

Supporting Caregivers of Veterans with Dementia at End-of-Life

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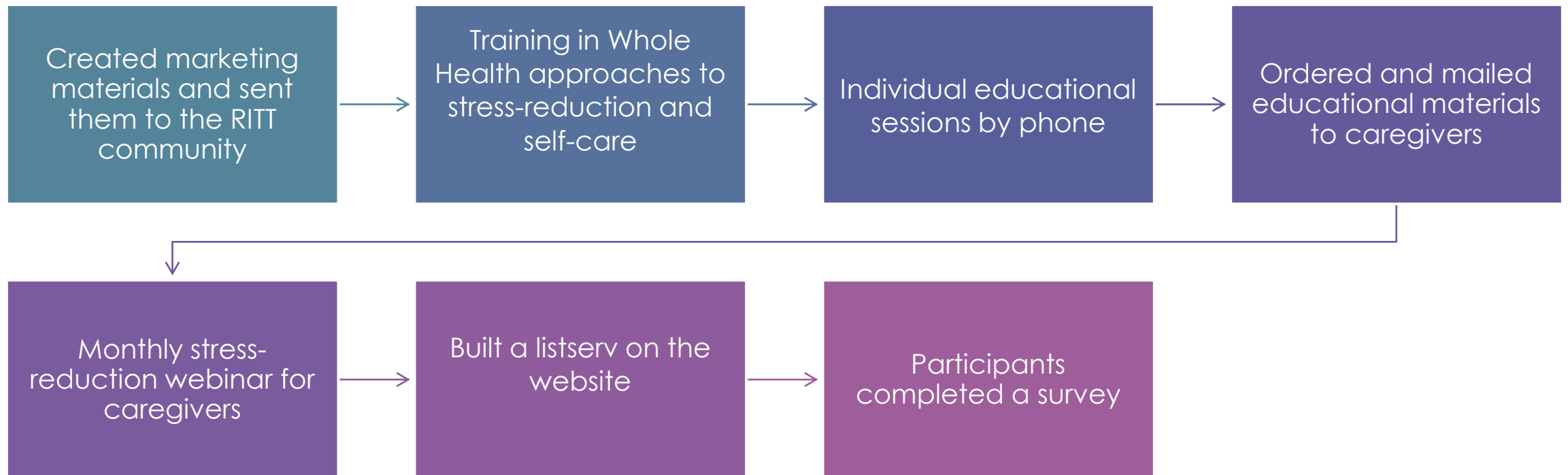
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Centers

Project Overview: Rural Interdisciplinary Team Training (RITT)

- ▶ RITT is a national program that began in 2011 to train VA staff in rural community-based outpatient clinics (CBOC) in geriatrics
- ▶ Participants shared that dementia was a growing concern and expressed a need for more services to support caregivers
- ▶ RITT caregiver support expansion initiative operated from 2020-2023 to provide individual and group educational support sessions directly to caregivers

Methods of RITT Caregiver Support Expansion



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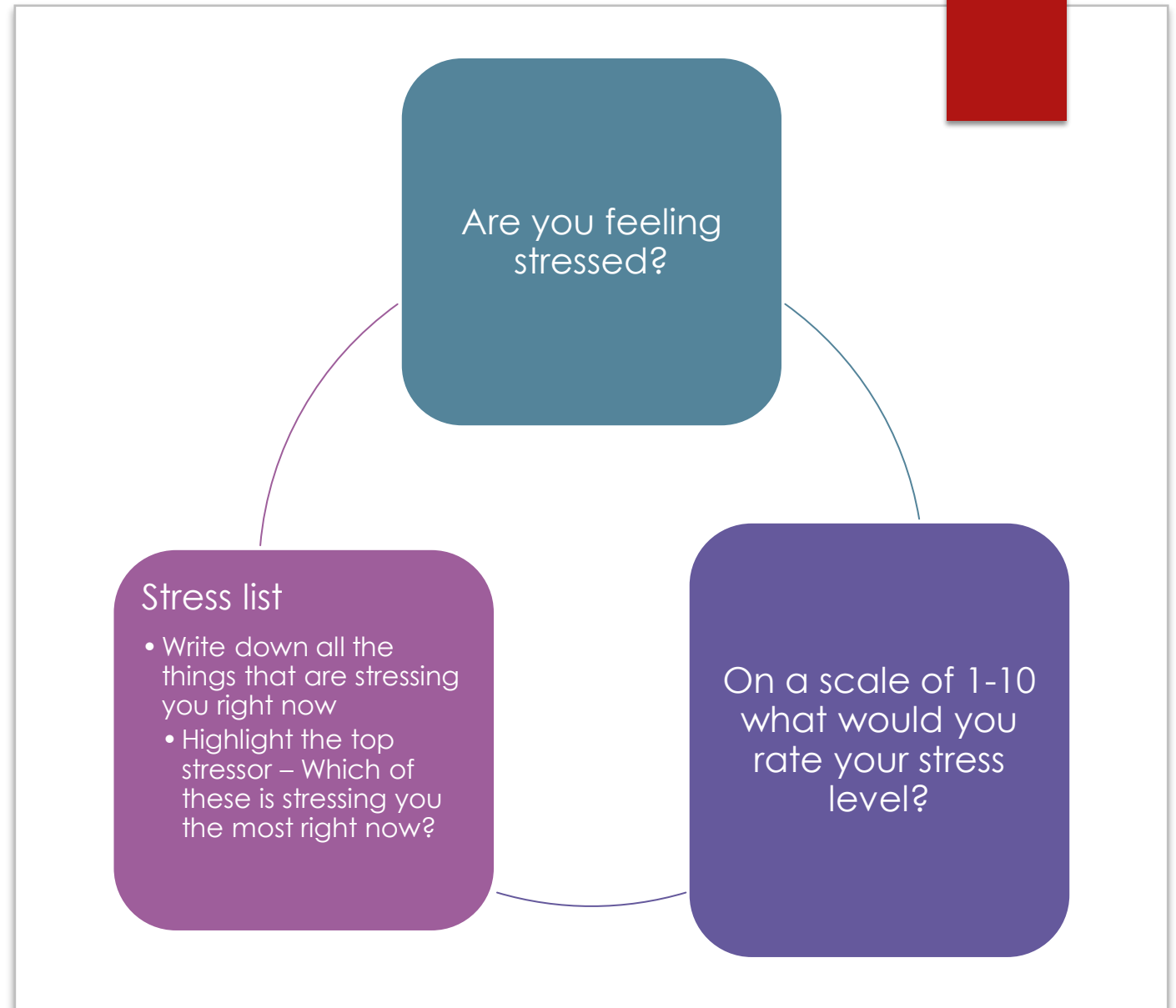
- ▶ We know that caring for a Veteran with dementia can be very stressful, especially at end-of-life
- ▶ We know that chronic stress is not good for the body/mind
- ▶ How can we help caregivers reduce stress levels so they can have better health and quality of life?



Recognizing Feelings is at the Center of Stress-Reduction



Regular Assessment of Stress Levels



Example of a Stress List

Jackie's stress list:

I'm managing all the finances, and I don't know what to do

I'm all alone, I lost my life partner, there's no intimacy

My daughter isn't doing well at her job

My husband is having accidents of bowel at night, I can't sleep

My eyesight is not the best

Nobody is helping me

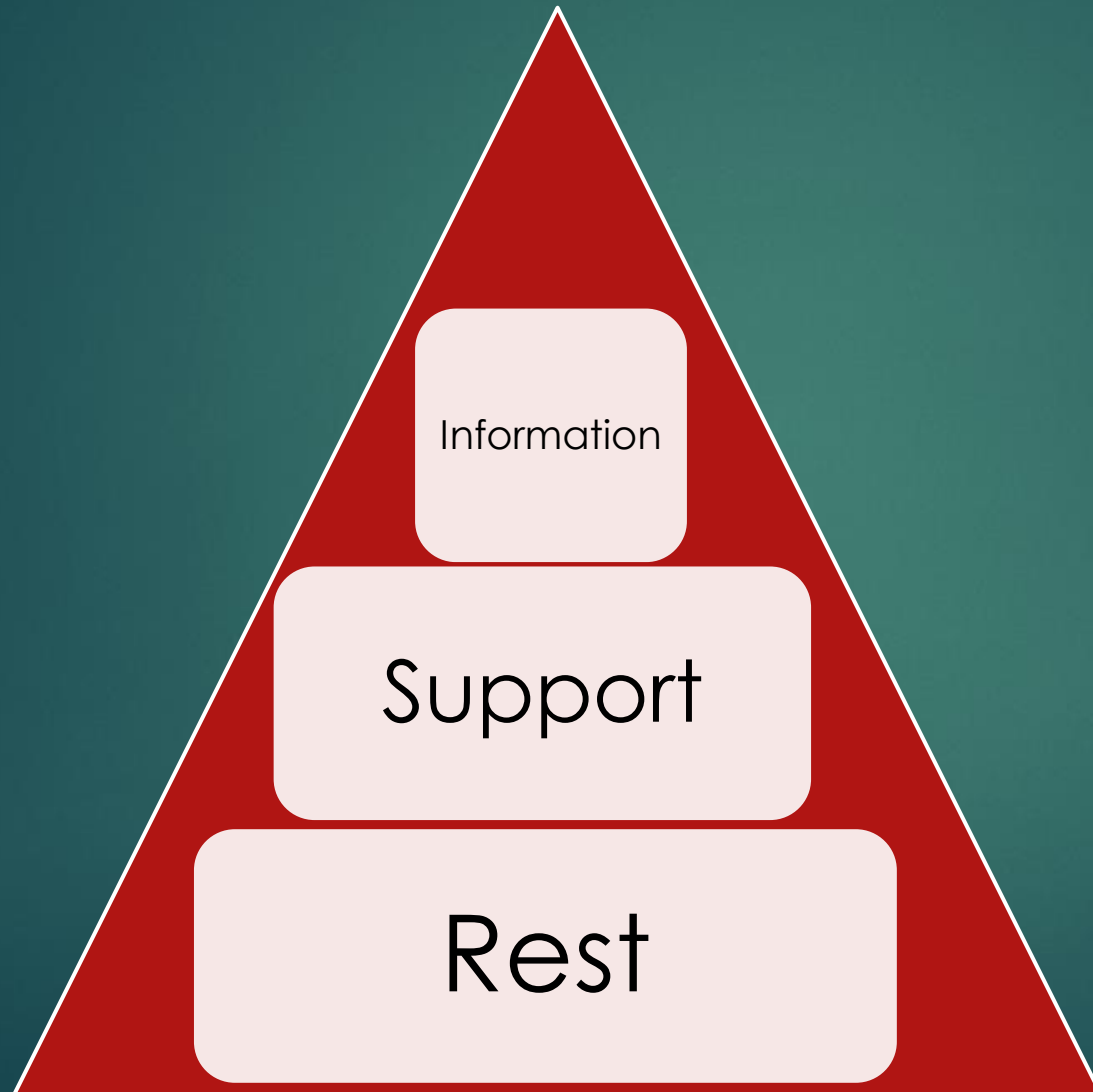
My husband doesn't even recognize me anymore

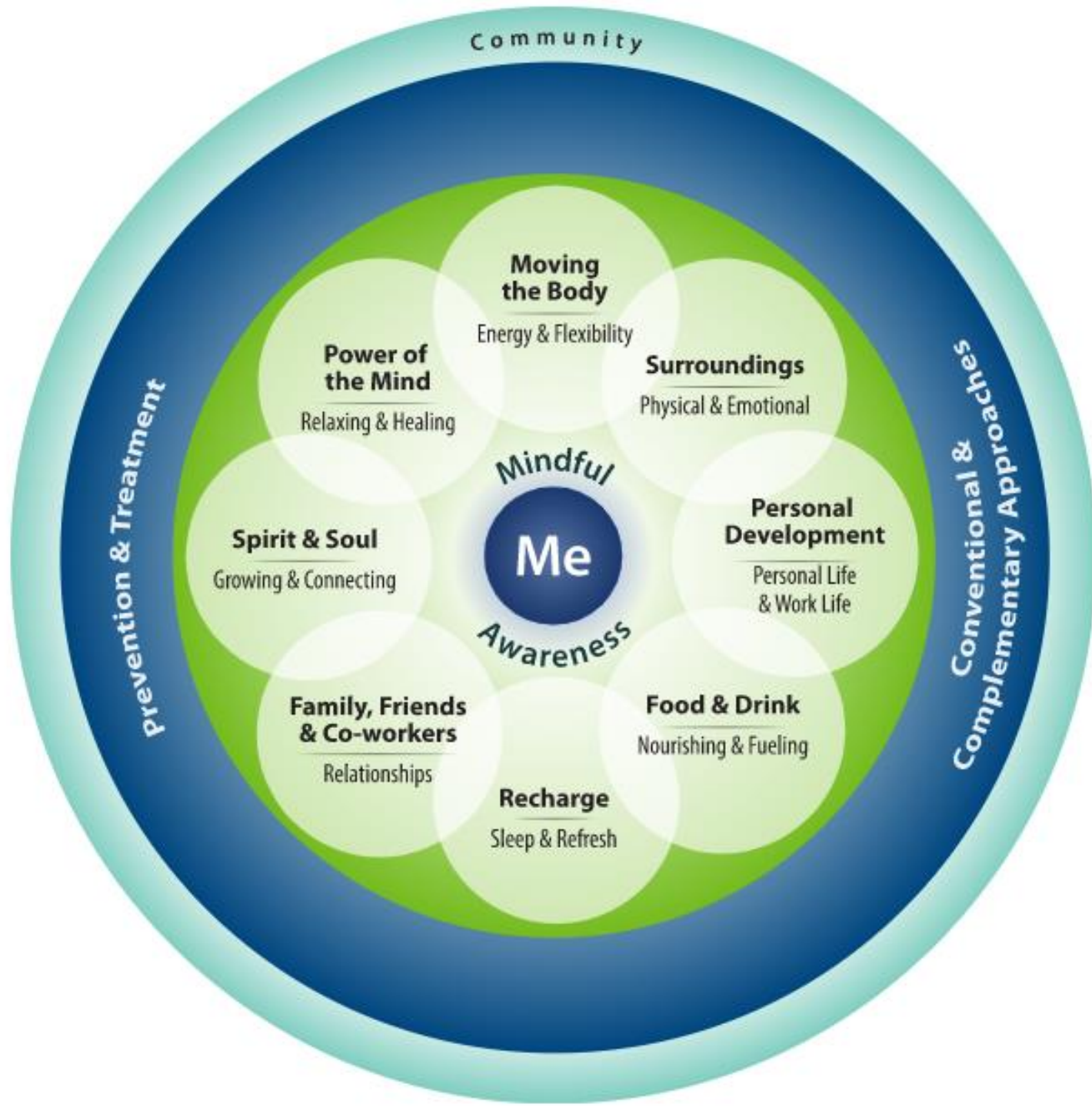
My husband keeps asking me the same question over and over

Nobody understands how much I have to do for him

Nothing is going well, I feel like a failure

Awareness of Needs





Whole Health Circle

Whole Health Approach



TREAT YOURSELF TO SOME TLC

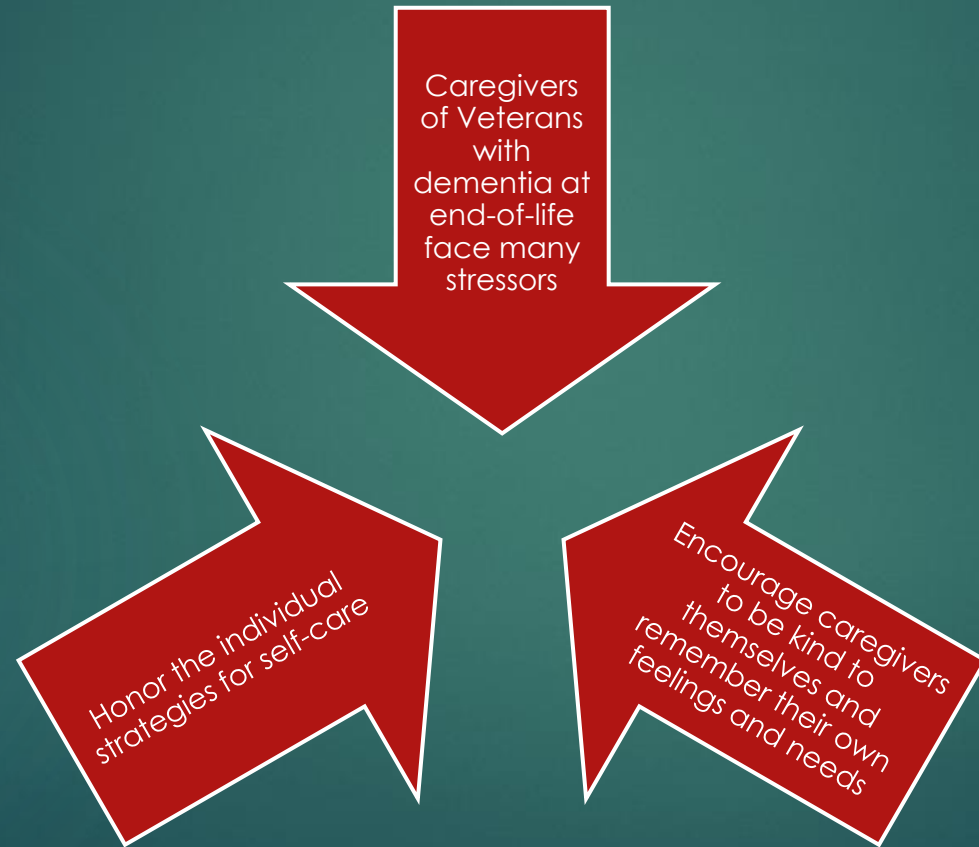


INCORPORATING YOUR OWN
FEELINGS AND NEEDS AT THE
CENTER OF YOUR LIFE



WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX
AND ENJOY LIFE?

Summary/Conclusion



Resources for Caregivers

- ▶ [VA Caregiver Support Program Home](#)
- ▶ [Whole Health Home \(va.gov\)](#)
- ▶ [The Elizabeth Dole Foundation](#)
- ▶ [AARP Resources for Caregivers and their Families](#)
- ▶ [RESOURCES - Office of Rural Health \(va.gov\)](#)
- ▶ [Alzheimer's Association | Alzheimer's Disease & Dementia Help](#)
- ▶ [Alzheimer's Foundation of America \(alzfdn.org\)](#)