



# **Reflecting on Self-Care: The 7 C's of Caregiving**

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## Self-Care Check-Up:

### Where are you now?

*We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time."*

- T. S. Elliott

#### Objective

**To assess your current needs for self-care in your caregiving role**

#### Questions for Reflection

- Where does self-care fit within your caregiving role?
- What was your first experience of caregiving?
- How would you describe your current caregiving role?
- What are the benefits and costs of caregiving?

#### Self-Care Check-Up Exercises

1. Your Caregiver History (Short Form)
2. Hooked on Helping Beliefs
3. What I really need in my life right now is more....
4. The Costs and Benefits of Caregiving

## Self-Care Check-Up #1:

### Your Caregiver History (Short Form)

1. What was your first experience of caregiving?
2. What 5 words or phrases best describe how you feel about your caregiving experience now?
3. What is the smallest change that you could make in your caregiving so it would be more hopeful to you?

## Self-Care Check-Up #2:

### HOOKED ON HELPING BELIEFS

Check yourself against these common care-giving syndromes. How many of these assumptions do you act on? Be aware that rarely do people actually speak these beliefs out loud. Mentally review your behaviors to find out whether you whisper any of these messages to yourself.

#### The SUPER-HELPER Syndrome

- \_\_\_\_\_ I must be everything to everyone.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I must be able to help everyone.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I don't have the limits of normal people.

#### The EMPTY POT Syndrome

- \_\_\_\_\_ I must always try to help someone if I'm asked.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Even though I feel empty, I can always find more to give.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I must never be "out to lunch."

#### The YOU FIRST Syndrome

- \_\_\_\_\_ My needs aren't so important as yours.
- \_\_\_\_\_ It's selfish to take care of myself.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I'll get my needs met by helping you.

In what ways do these beliefs lead me into behaviors that cause me distress?

Observations and Comments:

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### Self-Care Check-Up #3:

#### WHAT I REALLY NEED IN MY LIFE RIGHT NOW IS MORE . . .

Check the words below which fit into this sentence for you. Add any other words which are also important in your life.

vitality	self-esteem	tenderness	composure
security	recognition	generosity	centering
activity	confidence	caring	awareness
health	motivation	sharing	solitude
strength	knowledge/skill	music	devotion
energy	opportunities	laughter	contemplation
fitness	challenges	support	serenity
relaxation	variety	self-expression	trust
comfort	structure	companionship	insight
nutrition	accomplishments	harmony	joy
touching	control	romance	commitment
sex	imagination	intimacy	communion
sleep	money	patience	integration
coordination	responsibility	beauty	forgiveness
flexibility	education/training	sensitivity	surrender
exercise	experience	receptivity	faith
self-control	freedom	self-awareness	purpose

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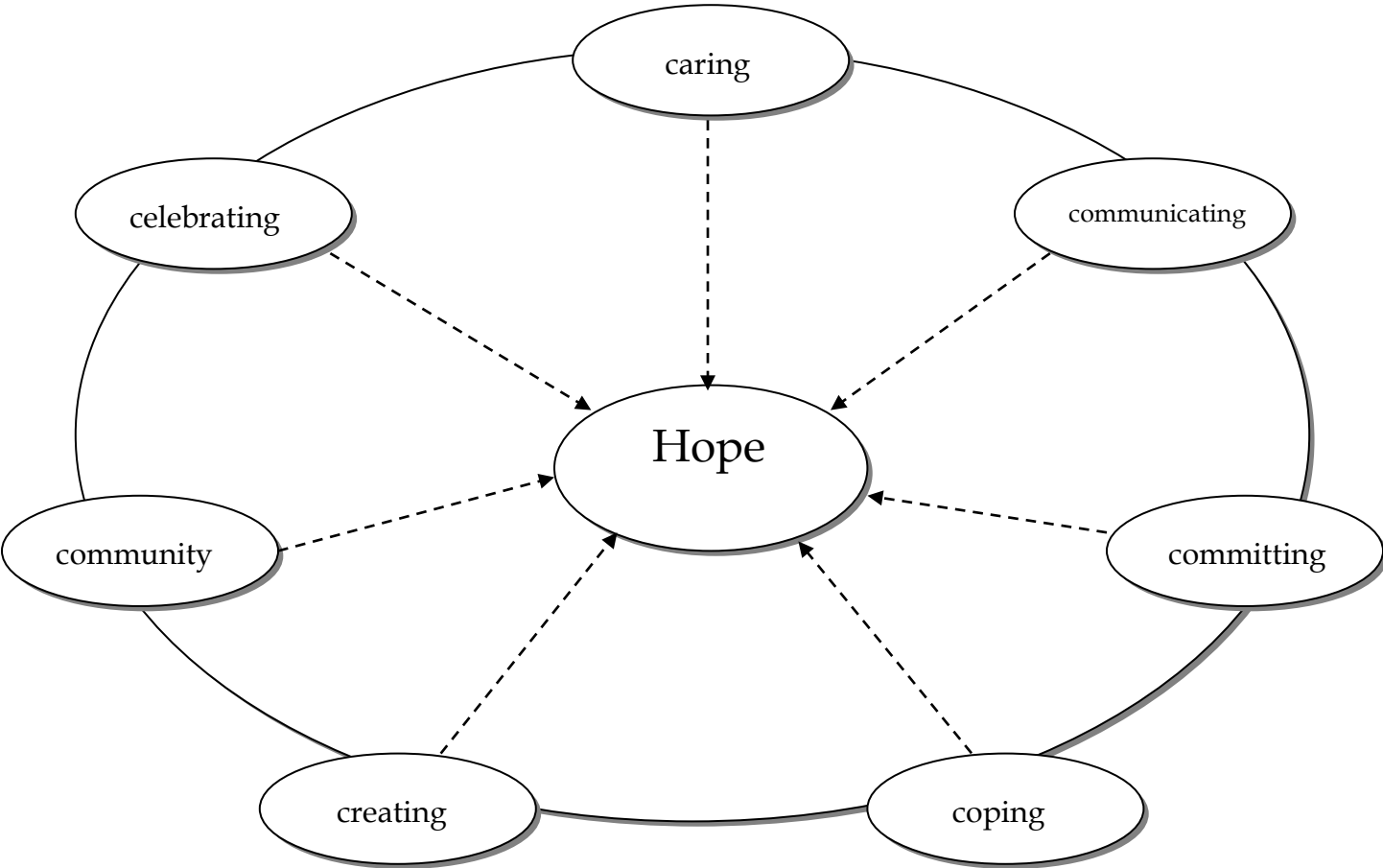
## Self-Care Check-Up #4:

### The Benefits and Costs of Caregiving

Think about a challenging situation in your current role as a caregiver.

1. How would you describe this situation now? What is working well? What is not working well?
2. How would you like this situation to be different?
3. How hopeful do you feel about changing this situation?

# Hope-Focused Strategies: The 7 C's of Caregiving





## **Caring: *The living hope***

I believe that imagination is stronger than knowledge  
That myth is more potent than history  
That dreams are more powerful than facts  
That hope always triumphs over experience  
That laughter is the only cure for grief  
And I believe that love is stronger than death

*Everything I Needed To Know I Learned in Kindergarten*  
R. Fulgrum

### **Self-Care Activities**

1. Caring begins with rest. Sleep when you can. Eat well. Make exercise a part of your day.
2. Make a list of assumptions you hold about caring.
3. Make a self-care list.
4. Make an "other" care list.
5. Do a random act of kindness – for others – and for yourself.
6. Create a “Circle of Caring.” Draw a circle that represents your life. Identify the special people who care about you.
7. Write about an experience of caring in your life.
8. Imagine a life without caring. What would it be like?

## **Communicating: *The language of hope***

### **Self-Care Activities**

1. Find a good listener to talk to.
2. Learn the language of “letting go” – when you are ready.
3. Write a letter or send a card to someone you care about.
4. Write down your thoughts and feelings.
5. Replace negative thoughts with positive words and affirmations.
6. Listen to your body.
7. Say “Thank You.”
8. Smile at a stranger.
9. Ask for help.

## **Commitment: *The intentional hope***

### **Self-Care Activities**

1. Live in the moment – when you can.
2. Reset your self-care clock.....every day.
3. Create a hope kit....to help you through the difficult days.
4. Follow your path.
5. Plan one day at a time.
6. Set a goal each day of something to achieve.
7. Keep a journal.
8. Write down one thing that you can do for yourself each day.

## The Hope Kit

The future is uncertain. That is its nature. Until it becomes the present, it cannot be known. Planning for it does not ensure it will resemble our vision. The best case scenario is our wish list will come true. Our hopes will be fulfilled. What though if they are not? How will your hope be affected? Do you have a hope kit ready to survive a difficult time? Every home and work place has a first aid kit for physical injuries? Why not a hope kit readied for unexpected adversity?

When you think of what you would need to sustain your hope, what tangible reminder could go into the kit? For example:

- a mirror- so that every time I lost sight of hope, I could reflect light into a dark spot
- a cocoon to remind me that metamorphosis can lead to something beautiful
- a photo of my grandmother who believed I could do anything.

Is your hope kit packed and ready to go? Is there someone in your world that needs a hope kit? You could start one for them.

What will you put in your hope kit?

## **Coping:** ***The practical hope***

### **Self-Care Activities**

1. Find your still point - a quiet place to rest and recover.
2. Look for what you can do – in small ways.
3. Look for “signs of hope.”
4. List three things that you could do to have a good night’s sleep.
5. Create a “Things to Do” list or “Job Jar” and share it with people who care about you and want to help.
6. Read a good book.
7. Go for a nature walk.
8. Practice yoga.
9. Listen to music.
10. Meditate.
11. Say a prayer.
12. Play more..... Love more..... Live more.

## **Creating: *The spirit of hope***

### **Self-Care Activities**

1. Words may not be enough. Nurture your creative spirit.
2. Create a “new normal.”
3. Find new ways of making special memories.
4. Write a poem or a song.
5. Prepare a special meal – or treat yourself to a special meal.
6. Create a collection "hopeful" or "soulful" food.
7. Develop a personal collection of "hopeful" or "soulful" music.
8. Create and colour a mandala.
9. Create a daily ritual – for the beginning and end of your day.
10. Try a new hobby.
11. Draw or paint.

## Mandala

Mandala is a Sanskrit word meaning “circle.” To create a mandala for yourself, draw a circle.

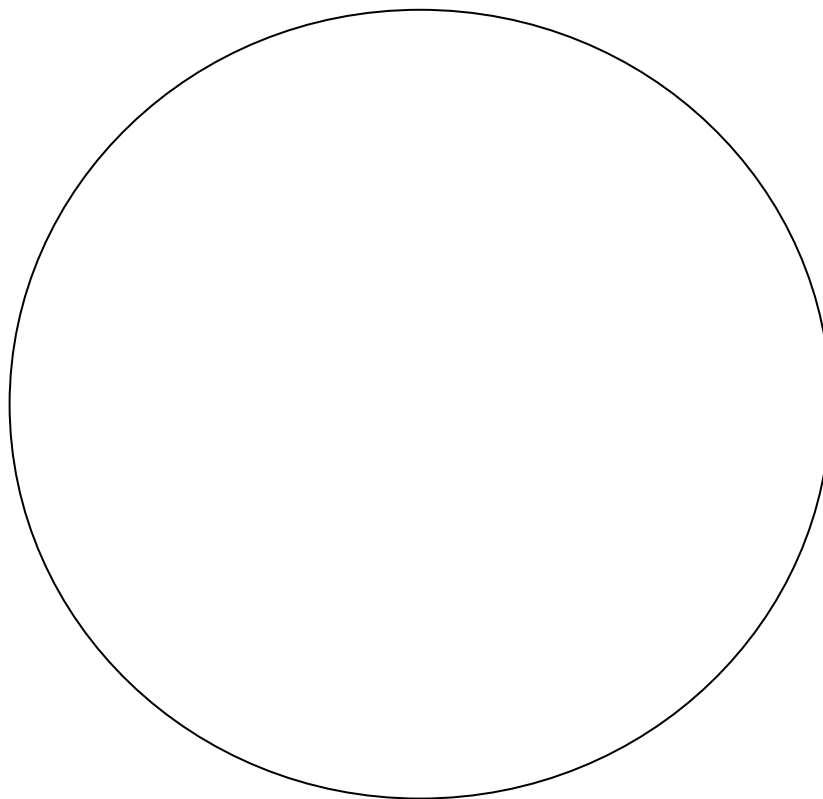
Draw your attention inward. Think of the different parts of your life.

- What are you feeling or aware of?
- Is there anything you need or hope for in your life right now?
- Is there an image that brings you support or inspiration?

You may wish to depict an image, a special place or an abstract design. Use the space below to sketch your mandala. You can colour it in with crayons, pastels or colored pencils.

There is no wrong or right way to draw. You may wish to add a word(s) or title.

Your mandala is a creative personal expression. Take time to reflect on any meaning that it holds for you.



## **Community:** ***The shared hope***

### **Self-Care Activities**

1. Build meaningful times together, knowing that everyone has their own special way of coping.
2. Access resources in the community or online.
3. Make a list of what is hopeful in your community or circle of caring. Photograph some of these hopeful moments.
4. Attend a hope ritual of your own or another culture.
5. Plant a tree.
6. Have a hope lunch with some special people in your life.
7. Join a support group.
8. Join a club (e.g. folk music club, book club)



## **Celebration: *The grateful hope***

### **Self-Care Activities:**

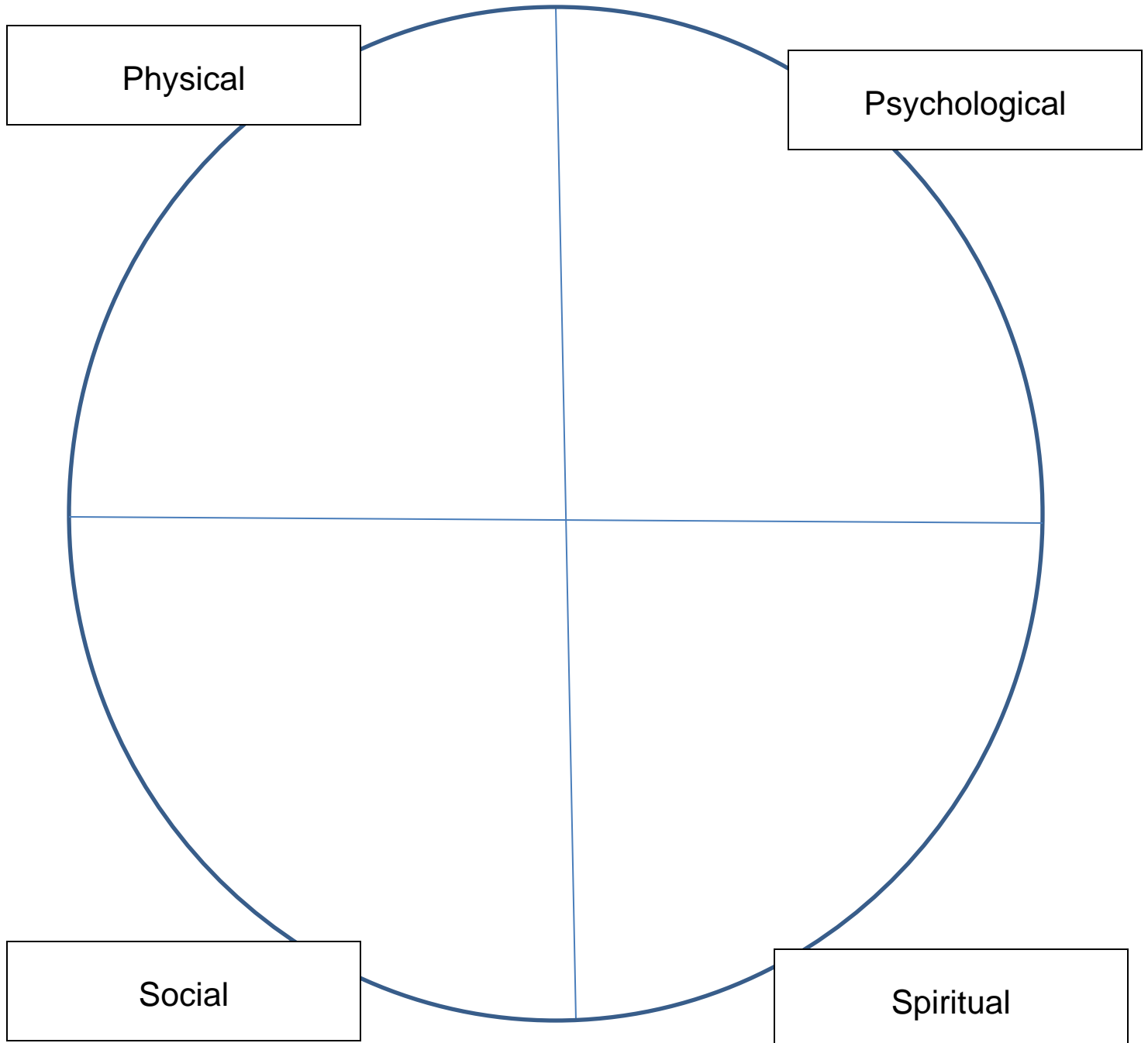
1. Find something to be grateful for each day – when you can.
2. Embrace the magic and mystery of life.
3. Celebrate special moments and milestones – in whatever way feels best for you.
4. Spend time with children. Learn about their hopes.
5. Cultivate your love of small things.
6. Keep a flower in a vase.
7. Complete the following sentence: “I am hoping for ..... and I am able to celebrate .....”
8. Be gentle with yourself when coping with holidays and special occasions.
9. Celebrate yourself.
10. Look after yourself. You are your greatest gift.

## Building a Self-Care Repertoire

### **Self-Care Strategies: “Caring for the Caregiver”**

1. What types of self-care strategies are you are currently using? Please list them on the next page, according to the following categories:
  - a. Physical
  - b. Psychological
  - c. Social
  - d. Spiritual
  
2. Which of these strategies are working well for you? Place a star next to the top three strategies that are working well.
  
3. In which of the four areas would you like to develop or improve your self-care? In the space below, list three strategies that would like to add to your circle.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What will be your first step?

## Self-Care Strategies: “Caring for the Caregiver”



## Self-Care Strategies: “Caring for the Caregiver”

Which of these strategies are in currently in your “Caring for the Caregiver” circle? Choose three new strategies that you could add to your circle.

### Physical

1. Breathe
2. Stretch
3. Do something physical (walk, climb stairs, gym workout, yoga stretches)
4. Listen to your body
5. Take time for afternoon tea
6. Take a mini- vacation from e-mails, cellphone and other electronic devices
7. Catch your breath (e.g. schedule block of time for office/ “catch-up” work)
8. Take time for lunch and coffee breaks
9. Keep a flower in a vase
10. Remove the clutter
11. Eat a healthy well-balanced meal. Chocolate is good too.
12. Take a nap

### Psychological

13. Replace negative thoughts with positive words and affirmations
14. Stay away from negaholics
15. Listen to some music
16. Write down your thoughts and feelings
17. Create a hope-focused self-care kit
18. Look at some pleasing art work or photographs
19. Cultivate your love of small things
20. Stay grounded

### Social

21. Find someone to talk to
22. Do a random act of kindness – for others – and for yourself
23. Smile at a stranger
24. Say “Thank you”

### Spiritual

25. Say a prayer (e.g. for yourself, for others, universal prayer)
26. Read a poem or other words of inspiration
27. Find a quiet place to sit for a few minutes
28. Celebrate special moments and milestones
29. Forgive yourself
30. Create a ritual – for the beginning and end of your work day (e.g. 8-minute meditation, reflective questions)
31. Connect with nature (e.g. take a walk outside, nature photographs)

## All I Need To Know About Life I Learned From My Dog

Never pass up the opportunity to go for a joy ride.  
Allow the experience of fresh air and the wind in your face to be pure ecstasy.  
When loved ones come home, always run to greet them.  
Run, romp, and play daily.  
Be loyal.  
Never pretend to be something you're not.  
Eat with gusto and enthusiasm.  
If what you want lies buried, dig until you find it.  
When someone is having a bad day, be silent, sit close by and nuzzle them  
gently.  
Thrive on affection and let people touch you - enjoy back rubs and pats on your  
neck.  
When you leave your yard, make it an adventure.  
Avoid biting when a simple growl will do.  
No matter how often you're scolded, don't pout - run right back and make friends.  
Bond with your pack.  
On cold nights, curl up in front of a crackling fire.  
When you're excited, speak up.  
When you're happy, dance around and wag your entire body.  
Delight in the simple joy of a long walk.  
If you stare at someone long enough, eventually you'll get what you want.  
Don't go out without ID.  
Leave room in your schedule for a good nap.  
Always give people a friendly greeting.  
If it's not wet and sloppy, it's not a real kiss.

*Author: Unknown*

Source: [www.scrapbook.com/poems/doc/6103.html](http://www.scrapbook.com/poems/doc/6103.html)

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