

National Family Caregiver Support Program  
Senior Center of Jackson Hole  
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### Meditation Creates Mindfulness

Being a Caregiver for a loved one can be one of the most demanding, and at times, mentally draining thing you'll ever do. There will be times when you may feel completely overwhelmed, depression may set in, and you may ask yourself "can I really do this?" I would like to offer you a way to calm the mind and find some peace in yourself.

I'm sure most of you have heard the word Meditation, and lately there has been a lot of mention in the news of the scientific value of the practice of Meditation and Mindfulness.

Meditation is not connected to any particular religion or denomination. It is user friendly, can be practiced by anyone as a way of relieving stress and anxiety, and can be done in as little as five or ten minutes a day. You can think of it this way: Meditation gives us an opportunity to step back and take a look at ourselves, to look at our feelings, our mental formations, anxiety and fears.

What is Mindfulness? According to Ruchika Rakash at Ohio State University Medical Center "Mindfulness refers to the development of a present-focused consciousness of ones thoughts and emotions, developing greater understanding". Simply put, "being present". Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh has often said "The greatest gift you can give to the one you love is your Presence." Being mindful is being present.

Meditation can help to develop Mindfulness. Meditation Master Sanjur Verma, writes that "when you stop receiving and internalizing negative information your heart beat and blood pressure and basically every part of your body starts to calm down. Because of this there will be less imbalance in the mind, body and breath, which can result in less disease overall".

So you may be asking "how do I meditate"? It's really very simple; you don't need fancy cushions or benches, your nice comfy chair will do just fine. Sit back in your chair, with your back straight, hands folded on your lap, and eyes closed. Take 3 nice deep breaths. Thoughts may begin to start pouring through your mind; just be aware of the thoughts and let them go. Keep breathing in and out, deep slow breaths. You can sit like this for 5 to 10 minutes, giving your mind an opportunity to find calm and ease. Don't feel frustrated if at first you have difficulty finding the calm in your mind; it does take time but if you stay with it the calmness will come. This is a practice; stay with it, and you will find peace, and a refreshed feeling, as you continue on with your day.

Zen Master Thich Nhat Hahn writes, "Sitting Meditation is very healing. We can just be with whatever is within us whether it is pain, anger, irritation, joy, love or peace. Let it come, let it stay, then let it go. We can observe the thoughts and images in our mind with an accepting and loving eye. Despite the storms that arise in us we're still calm."

Mindful Meditation is a gift you can give to yourselves and to the ones you love. As a caregiver myself, I find myself taking many deep breaths a day and using my daily practice of Meditation to calm and relax at the end of the day. Give it a try and see what you think.

If you would like more information about Meditation and Mindfulness practice I would be more than happy to talk to you.

Kristine Dyke CNA

**Family Caregiver Services are available!**

**Contact:**

Perri Stern  
Home Care Manager

307-733-7300

[pstern@seniorcenterjh.org](mailto:pstern@seniorcenterjh.org)

*Contributions Welcomed towards NFCSP Services*