Caring for the Caregiver

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Our Goal Today

- You are all caregivers or concerned about caregivers.
- Caregiving – while rewarding – can be quite costly in terms of stress.
- It is critical to have some strategies for managing stress and taking care of oneself.
- Today offers a chance to try some strategies.
The Ministry of Caregiving

- The rewards and joys
- The costly stress
Expressive Writing

The Benefits of Expressive Writing

- James Pennebaker, Ph.D.
  University of Texas at Austin

- John Evans, Ed.D.
  Wellness and Writing Connections

- Many others
Part I: Our Stories

- We are people of stories
- We think of our lives in terms of stories – received and created
- Central elements:
  - Plot
  - Theme
  - Characters
  - Timing
  - Continuity
  - Sense/Coherence
Narrative Disruption
Stress Can Challenge Our Story

The strains and stress of caregiving can represent a loss to our imagined story:

“Like a novel that loses a central character in the middle chapters, the life story disrupted by loss must be reorganized, rewritten, to find a new strand of continuity that bridges the past with the future in an intelligible fashion.”

- Robert Neimeyer
Writing Window
Part II: Our Future Stories

Work of Andrew Lester and Donald Capps:
What is my future story?
Writing Window
Part III: Gratitude
Writing Window