

UCSF Neuro-Oncology Gordon Murray Caregiver Program

Semi-annual newsletter

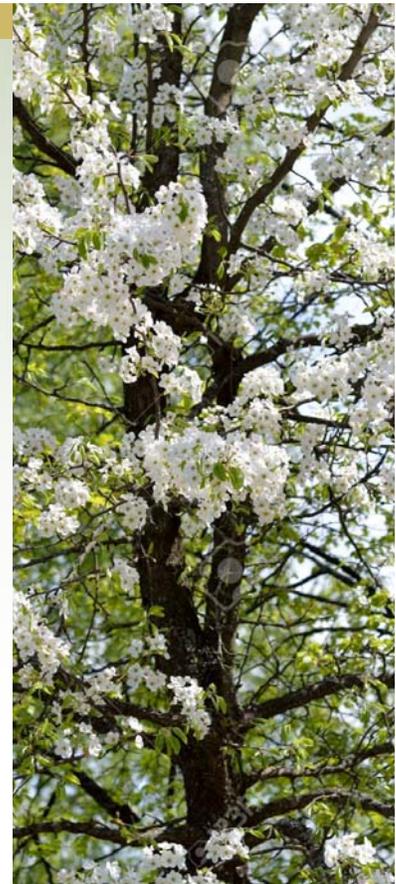
“Spring Cleaning” *by Margareta Page, MS, RN*

Happy Spring and welcome to the first edition of the UCSF Neuro-Oncology Gordon Murray Caregiver Program newsletter! We recognize and value the work that you do as a partner with the health care team to provide support and care for our patients here at UCSF. We hope that this newsletter will serve to keep you informed about our program offerings and provide timely tips to support you in your caregiving journey.

Spring is my favorite season. The days are noticeably longer. Buds spring from branches and flowers begin to appear. Animals awaken, shedding their winter coats, birds nest and prepare for new life. Each year mother nature puts on a beautiful show and reminds us that we, too have the opportunity for renewal, for new beginnings and for a chance to move from surviving to thriving!

In ancient times, during the spring equinox, rituals were performed to welcome the energy of spring and make way for new beginnings. This is where our tradition of “spring cleaning” originates. For me, spring cleaning involves clearing out the clutter, and often it starts with the junk drawer. Do you have a junk drawer? Mine is in the kitchen filled with tape, pens, old greeting cards, bottle caps, a stapler, batteries, old to-do lists, maps, screwdrivers and more. I also have a “mental” junk drawer filled with experiences, information, ideas, dreams, successes, hurts, joys and sorrows.

Caregiving may be a new role, or one you’ve been in for quite some time. Either way, now is the time to peak into the junk drawer to clear old energy and find new ways to create more space for yourself, physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.



Spring Into Action!

- ♥ Stay connected with friends by phone or in-person.
- ♥ Be creative. Learn something new. Novelty is good for the brain.
- ♥ Keep moving. Walk whenever you can and take the stairs.
- ♥ Set a personal intention for your day. Write it down.
- ♥ Nourish your mind with uplifting podcasts or audio-books.
- ♥ Take 5 minutes each day and practice conscious breathing.
- ♥ Find joy in each new day, no matter how simple or small.
- ♥ Hydrate. Eat well. Protect your sleep.
- ♥ Smile, it spurs a chemical reaction in the brain that can make you feel happier.



Cleaning Out Your Junk Drawer

Keep what works...

Sort and savor the good things. Reflect on happy memories, make a list of treasures, count the blessings of friendship and connection. Notice the beauty of the season. Give thanks for what's working. Ask yourself, "What's the gift within this challenge? What can I learn?"

Make a list of people in your support network. Simply reminding yourself that you can ask for help decreases stress and a sense of isolation.

Write down your values (for example: loyalty, kindness, independence, fun, courage, freedom, compassion, humor, faith). When the going gets tough, re-prioritize and align your actions with your values.

Let go of the rest...

Re-evaluate the goals you had prior to your loved one's diagnosis. Some goals will no longer matter, others may matter but are no longer realistic. Identify new goals. Write them down. Let go of the rest.

Reflect on repetitive thoughts and feelings that are stuck in the junk drawer - anxiety, frustration, resentment, anger. Talk with a trusted friend, journal about your feelings or attend a support group. Often, when we put our feelings into words they shift. Sometimes a "cleaning expert" is required. If you're struggling with thoughts and feelings that are interfering with your ability to manage your life, it's important to notice this and seek professional help. It's a sign of strength to reach out.

"We live in a time when science is validating what humans have known throughout the ages: that compassion is not a luxury, it is a necessity for our well-being, resilience, and survival."

-Roshi Joan Halifax

Recipe for Resilience

Resilience is a common human trait that involves the process of adapting or bouncing back in the face of stress or adversity. There are many "recipes" available to foster our individual capacity for resilience. Here is one example:

- ⇒ 2 cups of self-compassion
- ⇒ 1 cup of connection
- ⇒ 1/2 cup of meaning-making
- ⇒ 1 heaping cup of self-care
- ⇒ a dash of fun
- ⇒ a sprinkle of courage

Mindfully mix together with positive daily intentions and bake with wise hope until soft in the center. Garnish with gratitude and serve warm. Reheat and enjoy each new day!

Caregiver Resources

EVENTS

- ◆ Annual Caregiver Retreat "Fostering Resilience through Knowledge & Self-Compassion" - May 18, 2019—<https://braintumorcenter.ucsf.edu/caregiver-retreat>
- ◆ 25th Annual Bay Area Brain Tumor Walk—June 23, 2019
<https://events.braintumor.org/bay-area-brain-tumor-walk/>
- ◆ Head for the Cure Walk— November 10, 2019
<https://headforthecure.org>
- ◆ COMPASS—A 7-week program for caregivers starting this Fall 2019. Keep your eye out for more information to come.

BOOKS + PODCASTS

- ◆ *Resilient*—Rick Hanson
- ◆ *Stillpoint*—Shiela Collins & Christine Gautreaux
- ◆ The Thrive Global Podcast with Ariana Huffington—learn how to prioritize well-being and go from surviving to thriving

CAREGIVING IN THE NEWS

- ◆ <https://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-caregiver-tax-credits-20190321-story.html>

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