Resilience Guidebook
A Courage to Caregivers Guide to Telling Your Story
Welcome—we’re glad you’ve found Courage to Caregivers!

It takes a tremendous amount of courage just to take that first step—acknowledging that this journey of being a caregiver to someone you love can be hard, and recognizing you don’t want to take this journey alone. At Courage to Caregivers, we are ALL caregivers, and we’re glad to partner with you on this journey.

Courage to Caregivers offers three programs - all virtual due to the pandemic: One-to-One Caregiver Peer Support, Support Groups and Breathing Meditation classes. Our programs are based on a curriculum that is organized into 12 monthly themes with weekly topics within each theme—all focused on building resilience as a caregiver.
This compact journal provides affirmations, inspirational quotes, breathing techniques, and journal prompts that can be used as a companion to our programming or it can be used as a stand-alone tool. Additional resources can be found on our website. You can access our website via the QR code.

I welcome you to reach out to connect with me at any time—via email or text or call. Know that you are never alone!

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Why set goals?

Goal setting is a way to gently challenge yourself to make small or big changes in your life. These goals can be to change a behavior you find problematic, to grow personally, or simply to make your caregiving less stressful. The goals should also be specific or detailed to help you be more likely to achieve them. Simply put: goals should be SMART:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Timely

On the last week of each month we will summarize the month’s topic and explore more ideas...and most importantly don’t forget to celebrate your success!
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Why is breath work important?

Simple breathing practices are an effective, available, and free way to manage our stresses. Whenever you decide to practice, be intentional about it. Take the time to come to a comfortable position. And allow yourself a few minutes to relax and tune in to the breath.

Under stress, most of us breathe shallow, rapid, and through the mouth. This type of breathing contributes to all kinds of health issues from increased anxiety to high blood pressure. Learning to regulate the breath is a path to self-regulation.
Principles of healthy breathing for the practices listed below:

- Nasal breathing (breathing in and out through the nose) except where noted otherwise.
  - Nasal breathing filters and warms the air
  - Can impact hormone levels in the body
  - Can lower blood pressure
  - Influences heart rate
- “Slow and Low” - slow, effortless breaths, into the lower lobes of the lungs.
- Belly subtly expands with the inhale, Belly subtly draws in with the exhale.
- Regulating the breath can help us to regulate the body / mind system. For example: lengthening the exhale activates the body’s relaxation response.
Breathing Practices Glossary

Alternate Nostril Breathing:
Option 1: Take a cleansing breath. Close the left nostril and just breathe in and out through the right for 5-10 rounds. Notice. Close the right nostril and just breathe in and out through the left for 5-10 rounds. Notice. Option 2: Take a cleansing breath. Close the right nostril, breathe in through the left; close the left nostril, breathe out through the right - breathe in right, close the right and breathe out left. That's one round. Continue for 5-10 more rounds. Notice and be curious about the impact this practice has on you body, mind, and emotions.

Bellows Breath:
Option 1: Take a full in-breath, followed by an active out-breath (drawing navel toward spine) repeat.
Option 2: “Reach for the Sun”/Bellows
What are affirmations?
Why do we use them?

Affirmations are positive, present tense statements that plant seeds in our awareness. We all have negative self-talk that happens in our mind. An affirmation is a way of interrupting the negative self, and planting the seed for another perspective. Repeated over and over in mantra-like fashion so that thoughts may take hold and begin to shift our inner state...from fear to trust, from resentment to acceptance, from weakness or victim to strength and courage! Enjoy our suggested affirmations, but feel free to receive them as inspiration to formulate your own.
DREAM BIG

PERSONAL TIMELINE

When I look back I realize how successful I have been in figuring out my most challenging times.

GOALS FOR THIS WEEK:

In what small way can I grow for the future?

BREATHING TECHNIQUE:

Breath Awareness: Invite curiosity and observe the subtleties of the breath for 2-5 minutes.

MICRO SELF-CARE:

Eat something nourishing.

"What you think, you become. What you feel, you attract. What you imagine, you create.
- Buddha"
DREAM BIG
PERSONAL TIMELINE
Write about an event that occurred. What did I learn from that event? How can I reframe my thinking from that event happening to me to that event happening for me?

DATE:
PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT
WHO ARE YOU?

My values are like a compass, guiding my path. Aligned with my values, my life has a quality of ease and flow.

BREATHEING TECHNIQUE:
Belly Breathing: Observe the breath for 2-5 minutes and begin to invite the breath to slow down. Breathe in as the belly moves out/expands, and breathe out as the belly draws-in/contracts.

MICRO SELF-CARE:
Intentionally enjoy a natural aroma, like a fresh cut fruit or burn a natural candle for no other reason than it smells nice.

The one thing that you have that nobody else has is you. Your voice, your story, your vision. So write and draw and build and play and dance and live as only you can.
- Neil Gaiman

How do I see myself being excited to write my story/future?
DREAM BIG
PERSONAL MISSION
STATEMENT – WHO ARE YOU?

What does a good day look like for me? What emotions do I feel? What actions do I take?
DREAM BIG

WHAT BRINGS YOU JOY?

In the garden that is my life I cultivate JOY.

GOALS FOR THIS WEEK:

How can I incorporate more micro-joys into my life?

BREATHING TECHNIQUE:

3-5 rounds of Breath of Joy.
Repeat as needed.

MICRO SELF-CARE:

Make a proper pot of tea or coffee and take your time while making it.

“Joy is a decision, a really brave one, about how you are going to respond to life.
- Wess Stafford
DREAM BIG

WHAT BRINGS YOU JOY?

When did I feel most alive? What was happening?
Who/what was I surrounded by? How can I
cultivate a similar feeling in my day-to-day life?

DATE:
# DREAM BIG

## RECAP WEEK

### GOALS FOR THIS WEEK:

How can I continue what I learned this month into February?

### AFFIRMATION:

When I reflect on my life I see that I am resilient, strong, and creative.

### BREATHING TECHNIQUE:

Breath Awareness, Belly Breathing, Breath of Joy. Set a timer for 3 minutes and take a little bit of time with each of this month's breathing practices.

### MICRO SELF-CARE:

Put on your favorite song from a few years ago and have a mini dance party!

“Loving ourselves through the process of owning our story is the bravest thing we will ever do.

- Brené Brown
DREAM BIG
RECAP WEEK

If you had a day all to yourself, what would you do?
Would you wake up early or sleep in? Stay in or go out?
SELF DISCOVERY
STRENGTHS BECOME OPPORTUNITIES

GOALS FOR THIS WEEK:
How can I better apply my strengths to my life right now?

AFFIRMATION:
I discover my unique strengths and they reveal my resilience.

BREATHING TECHNIQUE:
Ocean Breath: Picture yourself by the ocean and imagine breathing with the waves on a calm clear day, matching your in-breath with the waves rolling in and out-breath with the waves moving back out to sea.

MICRO SELF-CARE:
Put lotion or essential oils on your hands.

“The struggle you're in today is developing the strength you need for tomorrow.”
- Robert Tew