

Caregiver Wellness Toolkit



Are you a caring for a loved one?

Are you feeling stressed or overwhelmed?

Are you worried you're not taking care of yourself?

You are not alone!

Nearly 4 in 10 Americans now have a caregiving role. They may take a loved one to medical appointments, run errands, help with their finances, or provide daily support. Unfortunately, caregivers often worry about their own health and wellness last.

Caregivers face a higher rate of depression, anxiety, and chronic medical conditions than non-caregivers. Incorporating self-care techniques into a daily routine is a must to help caregivers stay health – physically, mentally and emotionally.

This toolkit will give resources to manage the challenges of providing care and how to better take care of yourself. It's important to find the right self-care tools for you, so we hope you will try a few new things!



"Rest and self-care are so important. When you take time to replenish your spirit, it allows you to serve others from the overflow. You cannot serve from an empty vessel." - Eleanor Brownn

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FACT SHEET

Caregiving 101: On Being a Caregiver

Caregiving often creeps up on you. You start by dropping by your mom's house and doing her laundry, or taking your dad to a doctor's appointment. You find yourself doing the grocery shopping and refilling prescriptions. Gradually, you are doing more and more. At some point, you realize you have made a commitment to take care of someone else.

Sometimes, caregiving is triggered by a major health event, such as a stroke, heart attack, or accident. Maybe you suddenly realize that dad's memory lapses have become dangerous. Life as you know it stops, and all your energy goes to caring for your loved one. Caregiving has become your new career, and you adjust to a new normal.

The Caregiver Role

Caregivers can be spouses, partners, adult children, parents, other relatives (siblings, aunts, nieces/nephews, in-laws, grandchildren), friends, neighbors. Whatever your relationship with the person you're caring for, it's important that you add the title **caregiver** to the list of things you are. Without identifying yourself as a caregiver, you won't know to search for resources that can help you navigate this new role.

But caregivers play other roles as well. You may be employed full or part-time. You may be raising children, or be a volunteer, a spouse, have other family commitments. Adding caregiving to that list can easily lead to frustration and exhaustion. You might need to navigate social service systems, call doctors while you're at work, advocate for the care receiver, and take care of their day-to-day needs, while you try to do all of those same things for yourself and your family.

You are rarely trained to do the broad range of tasks you are asked to do as a caregiver. As a result, you may end up, for example, with back strain because you haven't had the benefit of training from a physical therapist on how to correctly transfer someone from bed to chair, or wheelchair to car. Or you find yourself battling with your mother who has Alzheimer's because you have not learned the skills necessary to communicate with someone with a cognitive impairment.

Here are some of the common tasks caregivers do:

- Buy groceries, cook, clean house, do laundry, provide transportation
- Help the care receiver get dressed, take a shower, take medicine
- Transfer someone out of bed/chair, help with physical therapy, perform medical interventions—injections, feeding tubes, wound treatment, breathing treatments
- Arrange medical appointments, drive to the doctor, sit in during appointments, monitor medications
- Talk with doctors, nurses, care managers, and others to understand what needs to be done
- Spend time handling crises and arranging for assistance—especially for someone who cannot be left alone
- Handle finances and other legal matters
- Be a companion
- Be a (usually) unpaid aide, on call 24/7

What are all the things you do? Try making a list, both for your own clarification and for other family members who may not be aware of your efforts.

First Steps for New Caregivers

- It's easy to become overwhelmed as a new caregiver. Here are some steps that can help:
- Identify yourself as a caregiver
- Get a good diagnosis—from a specialist or geriatrician if necessary—of your loved one's health condition
- Learn what specific skills you might need to care for someone with this diagnosis (Caring for someone with Frontotemporal dementia, for example, is different from caring for someone with chronic heart disease)
- Talk about finances and healthcare wishes
- Complete legal paperwork, e.g., Powers of Attorney, Advance Directives
- Bring family and friends together to discuss care
- Keep them up to date on the current situation
- Identify resources, both personal and in the community
- Find support for yourself and your loved one
- Remember, you are not alone

Keys to Caring for Yourself

It's one thing to gear up for a short-term crisis. But it takes different skills to provide care over a longer period of time. You'll be more successful if you learn to take care of yourself, starting immediately. Some things to remember:

- You cannot be perfect
- You have a right to all of your emotions (See FCA Fact Sheet [Emotional Side of Caregiving](#).)
- Depression is the most common emotion of long-term caregivers
- Set realistic expectations—for yourself and your loved one
- Learn about the disease and what you can expect
- Learn the skills you need to care for the care receiver and which ones you are or are not able to perform
- Learn to say “no” to things you cannot do
- Learn to accept help from others
- Build resilience
- Identify your button-pushers/stressors
- Identify your coping skills
- Remember the big three for successful coping:
Eat right—good nutrition as opposed to stress-snacking. Limit alcohol and other drugs
Exercise—it may be hard to find time but it's

the best cure for depression and increases your endorphins (“good” coping hormones)

Sleep—7-8 hours is hard to get, but essential.

Admit when you are experiencing burnout and get help

Most importantly, remember that taking care of yourself is as important as taking care of someone else.

The ‘IRS of Caregiving’: Information, Respite, and Support

INFORMATION

The first stages of caregiving are the most challenging. This is when you are least informed about what's needed and expected, and when you feel the most insecure and uncertain.

- In addition to information about the disease/disability your loved one is dealing with, you need to understand his or her medications and medical interventions. (See FCA Fact Sheet [Caregivers Guide to Medications and Aging](#).)
- What knowledge/skills will you need to be able to care for him or her? Where can you get trained to do the tasks required? How can you learn to successfully:
 - Feed, bathe, groom, or dress someone?
 - Handle toileting or deal with incontinence?
 - Handle a complicated medication schedule?
 - Transfer someone or help them walk?
- How does this disease progress and how will that effect the care receiver's ability to take care of him or herself?
- What are the care needs now and what are they likely to be in the future?
- What are the physical limitations that the care receiver has now or will have?
- What are the cognitive changes you can expect?
 - Are there predictable behavioral changes that go along with them?
 - How do I handle these changes?
 - If you are caring for someone with dementia, for instance, you need to learn the strategies for communication that will make you more successful and increase cooperation.
- What is the financial situation? (See FCA Fact

Sheet [What Every Caregiver Needs to Know About Money.](#))

- How much money is available to help with care?
- Who can access it (is there a Financial Power of Attorney in place)?
- Are there debts or other constraints on using the money?
- What legal matters should you know about? (See FCA Tip Sheets [Legal Planning for Incapacity](#) and [Where to Find My Important Papers.](#))
 - Is there a Will? A Trust?
 - Has the Medical Power of Attorney been completed (also called Living Will)? (See FCA Tip Sheet, [Advanced Health Care Directives and POLST.](#))
 - Do you have a Release of Information signed and filed with the care receiver's doctor(s)?

You might not be aware of community caregiving resources, but they are there to help you. You can find help in most communities for transportation, home delivered meals, day care programs, home repairs, and more. To learn about them, contact your local Area Agency on Aging (AAA) and find out what's available locally—not only for your loved one, but also for yourself. (In many communities, AAAs can be reached by dialing 211). There may be benefits that you haven't thought about—ask about Title III funding, part of the Older Americans Act specifically for caregivers. There may be Veterans benefits. Other benefits can be found at [Eldercare Locator](#), or FCA's [Family Care Navigator](#).

RESPIRE

Caregiving is often a 24/7 job, and everyone needs a break sometimes. Getting away can give you perspective and remind you that there's a world outside. Taking a respite break from caregiving can give you a chance to connect with others, share, laugh, catch up, renew. But it can also be a time for just doing things that are relaxing for you, such as reading a book without interruption, taking a nap, or going for a walk. This break is a necessary step in taking care of yourself so that you can care for someone else.

Respite can take many forms, from going away on a mini-vacation, to having someone in your home for a few hours so you can run errands or get to the

doctor yourself. A local adult day care program may offer enough hours of care—including transportation—so that you can go to work or attend to your other needs and interests. Some residential facilities also offer temporary respite. There may be funds available through your Area Agency on Aging as well as organizations in your community that can help you to get the break you need (also available through the Veteran's Administration for those eligible). Faith communities, disease-specific organizations and your network of friends might be able to help.

At first, it may not feel easy to take a respite break. First, there is our own internal reluctance to leave a loved one, particularly if he or she feels abandoned if you leave. Or there is the fear that something will happen while you're away and only you know how to care for him or her correctly. You might feel guilty and not be sure you have the right to have a good time if your loved one is suffering. You may be concerned about the cost. But remember, you must care for yourself, too.

SUPPORT

You can't do it alone! And, like respite, getting support for your caregiving situation will help you take better care of yourself. The longer you are a caregiver, the more isolated you can become. How many times can you say, "I can't get together with you" before people stop calling? But this lack of social interaction will lead to poorer health for you. One reason caregivers don't get the help they need is that taking care of yourself feels like just "one more thing you have to do."

But we all need someone to talk to. Special caregiver support groups in your community or online can help to reduce the feeling that you're all alone and help you learn coping skills from others who are in similar situations. (See FCA Fact Sheet [Taking Care of YOU: Self-Care for Family Caregivers.](#))

Adding stress to an already difficult situation, caregiving can also create family discord, particularly if you feel you're not getting the help and support you need from members of your own family. Resentment can build on all sides. If you are dealing with family conflict, it might help to have

a meeting. (See FCA Fact Sheets [Holding a Family Meeting](#) and [Caregiving with Your Siblings](#).)

Asking for Help

Most of us find it hard to ask for help. About 50% of caregivers get no outside help at all. When someone asks if there's anything they can do to help, most of us usually say, "Oh no, that's OK, we're doing fine." When you're a caregiver, it can be even harder. Whom can you call and what can you ask them to do? Learning to accept help early in your transition to being a caregiver will make it easier down the road.

Little things on a regular basis can mean a lot. Maybe someone would bring an occasional meal or dessert. Having someone help with household chores can be an opportunity to socialize as well as get things done. Maybe someone can just come and sit with your loved one so you can run to the grocery store. Make a list of things that you need help with. Post it on the refrigerator. If someone asks to help, show them the list and let them pick something they'd like to do. That way they're more likely to enjoy the task. If you know a friend enjoys cooking but dislikes driving, your chances of getting help improve if you ask for help with meal prep instead of a ride to an appointment.

Taking Care of YOU

Caregiving has many challenges and also many rewards. But you need to honor your own needs as well as commit to caring for someone else. That's the only way you will be able to sustain your patience and your caring and be successful over time. There are many things to learn and most caregivers are just "making it up" as they go along. Getting information and training will help you

feel confident about the many tasks you perform. Information is available online, at disease-specific websites, at [Family Caregiver Alliance](#), through your medical providers, Area Agencies on Aging, some employee assistance programs, support groups, senior centers, and your community. Start with saying "I am a caregiver and I need help."

Resources

Family Caregiver Alliance

National Center on Caregiving

(415) 434-3388 | (800) 445-8106

Website: www.caregiver.org

E-mail: info@caregiver.org

Family Care Navigator: www.caregiver.org/family-care-navigator

FCA Fact Sheets: www.caregiver.org/fact-sheets

Family Caregiver Alliance (FCA) seeks to improve the quality of life for caregivers through education, services, research, and advocacy.

Through its National Center on Caregiving, FCA offers information on current social, public policy, and caregiving issues and provides assistance in the development of public and private programs for caregivers.

For residents of the greater San Francisco Bay Area, FCA provides direct support services for caregivers of those with Alzheimer's disease, stroke, traumatic brain injury, Parkinson's, and other debilitating health conditions that strike adults.

ElderCare Locator

A public service of the Administration on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, www.eldercare.gov.

This fact sheet was prepared by Donna Schempp, LCSW, and reviewed by Family Caregiver Alliance. Funded by the California Department of Health Care Services. © 2016 Family Caregiver Alliance. All rights reserved.



Toll Free: 800.445.8106 | Office: 415.434.3388

Fax: 415.434.3508 | Email: info@caregiver.org

Website: www.caregiver.org

CAREGIVERS: WHO THEY ARE

Prevalence

39.8 MILLION
ARE CAREGIVERS

6 IN 10
ARE EMPLOYED



Compensation



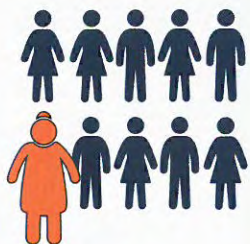
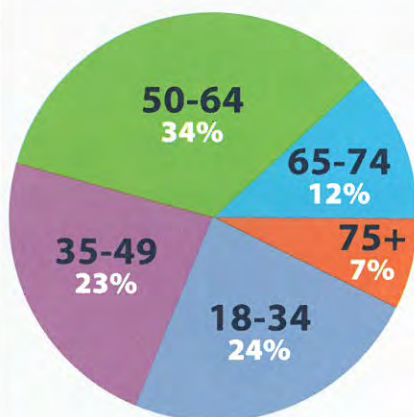
90% of all caregivers
who provide long-term services
and supports are **UNPAID**

Gender



60% FEMALE 40% MALE

Age



1 in 10
Caregivers
are 75 or
Older

CAREGIVERS: WHAT & WHERE

Where Care Recipients Live



48%
his/her home



35%
caregiver
home



11%
nursing facility,
assisted living,
retirement community



6%
someone
else's
home

Hours of Caregiving



24.4
HOURS
AVERAGE
PER WEEK

Caregiver Tasks



57% assist with medical/nursing tasks



78% who provide medical/nursing
tasks are managing medications,
and administering IVs, injections,
and medications



42% perform medical/nursing tasks
without any training

CAREGIVERS: THE STRESSORS

Emotional



**55% FEEL
OVERWHELMED**
BY THE AMOUNT OF CARE
FAMILY MEMBERS NEED

Health

1 IN 5  
**REPORT PHYSICAL STRAIN
DUE TO CAREGIVING DUTIES**

Financial



FAMILY CAREGIVERS ARE
2.5 TIMES MORE LIKELY
TO LIVE IN POVERTY

1 IN 5  
**RETIREEES LEFT WORKFORCE
EARLY TO CARE FOR FAMILY**

\$303,880 
LOST INCOME and BENEFITS
ON AVERAGE OVER LIFETIME
FOR FAMILY CAREGIVERS 50+

CAREGIVERS: LIMITED SUPPORT

Services for Caregivers

The National Family Caregiver Support Program*



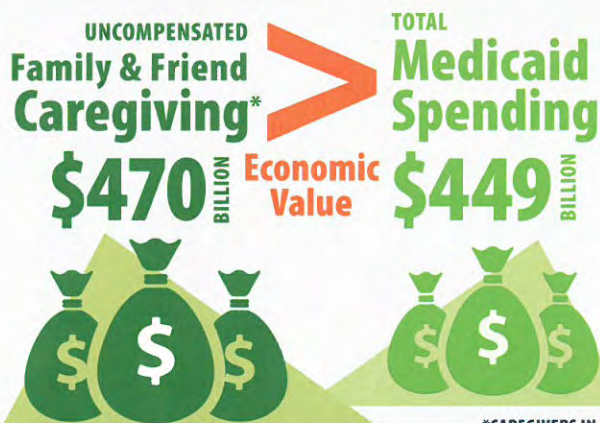
*CAREGIVERS SERVED IN 2013

Services Unable to Meet Demand

8 OUT OF 10 COULD USE MORE
INFORMATION
AND SUPPORT



The Growing Value of Caregiving



*CAREGIVERS IN 2013

Colorado Respite Coalition



Respite for you = better care for your loved one

The Colorado Respite Coalition (CRC) is an allied group of families and community partners who joined together to strengthen and preserve Colorado families who are caring for individuals with special needs. CRC works to improve the lives of Colorado families by supporting current respite care options and facilitating the development of new, safe and accessible respite care choices. CRC strives to expand respite services in the state of Colorado for people of all ages across the disability spectrum.

TRAINING & EDUCATION

Online training modules for family caregivers are available, along with training program presentations for professionals. Contact the CRC if you are interested in hosting a training.

FAMILY RESPITE VOUCHERS

Vouchers are a resource for family caregivers who have limited access to respite care and other supports. As a Payer of Last Resorts, this program provides funding for full-time family caregivers seeking respite.

ONLINE RESPITE LOCATOR

There are more than 500 registered respite providers for family caregivers to explore on the online Respite Locator. Respite providers are encouraged to register with their information.

COMMUNITY GRANTS

Competitive grants are awarded to qualified for profit, nonprofit or governmental entities currently providing respite services in an effort to respond to the needs of Colorado's family caregivers.

**Join the Colorado
Respite Coalition Today**

RESOURCES

Caregiving and Respite Care

Colorado Respite Coalition – www.coloradorespitecoalition.org

Local Area Agency on Aging or Aging and Disability Resources for Colorado – 1-844-COL-ADRC

Network of Care – www.networkofcare.org

AARP Colorado - <http://states.aarp.org/region/colorado/>

National Alliance for Caregiving - <http://www.caregiving.org/resources/>

Veterans Affairs - <http://www.caregiver.va.gov/>

Colorado Crisis Services – www.coloradocrisiservices.org or 1-844-493-TALK

ARCH respite network - <http://archrespite.org/>

Condition-specific groups, i.e.:

- Alzheimer’s Association - <http://www.alz.org/co/>

- Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado - <http://biacolorado.org/>

- Autism Society of Colorado - <http://autismcolorado.info/>

Daily Strength – www.dailystrength.org

Caregiver Action Network, Patient File Checklist - <http://caregiveraction.org/patient-file-checklist>

Five Wishes – Long-term planning - <https://agingwithdignity.org/>

A Caregiver’s Bill of Rights - <https://www.caregiver.org/caregiver%e2%80%99s-bill-rights>

Wellness

Eating Well - <http://www.eatingwell.com/> - online recipes and eating tips

All You – www.allyou.com – home exercise routines

Wellness Resources - http://www.wellnessresources.com/health_topics.php

Tips for Healthy Living - http://www.medicinenet.com/healthy_living/article.htm

Live Happy - <http://www.livehappy.com/>

Everyday Health - <http://www.everydayhealth.com/lifestyle/healthy-living/>

Stress Management - <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/basics/stress-basics/hlv-20049495>

The Huffington Post - <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/news/wellness-tips/>

Whole Living - <http://www.wholeliving.com/>

Relaxation Techniques - <http://www.webmd.com/balance/guide/blissing-out-10-relaxation-techniques-reduce-stress-spot>

Mindfulness Based Stress-Reduction - <http://www.mindfullivingprograms.com/whatMBSR.php>

Healthy Living - <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyliving/>

Caregiver Self-Assessment Questionnaire

How are YOU?

Caregivers are often so concerned with caring for the relative's needs that they lose sight of their own well-being. Please take just a moment to answer the following questions. Once you have answered the questions, turn the page to do a self-evaluation.

During the past week or so, I have ...

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| 1. Had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing.... | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 13. Had back pain..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2. Felt that I couldn't leave my relative alone..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 14. Felt ill (headaches, stomach problems or common cold)..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 3. Had difficulty making decisions..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 15. Been satisfied with the support my family has given me..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 4. Felt completely overwhelmed..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 16. Found my relative's living situation to be inconvenient or a barrier to care..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 5. Felt useful and needed | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 17. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being "not stressful" to 10 being "extremely stressful," please rate your current level of stress. | _____ |
| 6. Felt lonely..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 18. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being "very healthy" to 10 being "very ill," please rate your current health compared to what it was this time last year. | _____ |
| 7. Been upset that my relative has changed so much from his/her former self..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | Comments:
(Please feel free to comment or provide feedback.)

_____ | |
| 8. Felt a loss of privacy and/or personal time..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | | |
| 9. Been edgy or irritable..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | | |
| 10. Had sleep disturbed because of caring for my relative..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | | |
| 11. Had a crying spell(s)..... | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | | |
| 12. Felt strained between work and family responsibilities... | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | | |

To determine the score:

- ### To interpret the score

- If you answered “Yes” to either or both questions 4 and 11
- If your total “Yes” scores = 10 or more
- If your score on question 17 is 6 or higher
- If your score on question 18 is 6 or higher

- Consider seeing a doctor for a check-up for yourself
- Consider having some relief from caregiving
(Discuss with your healthcare provider or a social worker the resources available in your community.)
- Consider joining a support group

HealthinAging.org
(800) 563-4916
www.healthinaging.org

Eldercare Locator
(a national directory of community services)
(800) 677-1116
www.eldercare.gov

Family Caregiver Alliance
(800) 445-8106
www.caregiver.org

Medicare Hotline
(800) 633-4227
www.medicare.gov

National Alliance for Caregiving
(301) 718-8444
www.caregiving.org

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13

WHAT IS THE IMPACT ON DAILY WORK LIFE?

Have you ever...

Come into work late or left early due to your own or a family member's health challenges?

Often / Sometimes / Never

Left a meeting to answer an urgent personal call?

Often / Sometimes / Never

Found yourself worrying about your home life while at work?

Often / Sometimes / Never

Passed up a promotion or job opportunity because of your own or a family member's health challenges?

Often / Sometimes / Never

Worried about your job security because of your own or a family member's health challenges?

Often / Sometimes / Never

Wanted to ask for help or support from your manager or coworkers but felt nervous or afraid?

Often / Sometimes / Never



WELLNESS CHECK

Do you often....

Feel like you have to do it all yourself, but wish you could do more?	Yes/No
Not attend activities and social outings that you used to enjoy?	Yes/No
Worry about financial or health care concerns?	Yes/No
Worry about your loved one(s) when you're away from home?	Yes/No
Feel like you don't have time for exercise or preparing healthy meals?	Yes/No
Toss and turn throughout the night while trying to sleep?	Yes/No
Feel overwhelmed, depressed or anxious?	Yes/No
Feel like you can't unwind or relax?	Yes/No
Worry you should be taking better care of yourself?	Yes/No

If you answered "Yes" three or more times, you're likely experiencing stress and your own health may be at risk. How can you help yourself? Talk to your doctor to develop a plan for healthy living. If you are a family caregiver, please visit www.coloradorespitecoalition.org to find resources and care supports.



MY CRISIS PLAN WORKSHEET

This worksheet is designed to help you identify early warning signs of crisis and plan ways to prevent a crisis from occurring. You can write your answers right on this worksheet, but if there isn't enough room, you can record this information in the journal found in this kit.

PERSONAL WELLNESS – Being able to notice the differences between good times and bad times can help you identify when you need to take care of yourself and ask for more support. Think about how you feel and the things you do when you are feeling well.

When I am well, I...

Now think about how you feel and the things you do when you're not feeling well.

When I am not well, I...

EARLY WARNING SIGNS – Being self-aware can help you identify early signs that there is a change in your mental health. Examples of early warning signs may include being over-tired, having a hard time getting out of bed, feeling agitated, missing deadlines or being late, and feeling sad, but not knowing why. What are your early warning signs?

I know I am not doing well when...

ACTIVITIES – Finding activities that help you take control or focus your thoughts can be helpful in keeping your symptoms from getting worse. Examples of helpful activities may include calling a friend, eating a piece of fruit, petting the cat, breathing deeply, practicing yoga, or going for a walk.

These activities make me feel more in control and can help me prevent a crisis:

continue to other side >

SUPPORT SYSTEM – If you know you are at risk of entering a mental health crisis, calling someone from your support system will help. These are the people who know you have a mental illness and who know what is helpful for you.

These are people I trust and I know I can call when I need support:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Phone Number</i>	<i>Best Time to Call</i>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

These are my doctors and therapists who can also help me:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Phone Number</i>	<i>Office Hours</i>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

When I can't reach anyone, I can call the crisis line at **1-800-273-TALK**.

30 things you can do in small periods of time to care for yourself

Pick three things to do a day or in a week. Mix them up and have fun with your day's activities.

15 Minute Time Out

- Write in a journal
- Using a small jar and small pieces of paper, write down one thing you are thankful for each day and add it to the jar
- Read literature (1 chapter) that is unrelated to work or education
- Meditate or pray
- Turn the radio up and sing along with your favorite song
- Stretch; take time to stretch all your muscles; relaxation exercises, by systematically relaxing each part of your body, while focusing on a place of peace and renewal for you (i.e. the beach, the mountains, your garden)
- Have a piece of chocolate and watch funny animal videos on YouTube
- Laugh out loud
- Call a friend
- When you make an appointment for the person you are caregiving for, make the same type of appointment for yourself, i.e. doctor, dentist, hair, manicure, or pedicure

"Impossible situations can become possible miracles"

Robert H Schuller

30 Minute Time Out

- Take a walk in your favorite park
- Eat a full balanced meal
- Take a hot bath
- Take a nap
- Work in the garden
- Watch a funny TV show; laughter is great medicine
- Color or create something
- Write a loving letter to yourself and read it when you are feeling upset
- Make a cup of tea and enjoy it quietly
- Call and chat with a friend for the whole 30 minutes

"Life's challenges are not supposed to paralyze you; they're supposed to help you discover who you are"

Bernice Johnson Reagan

60 Minute Time Out

- Go to a park or local garden and sit and relax
- Watch your favorite TV show or funny videos
- Go to the gym or take a fitness class
- Cook your favorite recipe
- Meet a friend for lunch
- Attend a support group
- Go shopping
- Listen to your favorite music for a whole hour
- Take a yoga class - try laughter yoga
- Get a massage

"One person caring about another represents life's greatest value"

Jim Rohn

A Day of Self Care

- Go to the museum with a friend
- Visit the Botanic Gardens (Denver or Chatfield)
- Take a drive to the mountains

"Some days there won't be a song in your heart. Sing anyway"

Emory Austin



<p>Sip Green Tea Instead of turning purple with rage, get green with a cup of herbal tea. Green tea is a source of L-Theanine, a chemical that helps relieve anger. Boil the water, pour it out, and take a soothing sip.</p>	<p>Meditate No need to go on a retreat to the mountains—five minutes of peace is all it takes to reap the benefits of meditation. There's evidence that just two quick bouts of silent meditation per day can relieve stress and depression. Find a comfortable spot in a quiet place, concentrate on your breath, and feel those anxieties start to disappear.</p>
<p>Nosh on Chocolate Just a square (about 1.4 ounces) of the sweet stuff can calm your nerves. Dark chocolate regulates levels of the stress hormone cortisol and stabilizes metabolism.</p>	<p>Lay Your Head on a Cushion or Pillow There are days when all we really need is a nice, long nap. But it's not always possible to start snoring in the middle of the office. If you've got a pillow, you're already on the road to relaxation. Try this visualization technique: Lay your head down for a few minutes and imagine the pillow is a sponge sucking up all your worries.</p>
<p>Slurp Some Honey Replace stress with sweetness and try a spoonful of honey. Besides being a natural skin moisturizer and antibiotic, honey also provides compounds that reduce inflammation in the brain, meaning it fights depression and anxiety.</p>	<p>Remember to Breathe Is there any simpler way to relax? Slow, deep breaths can help lower blood pressure and heart rate. For the fancy noses out there, try pranayama breathing, a yogic method that involves breathing through one nostril at a time to relieve anxiety. The technique's supposed to work the same way as acupuncture, balancing the mind and body (and possibly eliminating the need for a tissue).</p>
<p>Bite Into a Mango Take a tropical vacation without leaving the desk chair. Use a five-minute break to peel, slice, and bite into a juicy mango, which packs a compound called linalool that helps lower stress levels. Don't fret about the juice dripping down your chin—the stress relief is worth the mess.</p>	<p>Try Progressive Relaxation Anxious? Just squeeze, release, and repeat. Progressive relaxation involves tensing the muscles in one body part at a time to achieve a state of calm. The method (also used by actors) is a great way to help fall asleep.</p>
<p>Chew Gum Minty, fruity, or bubble-gum flavor, a stick of gum is a surprisingly quick and easy way to beat stress. Just a few minutes of chewing can actually reduce anxiety and lower cortisol levels.</p>	<p>Count Backward Nope, it's not an IQ test, but it is a way to relax. When worries are running rampant, try slowly counting to 10 and then back again to calm down. It's harder to freak about an upcoming date or job interview when you're busy remembering what number comes before seven. (Hey, kindergarten was a long time ago.)</p>

Sniff Citrus Orange you glad you're not stressed? The smell of citrus can help us relax by increasing levels of the stress-related hormone norepinephrine.	Squeeze a Stress Ball On days when you want to strangle a coworker, your BFF, or the driver in the next lane, squeeze a stress ball instead. It's an easy, portable, and non-violent way to relieve tension.
Use Creative Visualization The doorbell rings. It's Ryan Gosling (or Elizabeth Banks), and he/she wants to know if you'll marry him/her. "Yes!" you shout and then—sorry, time's up. These little daydreams, also known as "creative visualization," involve thinking of something that makes us feel happy. It's an instant mood boost on hectic days when we're feeling tense.	Drip Cold Water On Your Wrists Pass on the perfume and go with water. When stress hits, head for the bathroom and drop some cold water on your wrists and behind your earlobes. There are major arteries right underneath the skin, so cooling these areas can help calm the whole body.
Close Your Eyes James Taylor said it: You can close your eyes, it's all right. Take a quick break from a busy office or a chaotic household by just lowering your eyelids. It's an easy way to regain calm and focus.	Rub Your Feet Over a Golf Ball Leave the clubs at home and just bring the ball. You can get an impromptu relaxing foot massage by rubbing your feet back and forth over a golf ball.
Give Yourself a Hand Massage When there's no professional masseuse in sight, try DIYing a hand massage for instant relaxation that calms a pounding heart. Massages can be especially helpful for people who spend a lot of time typing on a keyboard. Hands in general can carry a lot of tension. Apply some luxurious lotion and start kneading the base of the muscle under the thumb to relieve stress in the shoulders, neck, and scalp.	Brush Your Hair Really, it looks like a rat's nest. Even if you've already done your 100 strokes for the day, repetitive motions such as running a brush through your hair, washing dishes, or knitting can cause the body to relax.
Try Acupressure Pressure to meet a deadline can be stressful, but acupressure can help release all that tension. Acupressure's a kind of touch therapy that works by balancing the circulation of fluids and energies in the body. Use the thumb and forefinger to massage the soft area between the thumb and index finger of the other hand. Dab on some lavender oil for extra relaxation.	Create a Zen Zone Hiding in a bathroom stall might not sound calming, but do make (or find) a space that's completely free of stress where you can go to relax. Set up a comfortable chair or light some incense and disappear there for a few minutes until the tension dissipates.

<p>Be Alone</p> <p>Not everyone needs a cabin in the woods, but five minutes of alone time can help you collect your thoughts and clear your head.</p>	<p>Do Some Yoga</p> <p>Put your feet up—against the wall, of course. The Vipariti Kirani yoga pose involves lying on the floor and resting the legs up against a wall. Not only does it give the body a good stretch, but it helps create peace of mind, too.</p>
<p>Find the Sun</p> <p>Here comes the sun—and some stress relief. If it's a sunny day, head outside for an easy way to lift your spirits. Bright light can be an effective treatment for people who suffer from depression, and can even cheer up otherwise healthy folks.</p>	<p>Stretch</p> <p>Standing up for a quick stretch can relieve muscle tension and help us relax during a stressful workday. Why not try a shoulder roll-out or a chest-opening stretch right from the desk chair?</p>
<p>Write It Down</p> <p>"Dear Diary: Today I feel STRESSED." Just putting our emotions on paper can make them seem less intimidating. Try journaling before a big exam and it just might improve your score.</p>	<p>Smell Some Flowers</p> <p>Really, stop and smell 'em. Certain odors can change our mood, and it's hard to feel angry or upset with a nose full of roses. Keep a fresh jar of your favorite flowers near your workspace or in the living room, and take a whiff whenever anxiety strikes.</p>
<p>Listen to Your Favorite Song</p> <p>Beyonce, Blondie, or the Biebsters, sometimes belting out the lyrics to a favorite tune makes everything seem all right. If you're in a public place (that isn't the opera), just listening to music can be a quick fix for a bad mood. Classical music can be especially relaxing right before bedtime.</p>	<p>Try Aromatherapy</p> <p>It takes just a minute to drip some lavender, tea tree, or another essential oil into your palm and inhale. The soothing scents may help send stress and anxiety packing by stimulating smell receptors in the nose that connect to the part of the brain that regulates emotions.</p>
<p>Dance</p> <p>To the music! Research suggests people feel less anxious after a few months of modern dance, but if that's not your style, five minutes of the funky chicken probably works, too. (At the very least, dancing's a great form of cardio!)</p>	<p>Munch a Crunchy Snack</p> <p>Sometimes there's nothing more satisfying than munching away on a candy bar when we're stressed—one study found stressed adults craved crunchy and salty snacks more than usual. But that salty crunch doesn't have to be so sugary—a handful of trail mix or a bag of celery sticks will work just as well.</p>
<p>Do a Crossword Puzzle</p> <p>Number 10 across: Anxious, overwhelmed, or freaking out (seven letters). If you guessed "Stressed," you're in good shape to try some crossword puzzles. Brain games that require lots of concentration can help take our mind off whatever's worrying us.</p>	<p>Nose Full of Coffee</p> <p>Wake up and smell the latte. Just the odor of coffee can help reduce stress hormones—no sipping required. (Just be sure not to burn the tip of your nose.)</p>

<p>Cuddle With a Pet A boyfriend or girlfriend is okay, but they're (usually) not furry enough. After a rough day, snuggle up with a pet for an instant slobbery smile, since pets can boost self-esteem and even ease the sting of social rejection.</p>	<p>Laugh Stressed? Me? Ha! Laughter's one of the sillier ways to beat stress, but there's science behind it. A fit of hysterics can increase blood flow and boost immunity. Keep a book of jokes handy in the desk drawer or check out a hilarious YouTube video (maybe a piano-playing pug?) for a quick pick-me-up.</p>
<p>Talk to a Friend When something's really bothering you, it can help to share your feelings with a pal. In fact, more talkative folks tend to be happier in general. So vent to a coworker or call a close family member and spill.</p>	<p>Start Planning a Vacation Crashing waves, warm sand, a gentle breeze ruffling your hair. Well, at least the image is nice. Take a break from work and start browsing the web for some future vacation spots. Sometimes the whole fun of a trip is in the planning, anyway.</p>
<p>Look Out the Window No spying on the neighbors allowed. When things get hectic, take a five-minute break to do nothing but stare out the window. Looking at nature scenes like trees and public parks can be a lot more relaxing than staring at the TV screen.</p>	<p>Run in Place We may not be able to run away from stress, but it's worth practicing. Try running in place for a few minutes to get those endorphins flowing. Even brief physical activity can help beat stress.</p>
<p>Get Organized A stack of papers, three tape dispensers, a bunch of misshapen paperclips: All this clutter could be contributing to stress. Take a few minutes to reorganize your desk (or table, or wherever you are), leaving just what you need on top.</p>	<p>Take a Quick Walk "Now walk it out, now walk [stress] out." When you're feeling overwhelmed or having trouble concentrating, go for a quick stroll around the block. You'll get the benefits of alone time, physical activity, and a few minutes to gather your thoughts!</p>

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Script

Progressive muscle relaxation is an exercise that reduces stress and anxiety in your body by having you slowly tense and then relax each muscle. This exercise can provide an immediate feeling of relaxation, but it's best to practice frequently. With experience, you will become more aware of when you are experiencing tension and you will have the skills to help you relax. During this exercise each muscle should be tensed, but not to the point of strain. If you have any injuries or pain, you can skip the affected areas. Pay special attention to the feeling of releasing tension in each muscle and the resulting feeling of relaxation. Let's begin.

Sit back or lie down in a comfortable position. Shut your eyes if you're comfortable doing so.

Begin by taking a deep breath and noticing the feeling of air filling your lungs. Hold your breath for a few seconds.

(brief pause)

Release the breath slowly and let the tension leave your body.

Take in another deep breath and hold it.

(brief pause)

Again, slowly release the air.

Even slower now, take another breath. Fill your lungs and hold the air.

(brief pause)

Slowly release the breath and imagine the feeling of tension leaving your body.

Now, move your attention to your feet. Begin to tense your feet by curling your toes and the arch of your foot. Hold onto the tension and notice what it feels like.

(5 second pause)

Release the tension in your foot. Notice the new feeling of relaxation.

Next, begin to focus on your lower leg. Tense the muscles in your calves. Hold them tightly and pay attention to the feeling of tension

(5 second pause)

Release the tension from your lower legs. Again, notice the feeling of relaxation. Remember to continue taking deep breaths.

Next, tense the muscles of your upper leg and pelvis. You can do this by tightly squeezing your thighs together. Make sure you feel tenseness without going to the point of strain.

(5 second pause)

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Script

And release. Feel the tension leave your muscles.

Begin to tense your stomach and chest. You can do this by sucking your stomach in. Squeeze harder and hold the tension. A little bit longer.

(5 second pause)

Release the tension. Allow your body to go limp. Let yourself notice the feeling of relaxation.

Continue taking deep breaths. Breathe in slowly, noticing the air fill your lungs, and hold it.

(brief pause)

Release the air slowly. Feel it leaving your lungs.

Next, tense the muscles in your back by bringing your shoulders together behind you. Hold them tightly. Tense them as hard as you can without straining and keep holding

(5 second pause)

Release the tension from your back. Feel the tension slowly leaving your body, and the new feeling of relaxation. Notice how different your body feels when you allow it to relax.

Tense your arms all the way from your hands to your shoulders. Make a fist and squeeze all the way up your arm. Hold it.

(5 second pause)

Release the tension from your arms and shoulders. Notice the feeling of relaxation in your fingers, hands, arms, and shoulders. Notice how your arms feel limp and at ease.

Move up to your neck and your head. Tense your face and your neck by distorting the muscles around your eyes and mouth.

(5 second pause)

Release the tension. Again, notice the new feeling of relaxation.

Finally, tense your entire body. Tense your feet, legs, stomach, chest, arms, head, and neck. Tense harder, without straining. Hold the tension.

(5 second pause)

Now release. Allow your whole body to go limp. Pay attention to the feeling of relaxation, and how different it is from the feeling of tension.

Begin to wake your body up by slowly moving your muscles. Adjust your arms and legs.

Stretch your muscles and open your eyes when you're ready.

Mindfulness Exercises



Mindfulness Meditation

Find a place where you can sit quietly and undisturbed for a few moments. To begin, you might want to set a timer for about 10 minutes, but after some experience you should not be too concerned about the length of time you spend meditating.

Begin by bringing your attention to the present moment by noticing your breathing. Pay attention to your breath as it enters and then leaves your body. Before long, your mind will begin to wander, pulling you out of the present moment. That's ok. Notice your thoughts and feelings as if you are an outside observer watching what's happening in your brain. Take note, and allow yourself to return to your breathing.

Sometimes you might feel frustrated or bored. That's fine--these are just a few more feelings to notice. Your mind might start to plan an upcoming weekend, or worry about a responsibility. Notice where your thoughts are going, and accept what's happening.

Whenever you are able to, return your concentration to your breathing. Continue this process until your timer rings, or until you are ready to be done.



Body Scan

During the body scan exercise you will pay close attention to physical sensations throughout your body. The goal isn't to change or relax your body, but instead to notice and become more aware of it. Don't worry too much about how long you practice, but do move slowly.

Begin by paying attention to the sensations in your feet. Notice any sensations such as warmth, coolness, pressure, pain, or a breeze moving over your skin. Slowly move up your body--to your calves, thighs, pelvis, stomach, chest, back, shoulders, arms, hands, fingers, neck, and finally your head. Spend some time on each of these body parts, just noticing the sensations.

After you travel up your body, begin to move back down, through each body part, until you reach your feet again. Remember: move slowly, and just pay attention.



Mindful Eating

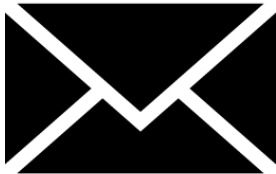
Choose a food you would like to practice with (preferably something you can hold in your hand without getting messy). Something as simple as a single raisin will work well. Move slowly through these steps, taking a moment to focus on each one.

Before you pick up your food, notice how it looks on the table in front of you. Notice its color, how the light reflects from its surface, and its size.

Gratitude Exercises

Journal About Gratitude

Take a few minutes every evening to write down five good things about your day. The entries don't have to be major events—they might be as simple as a good meal, talking to a friend, or getting through a difficult challenge.



Write a Letter

Think about someone who has had a major impact on your life, someone who you would like to thank, or someone who you appreciate having in your life. Write a letter with specific details about what it is you appreciate about them, and send it.

Visit Someone who you Appreciate

Write a letter to someone you appreciate as described above, but instead of mailing it, deliver the letter in person. Don't tell them why you're visiting! Read them letter, and then allow them to keep it as a memento.

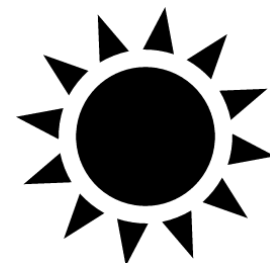


Say "Thank You"

Keep your eyes open throughout the day for reasons to say "thanks". Try to recognize the small actions people do every day that might be overlooked such as a colleague who always goes the extra mile, or a friend who always seems willing to listen.

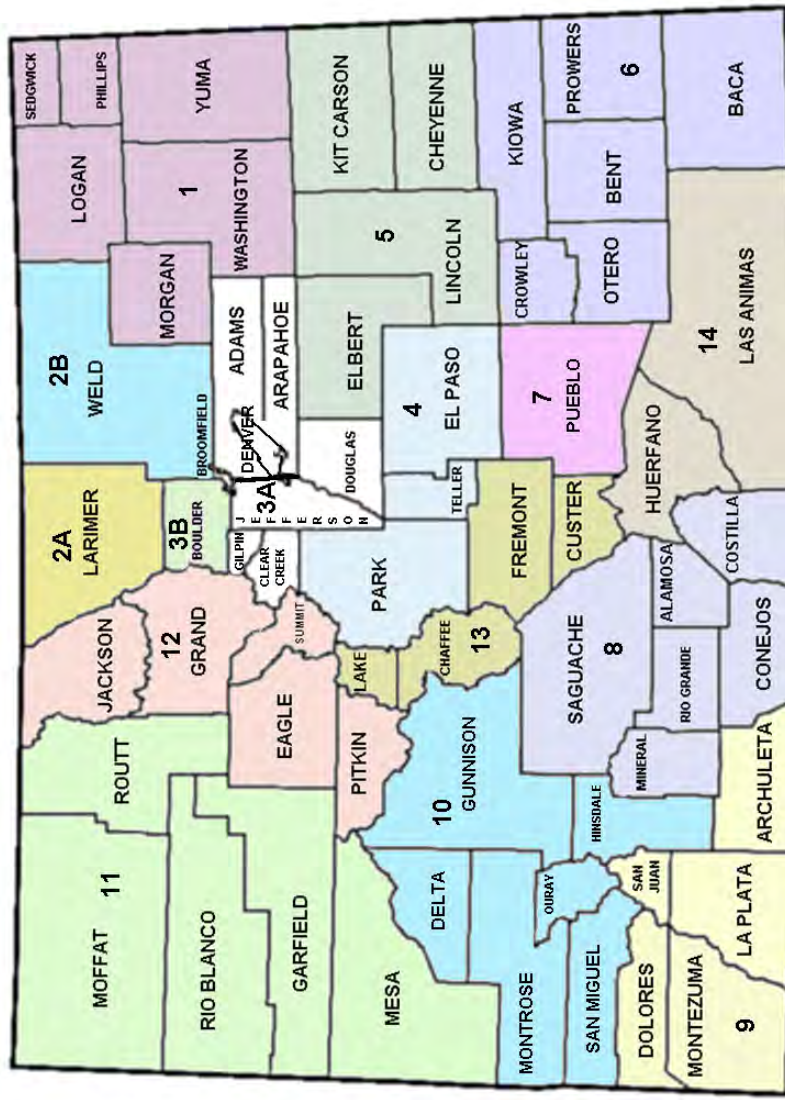
Take a Gratitude Walk

Go for a walk and make a special effort to appreciate your surroundings. You might notice the smell of flowers, a pretty building, or a soothing breeze. Spend a few minutes focusing on each of your senses (sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch) to find new things you may not have noticed.



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The “No Rules” of Journaling

By Lori Ramos Lemasters

- Pick the type of journal that suits you
- Find the writing utensil that feels comfortable
- On the front of your journal write STOP these are my private thoughts please do not read without permission
- Safe place to keep your journal
- Journal “buddy” someone who knows you're keeping a journal and who will destroy it if anything happens to you
- Date each entry
- Always time your write - 5 minutes is usually enough
- Always do a feedback write: re-reading what you wrote and then write for 2 more minutes on what surprised you
- Allow yourself the time to focus and in a comfortable space
- Once you begin writing write swiftly, don't correct yourself and keep writing until your timer goes off



Breathing life back into care partners





HOUSE BILL 14-1359

BY REPRESENTATIVE(S) Ginal, Fields, Peniston, Primavera, Singer, Williams, Buckner, Hulinghorst, Labuda, Mitsch Bush, Rosenthal, Ryden, Schafer, Tyler, Vigil, Young;
also SENATOR(S) Aguilar, Crowder, Guzman, Heath, Jones, Newell, Nicholson, Schwartz, Tochtrop, Todd.

CONCERNING MEDICATION SYNCHRONIZATION FOR PATIENTS WHO ARE
PRESCRIBED MULTIPLE MEDICATIONS.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

SECTION 1. In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 10-16-141 as follows:

10-16-141. Medication synchronization services - cost-sharing for partial refills - dispensing fees. (1) A CARRIER OFFERING AN INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP HEALTH COVERAGE PLAN IN THIS STATE THAT PROVIDES PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE SHALL OFFER, AS PART OF THE PLAN, MEDICATION SYNCHRONIZATION SERVICES DEVELOPED BY THE CARRIER THAT ALLOW FOR THE ALIGNMENT OF REFILL DATES FOR A COVERED PERSON'S PRESCRIPTION DRUGS THAT ARE COVERED BENEFITS.

(2) UNDER ITS MEDICATION SYNCHRONIZATION SERVICES, A

CARRIER SHALL:

(a) NOT CHARGE AN AMOUNT IN EXCESS OF THE OTHERWISE APPLICABLE COPAYMENT AMOUNT UNDER THE HEALTH COVERAGE PLAN FOR DISPENSING A PRESCRIPTION DRUG IN A QUANTITY THAT IS LESS THAN THE PRESCRIBED AMOUNT IF:

(I) THE PHARMACY DISPENSES THE PRESCRIPTION DRUG IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE MEDICATION SYNCHRONIZATION SERVICES OFFERED UNDER THE HEALTH COVERAGE PLAN; AND

(II) A NETWORK PHARMACY DISPENSES THE PRESCRIPTION DRUG;
AND

(b) PROVIDE A FULL DISPENSING FEE TO THE PHARMACY THAT DISPENSES THE MEDICATION TO THE COVERED PERSON.

SECTION 2. Safety clause. The general assembly hereby finds,

determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety.

Mark Ferrandino
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES

Morgan Carroll
PRESIDENT OF
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Notes

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Questions

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Resources

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