**How To Help Your Loved One Cope With Uncertainty**

As we age, we become more reflective of life, and this, combined with the current global health crisis, has many of us experiencing high levels of uncertainty, especially for seniors. During times of uncertainty, there are many aspects of life that we cannot control, and this feeling can have negative psychological and physical effects.

Many older adults may be experiencing heightened feelings of anxiety and stress during the COVID-19 pandemic, and living with uncertainty is challenging. To best help your loved one handle these feelings, it is important to encourage them to enjoy life and to not be too focused on the unknown. This article will look at 5 ways you can achieve this and help your elderly loved one best cope during these difficult times.

1. Encourage A Healthy Routine

A person feels more in control if they continue to do the things they enjoy and at a standard schedule. This includes keeping a healthy routine in regard to eating habits, exercising, maintaining a good sleep schedule, and staying connected with friends and family. It’s all about creating daily certainty amidst the uncertainty. During these tentative times, establishing a routine for your loved one can help them stay active, better manage their emotions, and establish some predictability to combat the uncertainty.

1. Mindfulness and Stress Reduction Activities

The key to mindfulness is focusing on living in the here and now. Encourage your loved one to find time each day for an activity that engages their attention in the present moment. This can be cultivated through yoga, meditation, walking, gardening and gentle exercises. These all bring focus to the moment and shift attention to how we feel and what is currently happening. This relaxes our body and removes feelings of fear and anxiety about the unknown. Whatever technique they use, it is important to reduce stress, as this will help them relax and be better prepared to handle whatever life presents them with.

1. Manage Emotions

It is easy to get lost in feelings and drown in negative speculations. We need to learn how to stop this and remind ourselves that while the future is unknown, it does not mean it will be negative, so we need to look forward to it with positive feelings. It helps to determine the worst that could happen and then figure out a plan on how to handle it. Once your loved one knows how they will deal with the worst-case scenario, it becomes less stressful, and they will be able to build up confidence in their ability to handle the future.

1. Let Them Know You’re Thinking Of Them

If your loved one is really struggling, then it can be helpful to let them know you are thinking of them, even if you can’t be with them 24/7. To perk them up, why not send them a thoughtful care package filled with all their favourite things? This could include items tailored to their favourite hobby, such as crosswords, puzzles, cross-stitch patterns, sudoku, etc, to keep them entertained for hours. Or, if they love treats, then you can always send them something sweet like a gift box of macaroons, and maybe even make it more personal by having a message or photos printed on them! From spa kits to homemade meals, there are plenty of care package options you can choose from, and your loved one will appreciate that you were thinking of them.

1. Help Them Learn To Accept Uncertainty

To help your loved one become more tolerant of uncertainty, identify their main triggers, so action can be taken to avoid or reduce their exposure. A lot of uncertainty tends to be self-generated through excessive worrying, but some uncertainty can be generated by external sources, especially at times like this global pandemic. Reading negative media stories, spending time on social media amid half-truths, or simply communicating with anxious friends can all fuel fears. Recognise when your loved one feels the need for certainty and look for the physical cues that they’re feeling anxious. Encourage them to take a moment to pause and recognise that they’re craving reassurance. Allow them to feel the uncertainty and focus on the present moment, accepting that uncertainty is part of life. And when their mind wanders back to worrying, help them to refocus on the present moment and their own breathing.

Many senior adults will be feeling overwhelmed during the COVID-19 pandemic, but they don’t have to manage these feelings alone. By showing your support for your elderly loved one during these confusing times, you will help ease their worries and allow some small sense of normality back in their lives.

**Sources**

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