

Caregiver *Corner*

a  FreedomCare Publication

INSIDE

 Virtual Talk Recap

 Caregiver Spotlight

 Fall Recipe



<https://www.freepik.com/vectors/shopping>>Shopping vector created by pikisuperstar

Welcome back to the Caregiver Corner!

We're excited to continue sharing tips, activities, and recipes, and spotlighting caregivers in our quarterly newsletter.

In this issue, we'll recap a virtual talk on caregiving we hosted a few weeks ago, featuring Dr. Barry Jacobs. We think the highlights of his talk will be useful, especially if you couldn't make it to the event in September.

Next we'll spotlight caregiver Ameena R. and her mother Bibi, who have lots to share about caregiving as a job but also as a way to spend quality time with family.

Then we'll send you off with a flavorful fall recipe.

Have a restful autumn and winter, and you'll hear from us again as we enter 2022!

Recap:

Dr. Barry Jacobs on reducing stress and family conflict as a caregiver

A few weeks ago, FreedomCare hosted a virtual talk with noted clinical psychologist and family therapist Dr. Barry Jacobs. Dr. Jacobs specializes in family caregiver support. He's written a number of books on the topic, including *The Emotional Survival Guide for Caregivers—Looking After Yourself and Your Family While Helping an Aging Parent*, and with Dr. Julia L. Mayer, *AARP Meditations for Caregivers—Practical, Emotional and Spiritual Support for You and Your Family*.

You can watch a recording of the event [here](#).

Dr. Jacobs used transcripts from actual clients to illustrate how caregivers can relieve stress and take ownership over their caregiving plan. Here are some of the main takeaways from the virtual talk:

Practice self-care

Caregiving can have a negative impact on health and well-being, so it's important to set aside time for yourself to recharge, physically and emotionally. Protect time for exercise, relaxation, meditation, and keeping up spiritual practices.

Embrace mixed feelings

As a caregiver, embrace your mixed feelings about caregiving. It's okay if you don't love caring for your patient every moment of the day. Accepting that there will be emotional ups and downs helps to reduce the guilt you feel when you're burnt out or just not feeling it sometimes.

Set your limits

Handing off certain tasks doesn't mean you're a bad caregiver or don't care about your patient. On the contrary, identifying your limits and creating a care

plan that's sustainable for you is in your patient's best interest.

Keep purpose top of mind

When feelings of resentment and burnout are just too much to bear, remind yourself of the greater purpose of your sacrifices. Ask yourself, "Why do I do what I do for my loved one?" and "How does my choice to give care reflect my values?"

Separate past from present

A lot has changed over the years for you and your family. Attempt to separate out past family dynamics from the caregiver-patient dynamics you experience now.

Set expectations

To reduce feelings of resentment, aim to set clear expectations and promote open dialogue with your patient, and with other family members whose contributions may not match yours.

During the talk, some caregivers expressed how difficult it is to set boundaries with their patients. Dr. Jacobs offered that caregivers in this situation explain to their patients that they need help and support too, and that patients can help caregivers by respecting their boundaries and seeking out additional support when the caregiver takes time to focus on their own needs.

Throughout the evening, Dr. Jacobs returned to the notion of caregiving as a marathon and not a sprint. You have to maintain a sustainable pace and take any and all replenishment offered if you're going to care for your loved one long-term.

If you still have questions for Dr. Jacobs, please send them to wellness@freedomcareny.com.



Are there other topics you'd like to see addressed in a virtual talk? Let us know by replying to this email so we can select speakers based on your specific needs and interests.



Caregiver Spotlight

Ameena R.

In each Caregiver Corner, we highlight a new caregiver. We share their story of how they came to FreedomCare, what being a caregiver means to them, and any caregiving tips they wish to share with others.

To be featured, email omcgill@freedomcareny.com.

For Ameena, FreedomCare came just at the right time. For the past few years, she faced mounting challenges in all aspects of her life. She was a single mom caring for her special needs son when COVID-19 hit. Her son's school went remote and she couldn't return to her seasonal job. She knew something needed to be done so she talked with her mother, Bibi, about FreedomCare and it was settled. "We said let's do this!"

Thanks to the flexibility of her caregiving schedule, Ameena can now support herself, her son, and her mother. With FreedomCare, she has secured income, and created a schedule that allows her to care for her aging mother and be home with her son for remote learning.

What Ameena appreciates the most about caregiving is that she can be there for her family. Before FreedomCare, Ameena was balancing work and caring for her son. She couldn't visit her mom as much as she wanted to. Now she visits her mom almost every day. Her family is thankful for the new arrangement too. On her days off, her

dad and sisters, who live with her mom, call and text her-- "You're not coming today??" They've come to rely not only on Ameena's help, but also her company.

Ameena recognizes that having caregivers come into the home can be hard for patients. Aging patients often struggle with having less control than they're used to. She says it makes it much easier when the caregiver is someone the patient knows and trusts. Ameena looks at caregiving both ways: "I have to be on top of her, but I also consider my mom's emotions." Ameena knows all her mom's doctors and has a list of all her mom's medications, but she also spends quality time with her. "It's a job but I also get to be with my mom."

Ameena's advice for caregivers? "Patience and positivity, when you bring that [to any relationship], it comes back to you." Ameena adds that it's important to take care of yourself before you care for others. "Whether you're with your patient or not, enjoy the little things every day."

Best Lentil Soup

Get ready for fall with this easy and flavorful weeknight dinner!

Prep Time: 10 mins | Cook Time: 35 mins | Total Time: 45 mins | Serves 4 to 6

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons coconut oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 3 tablespoons minced ginger
- 1 tablespoon mild curry powder
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes, more to taste
- 1 (28-ounce) can fire roasted diced tomatoes
- 1 cup dried French green lentils, rinsed and drained
- 2½ cups water
- 1 (14-ounce) can full-fat coconut milk
- ½ teaspoon sea salt, more to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper
- ½ cup diced cilantro
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice

Instructions:

1. Heat the oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the onion and a pinch of salt and cook until soft and lightly browned around the edges, 8 to 10 minutes, reducing the heat to low as needed.
2. With the heat on low, add the garlic, ginger, curry powder, and red pepper flakes and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 2 minutes.
3. Add the tomatoes, lentils, water, coconut milk, ½ teaspoon salt, and several grinds of black pepper. Bring to a boil, cover, and reduce to a simmer, stirring only




This recipe, and more like it, can be found at loveandlemons.com

occasionally, until the lentils are tender, 25 to 35 minutes. If your soup is too thick, stir in ½ to 1 cup more water to reach your desired consistency.

4. Stir in the cilantro and lime juice. Season to taste with salt and pepper and serve.

Notes

Store leftover soup in the fridge for up to 4 days. If it thickens too much in the fridge, stir in a little water while you reheat it until you reach your desired soup consistency. This soup also freezes well.



“The source of love is deep in us and we can help others realize a lot of happiness. One word, one action, one thought can reduce another person’s suffering and bring that person joy.”

Thich Nhat Hanh

Want your question answered in the next newsletter?

Being a caregiver is hard work! Send us your questions or concerns about caregiving by responding to this email, and we’ll answer them in the next newsletter.