

Navigating Loss, Loneliness, and Aging: **RECONNECTING TO SOURCES OF STRENGTH**

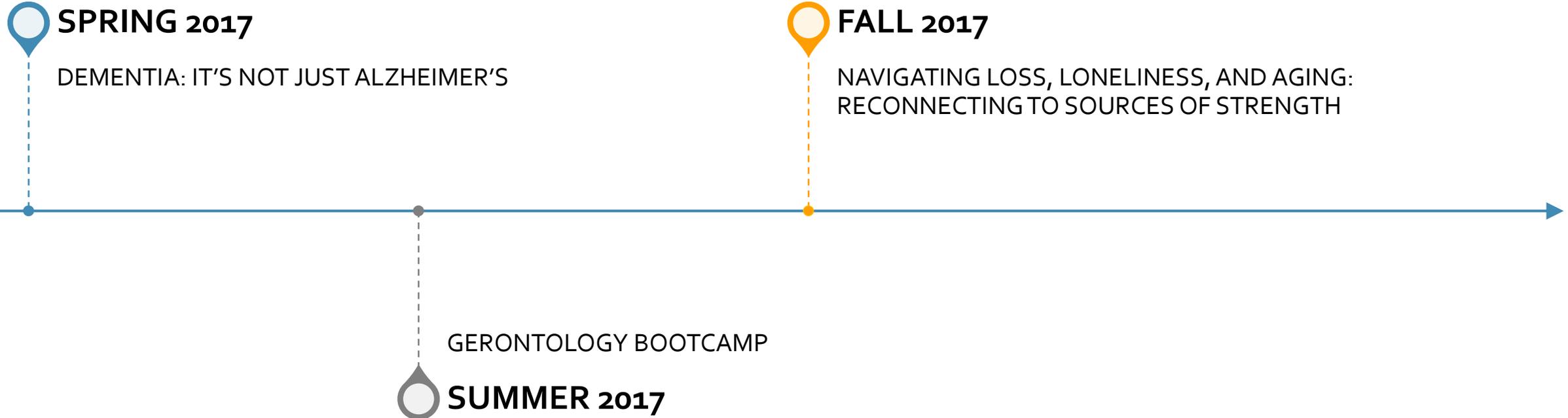
PART 3 – LOSS & THE PROFESSIONAL CAREGIVER

Developed by:

Gigi Amateau, Enid Butler, Annette Clark,
Annette Kelly, Jenny Inker, Raleigh Priddy, Jay White

November 2017

THREE SERIES





VCU Department of Gerontology

<http://www.sahp.vcu.edu/departments/gerontology/>



Virginia Department for Social Services

www.dss.virginia.gov/

A PROGRAM FOR PROFESSIONAL CAREGIVERS WORKING IN ADULT DAY CARE SETTINGS

A FOUR-PART WEBINAR SERIES

1

Part I: Loss

2

Part II: Grief & a
"New Normal"

3

Part III:
Loss & the
Professional
Caregiver

4

Part IV:
Social
Connectedness

At the end of this series, YOU will have an increased understanding of:

the difference between **grief** and **loss**

the areas of life that loss can impact

how to work towards a "**new normal**"

activities and resources for **navigating loss**

person-centered care as it relates to loss

the importance of **self-care** for the professional

the relationship between **loss, loneliness, and social isolation**

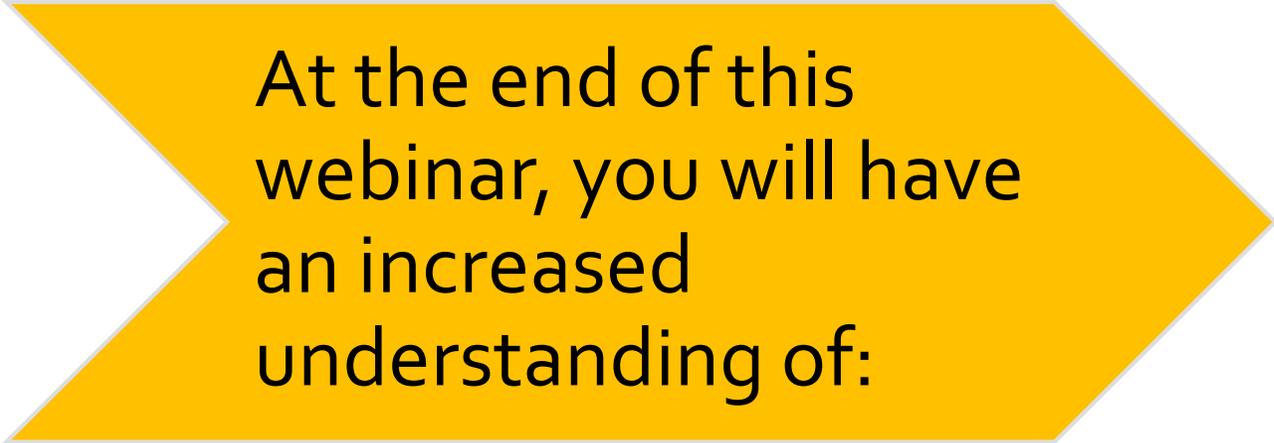
risk factors for loneliness and social isolation

the **health consequences** of loneliness and social isolation

how loneliness and social isolation impact the body's **immune system**

the health benefits of **social connectedness**

activities for enhancing social connectedness



At the end of this webinar, you will have an increased understanding of:

- The **areas of life loss** can influence
- **Person-centered** care as it relates to loss and grief
- The importance of **self-care** for the professional
- How better **to identify the influence of loss** in our own lives

SESSION 3

Learning Objectives

A wooden Adirondack chair sits on a wooden dock overlooking a calm lake. In the background, there are lush green mountains under a blue sky with light clouds. The scene is peaceful and scenic.

INHALE

EXHALE

**WHAT SHOULD
STAFF KNOW AND
HOW CAN WE HELP?**

**A
PRACTICAL
APPROACH**

What you can do to support participants through loss and grief and promote good mental health

1. Know

Know the individuals you care for, including information about their mental health

2. Provide

Provide compassionate support to individual and families

3. Identify and build

Identify and build on strengths

4. Be resourceful

Be familiar with mental health professionals and community resources for people experiencing loss and grief

5. Stay engaged

Don't give up!

Physical health

Illness and pain
patterns

Sleep patterns

Dietary routines

Change in
attitude

Interactions with
family, friends,
staff, participants

Engagement
levels

Behavior
patterns

Changes in desire
to be "left alone"

1. Know Your Participants

Potential Information Sources

```
graph LR; A[Potential Information Sources] --- B[Participant records]; A --- C[Interviews]; A --- D[Observations]; A --- E[Clues from family members or other participants]; A --- F[Asking the participants direct questions]; A --- G[Other center staff];
```

Participant records

Interviews

Observations

Clues from family members or other participants

Asking the participants direct questions

Other center staff

Active listening

Responsiveness

Being your authentic,
genuine self

Displaying warmth and
friendliness

Being non-judgmental

Being empathetic and
understanding

Accepting people as
they are

Being present in the
moment with
participants

Inviting/including family
members and friends as
part of the care team as
appropriate

2. Provide compassionate support

Focusing on positive aspects

Identifying strengths

Building upon those strengths

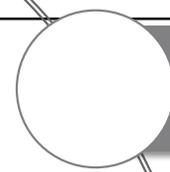
Promoting connectivity with people, places, events

Getting people involved: family, friends, volunteers, therapy animals, clergy, etc.

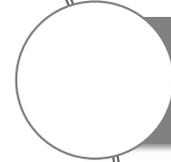
Other suggestions?

3. Identify Strengths

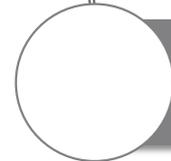
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
- Mental Health America
- Faith-based Groups
- Private Mental Health Practices
- Hospitals
- Community Mental Health Agencies
- Online communities/organizations



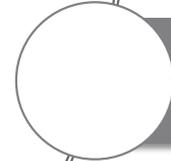
Educational Classes



Support Groups



Coping Skills



Links to Resources



Advocacy

4. Be familiar with resources!

Encourage
participants
to:

- Be independent and autonomous
- Engage in physical activity
- Participate in group activities
- Try alternative therapies (music, aromatherapy, light therapy)
- Be creative and try something outside their comfort zone
- Mentor new participants
- Volunteer in the center
- Other suggestions?

5. Stay engaged! Don't give up!

Take 5: The Forest Awakens - Guided Imagery for Stress Relief (verbal, music & nature sounds)



The Forest Awakens

Take 5 Guided Imagery Series
Relaxation/Stress Relief



Center for Spirituality & Healing
since 1993

MORE VIDEOS

Videography by Craig Blacklock

0:00 / 5:43

YouTube

www.youtube.com/watch?v=gU_ABFUAVAs

LOSS & GRIEF

**Self-Care for
the
Professional
Caregiver**

Professional Caregivers' Loss and Grief

The personalities of most health care professionals have a strong empathetic and compassionate component.

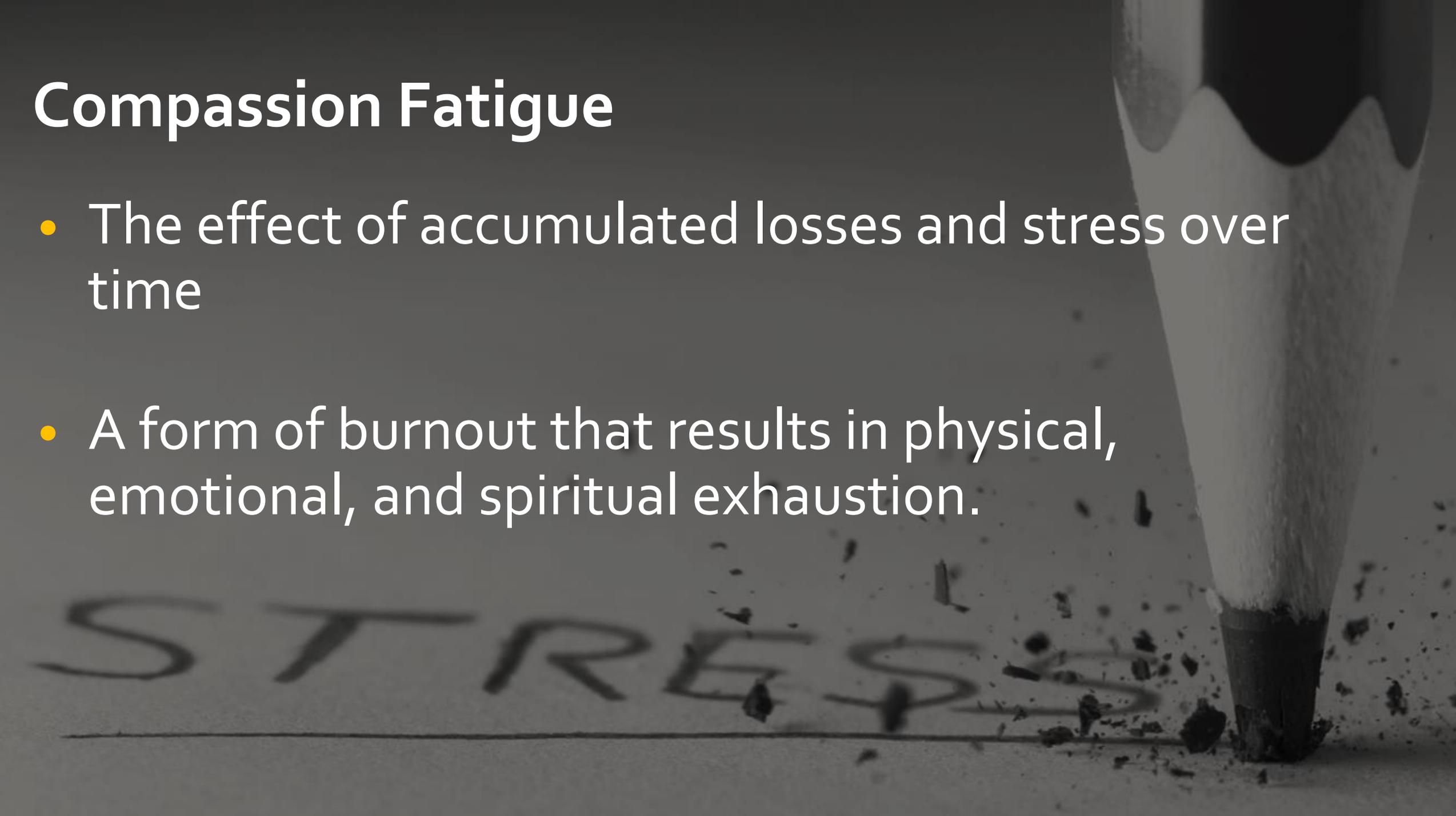
Often professional caregiver loss is not addressed in the workplace.

Professionally-related grief events, which accumulate over time, can be tied to emotional distress and burnout.

Compassion Fatigue

- The effect of accumulated losses and stress over time
- A form of burnout that results in physical, emotional, and spiritual exhaustion.

STRESS

A close-up, grayscale photograph of a pencil tip drawing the word "STRESS" on a light-colored surface. The pencil is positioned vertically on the right side of the frame, with its lead tip touching the surface. The word "STRESS" is written in a simple, hand-drawn font. The background is dark and textured, suggesting a wooden desk or similar surface. The overall mood is one of weariness and exhaustion, which directly relates to the concept of compassion fatigue discussed in the text above.

Compassion Fatigue: Signs & Symptoms

Fatigue

Depression

Losing interest in hobbies, enjoyable activities

Withdrawing from relationships

Physical symptoms
– headache, sleep changes

Anger/Irritability

Obsession with work related issues

Decline in work satisfaction

Compassion Fatigue: Assessment



Ask yourself these questions, *yes* or *no*

	YES	NO
Personal concerns commonly intrude on my professional role.		
My colleagues seem to lack understanding.		
I find even small changes enormously draining.		
I can't seem to recover quickly after association with trauma or loss.		
Association with loss or trauma affects me very deeply.		
My participants' stress or grief affects me deeply.		
I have lost my sense of hopefulness.		
I feel vulnerable all the time.		
I feel overwhelmed by unfinished personal business.		

Self-Care

Some see self-care as "selfish" or not productive.

Honest self-reflection is important!

Professional caregivers tend to place a high priority on caring for others but not themselves.

"Self care" is a priority for combating compassion fatigue.

- What routines help me sleep best?
- What foods nourish me?
- How can I infuse my days with more movement and physical activity?

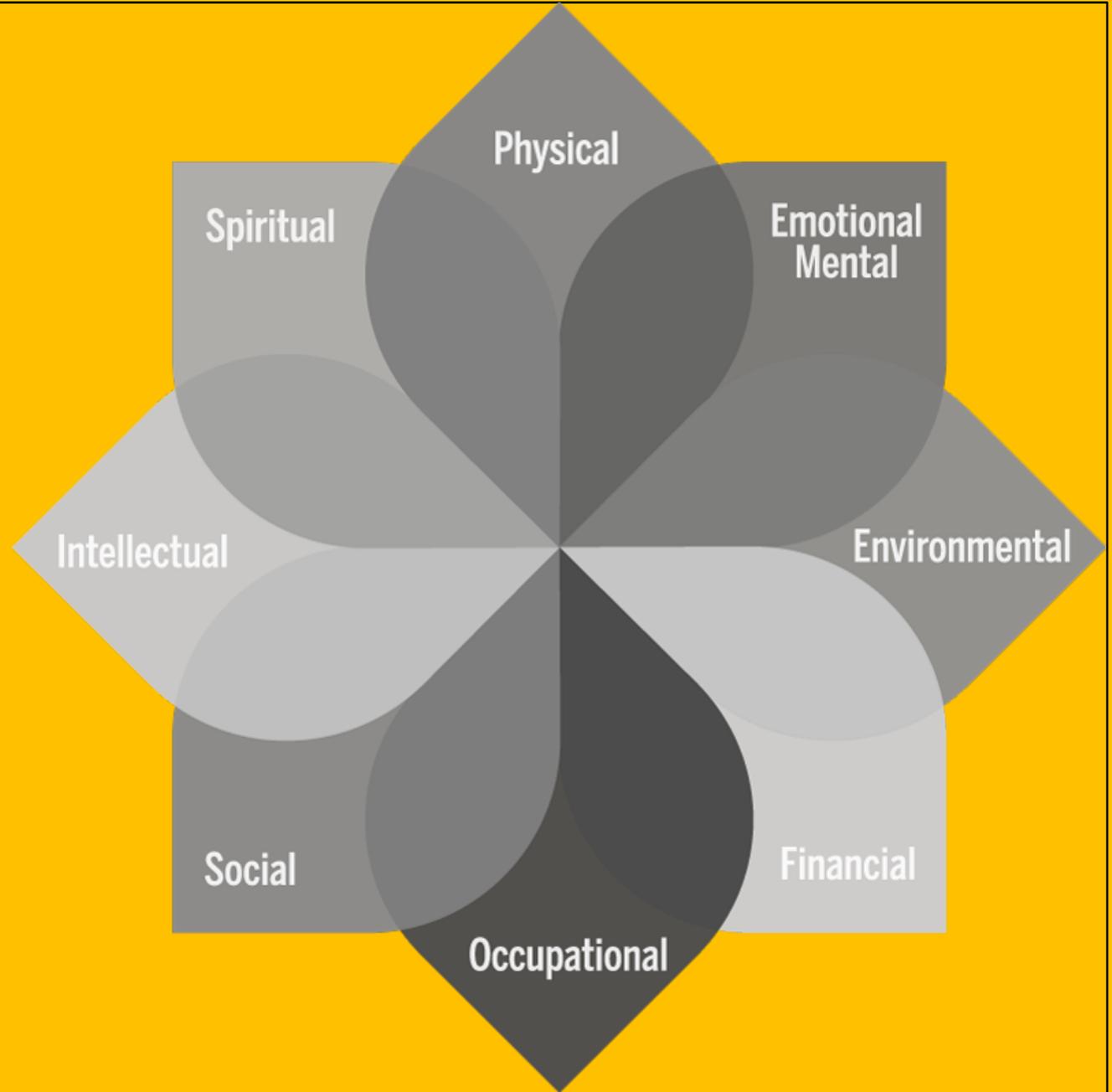
- Who or what calms me?
- What makes me laugh?
- When do I feel confident and strong?



- What gives my life meaning?
- What is the source of my greatest joy?
- What do I deeply believe in?

- Who can I call on for support?
- Who do I enjoy spending time with?

THE 7 DIMENSIONS OF WELLNESS





SELF CARE:
The "Do's"

Find a hobby

Find quiet time to reflect

Draw boundaries

Exercise

Eat well

Connect with family and friends

Get enough sleep

Laugh – often and loud!

Find a creative outlet

Take time off

Be gentle with yourself



Finding a balance
between your work
life and personal
life is critical.

Recognize the
work you do is
important and
meaningful.

Enjoy your life and
live it to the fullest!

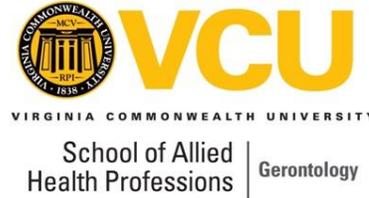
Be as gentle and
kind to yourself as
you would to those
you care for!

Humor can be
really helpful!

Self-Care



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES



- Phone: (804) 828-1565
- Website: <http://www.sahp.vcu.edu/gerontology/>
- Email: agingstudies@vcu.edu

- Be sure to “like” us on Facebook
- <https://www.facebook.com/vcugerontology>

1

Part I: Loss

2

Part II: Grief and
the "New Normal"

3

Part III:
Loss & the
Professional
Caregiver

4

Part IV:
**Social
Connectedness**