



**NEWS RELEASE – Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.**

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## **“Wellness Wednesday” Livestream Discusses Relaxation Techniques**

A weekly livestream focusing on wellness opportunities through the Area Agency on Aging District 7 (AAA7) is featured each Wednesday on the AAA7 Facebook page. “Wellness Wednesdays” is featured each week at 10:00 am with a new wellness topic for discussion during the broadcast.

As routines have changed through the pandemic, so too have the wellness programs offered through the AAA7. The Agency offers a number of valuable and helpful programs designed to help individuals with their chronic conditions and other health concerns. Prior to the pandemic, the AAA7 would have these classes in person, but have moved them now to telephone classes. Through “Wellness Wednesdays”, the Agency is able to expand the reach to share information about the valuable programs available to help with chronic disease self-management, diabetes self-management, chronic pain self-management, falls management, and caregiver support. The goal is to increase knowledge about these programs and help more and more people learn to live with their chronic conditions and/or embrace helpful tips that can help individuals live healthier.

Recently, the topic of relaxation was included as a discussion point during the livestream.

Thoughts, feelings, moods and actions can have an effect on our overall health just like healthy eating and exercise does. Both pleasant and unpleasant thoughts and emotions can cause your body to react in different ways. Training your mind to help manage symptoms can help you relax and reduce stress and anxiety. Relaxation is not a “cure-all”, but can be an important part of a treatment plan.

Incorporating some pleasurable activities that we enjoy can help with relaxation. Some of these activities can include watching television, listening to music, gardening, and just doing something for ourselves. Nature therapy can also help with spending some time outdoors, and companions such as pets can also be a benefit.

Guided imagery and visualization allows you to use your imagination to relieve symptoms. This “guided daydream” helps you to refocus your mind away from the symptom. Picturing yourself in a peaceful environment can help you achieve relaxing feelings.

Distraction can also help by training your mind to focus on something else to lessen symptoms. Through this method, you are not ignoring your symptoms, just choosing to not dwell on them. You can think of words for every letter of the alphabet, remember words to a song, or the events in an old story. Distraction can help for short periods of time.

The “stop” technique consists of redirecting your attention to a pleasurable experience like looking outside, massaging your hand, or smelling a sweet odor. Stopping and shouting “stop!” when you are entrapped in endlessly negative thoughts can help you direct yourself to something positive.

Practicing gratitude can also be a way to improve your mood and overall happiness by focusing your attention on what is going well in your life. Some ways to practice gratitude include: writing a letter of thanks to someone who had been kind to you, and acknowledging at least three good things that happened that day before bed.

Relaxation is a topic that is discussed as a part of wellness classes at the AAA7 including Chronic Disease Self-Management, Diabetes Self-Management, and Chronic Pain Self-Management. Currently, these classes are being conducted over the telephone. If interested in participating in an upcoming class, call the AAA7 at 1-800-582-7277 or e-mail [info@aaa7.org](mailto:info@aaa7.org).

If you missed any of the “Wellness Wednesday” episodes, you can see a recorded version on the AAA7’s Facebook page or on the AAA7’s website at [www.aaa7.org](http://www.aaa7.org).

Your local Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc. provides services on a non-discriminatory basis. These services are available to help older adults and those with disabilities live safely and independently in their own homes through services paid for by Medicare, Medicaid, other federal and state resources, as well as private pay. The AAA7’s Resource Center is also available to anyone in the community looking for information or assistance with long-term care options. Available Monday through Friday from 8:00 am until 4:30 pm, the Resource Center is a valuable contact for learning more about options and what programs and services are available for assistance.

Those interested in learning more can call toll-free at 1-800-582-7277 (TTY: 711). Here, individuals can speak directly with a specially-trained Resource Specialist who will assist them with information surrounding the programs and services that are available to best serve their needs. The Agency also offers an assessment at no cost for those who are interested in learning more. Information is also available on [www.aaa7.org](http://www.aaa7.org), or the Agency can be contacted through e-mail at [info@aaa7.org](mailto:info@aaa7.org). The Agency also has a Facebook page located at [www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7](http://www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7).

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