

## Long-Term Care Survey Alert

### STRESS MANAGEMENT: Take This Balanced Approach to Maintaining Your Wellbeing

Are you focusing on these four aspects of yourself?

With the MDS 3.0 and RUGs-IV on the near horizon, your stress levels may be hitting new levels.

As a stress antidote, **Cheryl Boldt, RN**, recommends achieving "balance" by engaging in activities that take care of your physical self, social emotional self, mental, and spiritual selves. Boldt notes that author Franklin Covey's book, "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People," discusses how you need to make time for these activities "because they will not happen if you do not schedule them. He also says 'common sense is not always common practice' and that it takes practice to develop a habit, which includes replacing a bad habit with a good one," adds Boldt, a consultant in Omaha, Neb.

"Think of it as sitting on a fourlegged stool with each aspect of your being representing one leg on that stool. How many of the legs can you cut off and still have 'balance'?"

Examples: "Your social emotional self may include those things you do that provide meaningful connectivity with others," says Boldt, a consultant in Omaha, Neb. "Your spiritual self may need to attend church, read the Bible or other spiritual guide ... get in touch with the inner you through yoga, meditation, or attending a spiritual event, walk in nature, pray ... whatever is spiritual to you," she adds.

"Your mental self requires whatever it takes to keep yourself mentally stimulated and fit." That "may include reading, writing, taking a class, interacting with a person who challenges you to think, quiet time to meditate or think without interruption, listening to music, or listening to educational information as you drive or relax." Some activities can "meet two or three aspects of your being at one time," says Boldt. An example would be walking outdoors, drinking a healthy drink, and listening to music or educational materials.

Finds Ways to Really Get Away

Setting aside some clearly identified "'me time' might be enough to recharge your caregiver batteries," says **Steven Littlehale, MS, GCNS-BC**, chief clinical officer for PointRight Inc. in Lexington, Mass.

"In general, nurses and all healthcare providers have to get away from what they do from time to time," agrees **Rena Shephard, MHA, RN, RAC-MT, C-NE**, founding board chair and executive editor for the American Association of Nurse Assessment Coordinators and president and CEO of RRS Healthcare Consulting Services in San Diego. "We tend to just keep working and working," she observes. Taking time off where you don't even think about work "helps you see things more clearly and gives you some breathing room to develop a better perspective. You can get so pulled into the work that sometimes you can hardly see straight," she notes.