you are not alone, and help is available for both you and those you care for. Let's work together to create a world where mental health is prioritized and supported.

If you or your loved one need immediate help, especially if there are thoughts of self-harm:

- **Call the doctor or go to a hospital emergency room, or**
- **Call the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: 988 or 800-273-TALK (800-273-8255) or 800-799-4TTY (800-799-4889).**

In non-emergency situations, your Ceresti coach is also available for support by sending a message on your tablet.

By Marilyn Abrahamson, Brain Health Education Specialist at Ceresti Health

Ceresti's Brain Health Education Portal is provided at no cost to Ceresti Caregivers and families. Go to brainhealth.ceresti.com. If this is your first time visiting the portal, use the code **GIVECARE** when you register.

CERESTI COACH CHRONICLES

MEET EILEEN GRIFFIN



Hola! My name is Eileen Griffin, and I serve as a Bilingual Caregiver Coach with Ceresti. I am dedicated to providing support and guidance to our caregivers. With fluency in two languages, I am committed to ensuring effective communication and understanding in diverse caregiving scenarios.

I come from a mixed cultural background, being raised in Puerto Rico and having a father from Texas. I am blessed to be fluent in both Spanish and English. My educational pursuit led me to Georgia for college, where I focused on Communications and TV production.

Despite making a fashionably late entrance of three hours to our first date, my spouse and I have been together for 12 years, and we currently call Georgia home. As a mother to two incredible sons, I take pride in their accomplishments and aspirations. My youngest son and his wife are eagerly anticipating the arrival of their first child while simultaneously pursuing his aspirations of becoming a commercial airline pilot. Meanwhile, my oldest son is thriving in his role as a lead inventory specialist at Delta Air Lines and is on the path to owning his first home.

Beyond my family life, I have consistently displayed a dedication to working with and supporting our senior community and advocating for animal welfare. I have previously served as a foster parent for the Henry County Humane Society and currently oversee a household full of Goldendoodles. My experiences have taught me the value of compassion, resilience, and dedication throughout challenging times. As an only child, I assumed the role of caregiver from a young age, caring for my father until his passing and subsequently caring for my mother, who had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's during my tenure as a flight attendant for Delta Air Lines. Following her diagnosis, I resigned from my position to provide care for her until her passing in 2016.

Professionally, my experience includes over 2 years working as a Physical Therapy Aide in three nursing facilities, over five years as a case manager with Henry County Senior Services, as well as five years in a dual role as a case manager and marketer with Visiting Angels. While at Visiting Angels I had the privilege of getting certified as a coach through the PAC Teepa Snow training.

In recognition of the values instilled by my parents, I have been driven to work for an organization dedicated to serving seniors where I can use my professional and personal experiences as a caregiver to assist and support others. It is with great honor and privilege that I accept the role of *Bilingual Caregiver Coach* at Ceresti Health.

I am eagerly anticipating the opportunity to make meaningful contributions to this exemplary team and to function as a valuable asset to the organization. I look forward to working with each and every one of you!

The Benefits of the 5-Finger Breathing Brain Break

Caregiving can be incredibly rewarding, but it can also bring a lot of stress and anxiety. Incorporating mindful breathing exercises into your routine can provide a simple yet effective way to manage these feelings. One such technique is the 5-Finger Breathing Brain Break. This exercise helps ground you in the present moment, promoting relaxation and reducing anxiety.

How to Do the 5-Finger Breathing Brain Break

- 1. Find a Comfortable Position:** Sit or stand in a comfortable position. Rest your hand, palm facing up, on a flat surface.
- 2. Trace Your Fingers:** Use the index finger of your opposite hand to slowly trace the outline of your other hand. (You may also use the graphic provided.)
- 3. Inhale and Exhale:** As you trace up the outside of your thumb, breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose. Pause briefly at the top.
- 4. Exhale and Relax:** As you trace down the inside of your thumb, breathe out slowly through your mouth. Feel the release of tension.
- 5. Continue Tracing:** Repeat this process for each finger, inhaling as you trace up and exhaling as you trace down.
- 6. Complete the Circuit:** Once you've traced all five fingers, you can repeat the exercise if needed.

This simple yet powerful technique can be done anywhere, anytime, providing a quick and effective way to manage stress and anxiety. Taking just a few minutes for this mindful practice can help caregivers stay centered and calm, ready to face the challenges of their important role.

