Alzheimer’s San Diego Tips

Developing an Emergency Self-Care Plan

Why you should have an emergency self-care plan.

It’s very hard to think of what to do when things get tough. But the best defense is having a plan ready for those times when you need it.

Consider these your guiding thoughts: What to do, what to think, and what to avoid.

We suggest writing this plan on a 3x5” card and keeping it in your purse/wallet (and on your phone if you can) to have it readily available for suggestions.

Look at it often. Add more good ideas when you can. Make sure it’s a list that works for you.

1. Make a list of what you can do when you are upset. Ask yourself:

   - **What will help me relax?** Some examples include:
     - Breathing, muscle relaxation, or listening to music.
     - Reading for fun or watching a movie.
     - Exercising or taking a walk.

   - **What do I like to do when I'm in a good mood?**
     - List all the things you like to do so you remember when you are struggling to find something to do.

   - **What can I do that will help me throughout the day?**
     - Avoid too much caffeine if you’re feeling anxious.
     - Actively focus on breathing.
     - Pay attention to where your thoughts wander.
     - Stay present in the moment.

2. Make a list of people you can contact if you need support or distraction.

   - Examples include: your best friend, other friends, a sibling, parent, grandparent, other relative, therapist, priest/minister/rabbi/imam, etc.

   - Then divide the list into categories asking:
     - Who can I call when I’m depressed or anxious?
     - Who can I call if I’m lonely?
     - Who will come over to be with me if I need company?
     - Who will listen?
     - Who will encourage me to get out of the house and do something fun?
     - Who will remind me to follow my self-care plan?

3. Make a list of positive things to say to yourself when you are giving yourself a hard time.

4. Make a list of who and what to avoid when you are having a hard time.

For free support, contact Alzheimer's San Diego:
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