

The Arthritis Foundation presents:

Webinar Series
**Chronic Pain and
Military Families**



Sponsored by



We'll begin shortly...



Event Program

- ✓ All attendees have been muted
- ✓ Q&A function at the bottom of the screen to type in questions
- ✓ Presentation, followed by Q&A
- ✓ Post-Event Survey
- ✓ YouTube.com/ArthritisFoundation
- ✓ Arthritis.org/Webinars



POLL: What's the biggest challenge in your family right now?

a) Communication about pain

b) Maintaining routines

c) Managing caregiver stress

d) Talking with children

e) Finding time for connection



Tonight's Moderator



Robert Santiago

Commissioner of Veteran Services
for the City of Boston, a retired
Navy veteran.

The Invisible Wounds



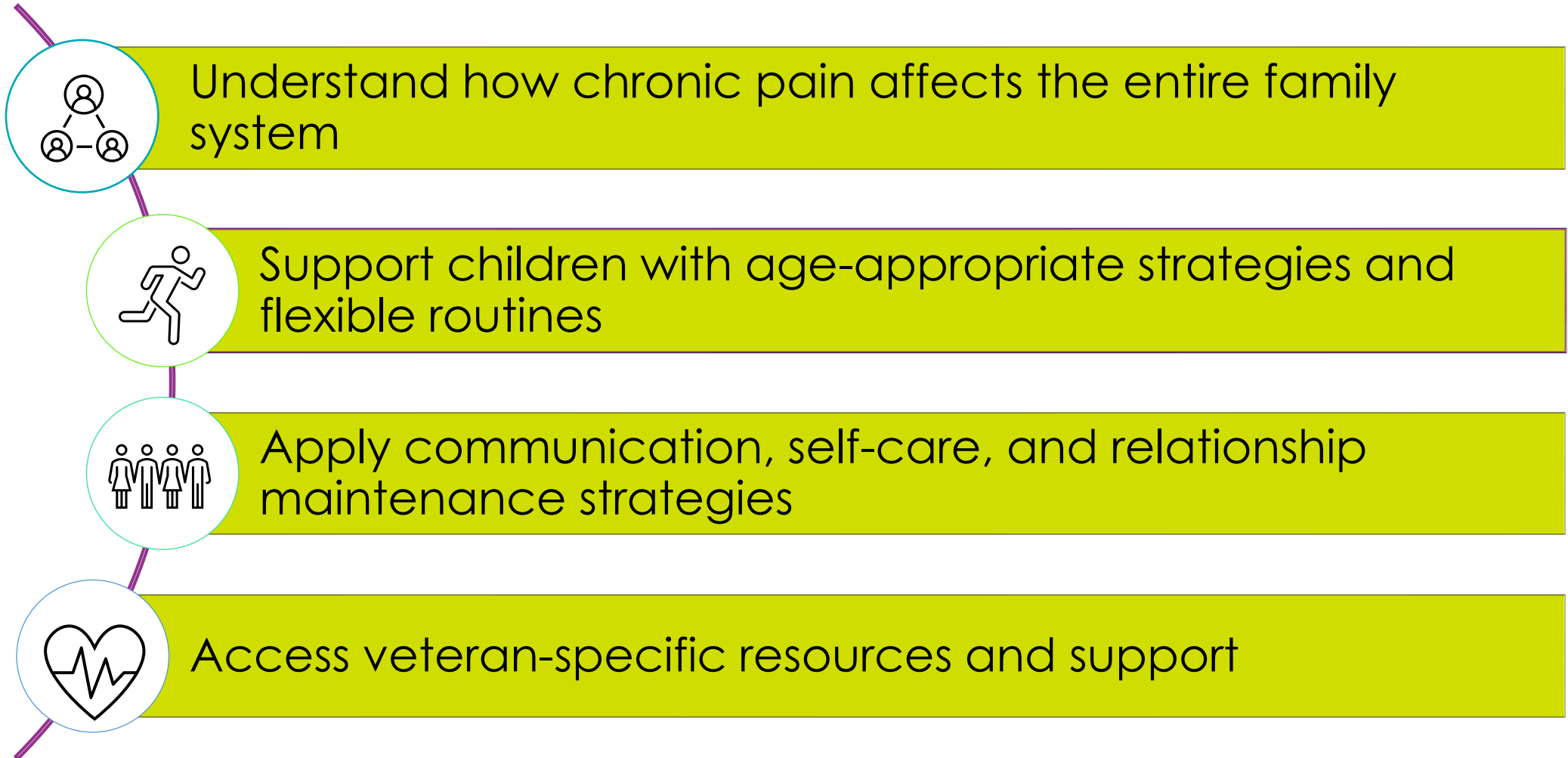
- Nearly **50%** of veterans report chronic pain
- Family members often become full-time caregivers
- Increased stress, anxiety, and depression in spouses and children due household burden



You are in the right place. This is a highly prevalent challenge in the military and veteran community. **We see you, and we are here for you.**



Tonight, You'll:



This Webinar is About Chronic Pain

For more in-depth information about disease management, diet, sleep, etc.

- ✓ [Arthritis.org/health-wellness](https://www.arthritis.org/health-wellness)
- ✓ [Arthritis.org/webinars](https://www.arthritis.org/webinars)
- ✓ [Arthritis.org/podcast](https://www.arthritis.org/podcast)
- ✓ [Arthritis.org/YESTOOL](https://www.arthritis.org/YESTOOL)



Tonight's Experts



Dr. Chrissy Salley
Pediatric Psychologist



Dr. Jessica Leavell
Clinical Psychologist
Certified Pain Reprocessing
Psychotherapist



Ed and Susan Flynn
Boston City Councilor &
military family



**Expert presentation, service member discussion &
Q&A**



Disclaimer:

This webinar is for educational purposes only and not intended to replace medical advice.



ALWAYS Talk to Your Doctor Before
Making Any Changes to Your Care Plan!



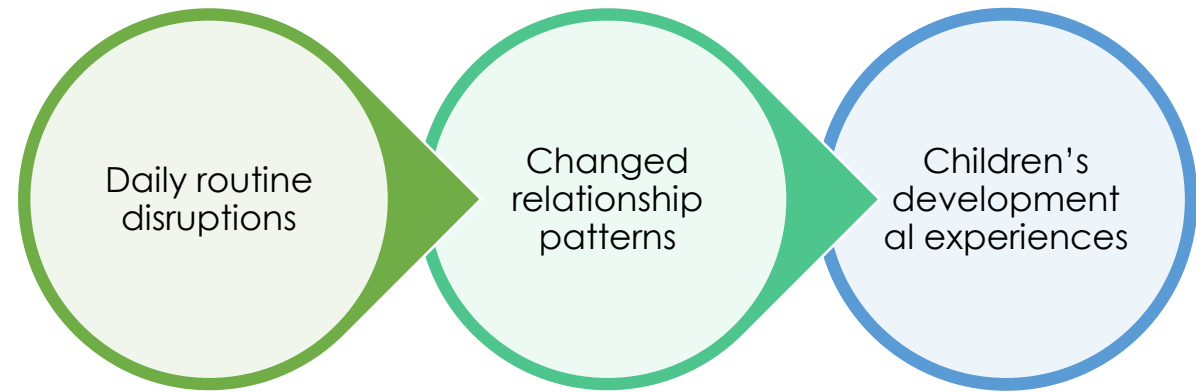
Growing Together

Understanding Family Dynamics and Child Experiences

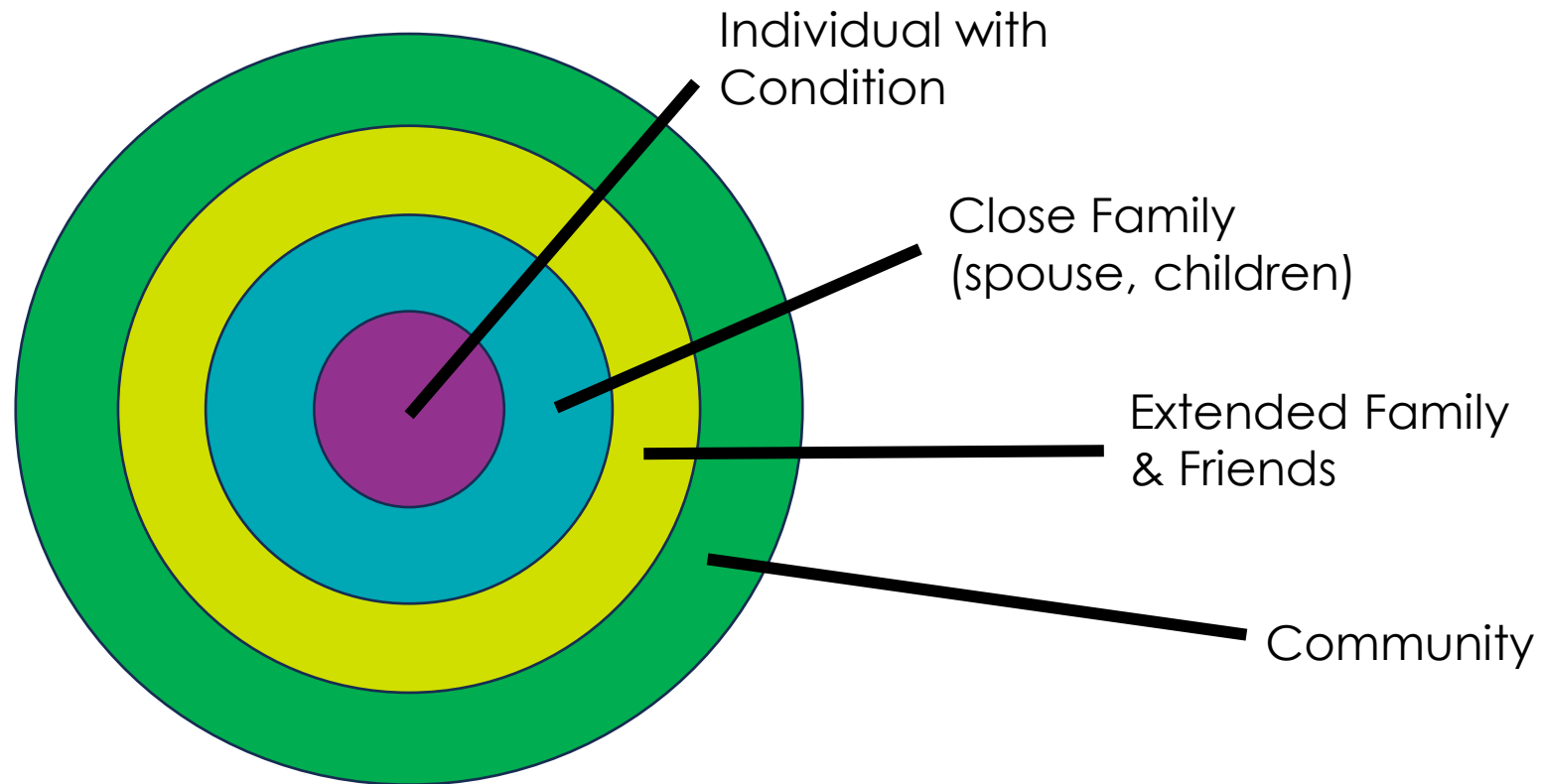
With Dr. Chrissy Salley

Understanding the Family Impact

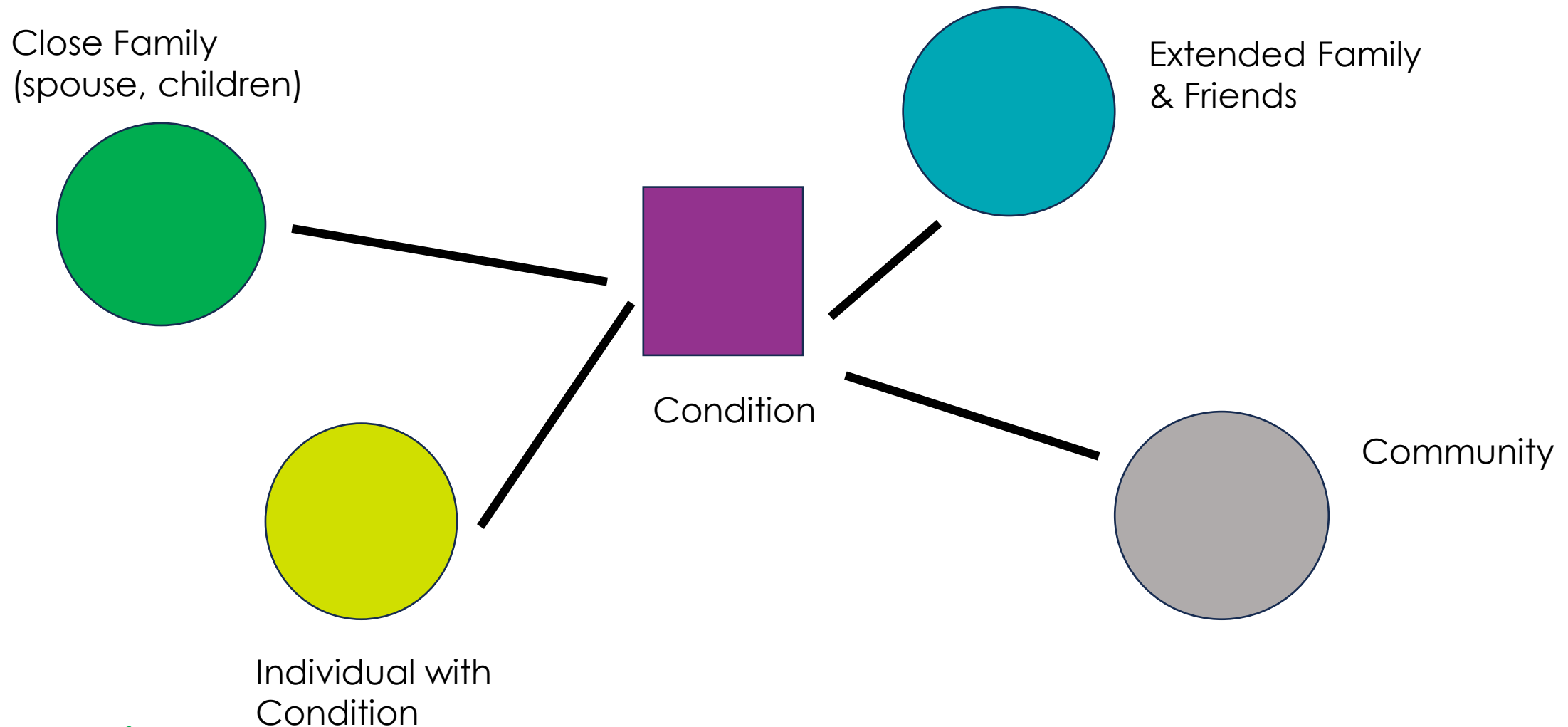
The ripple effect of chronic pain on family life



Relationship with the Impacted Individual



Relationship with the Condition



Talking About Pain

Conversations with Children at Every Age

Talking with Children

Core Principles for All Ages



- Tell the truth
- Listen first
- Maintain routines
- Focus on hope & coping



Preschool



School age



Adolescents



Advancing the Conversation



- Respond to the child's actual concerns
- You can inquire to better understand what they are *really* asking
- Respond honestly and directly
- Consider seed planting for what's to come
- Validate and relate

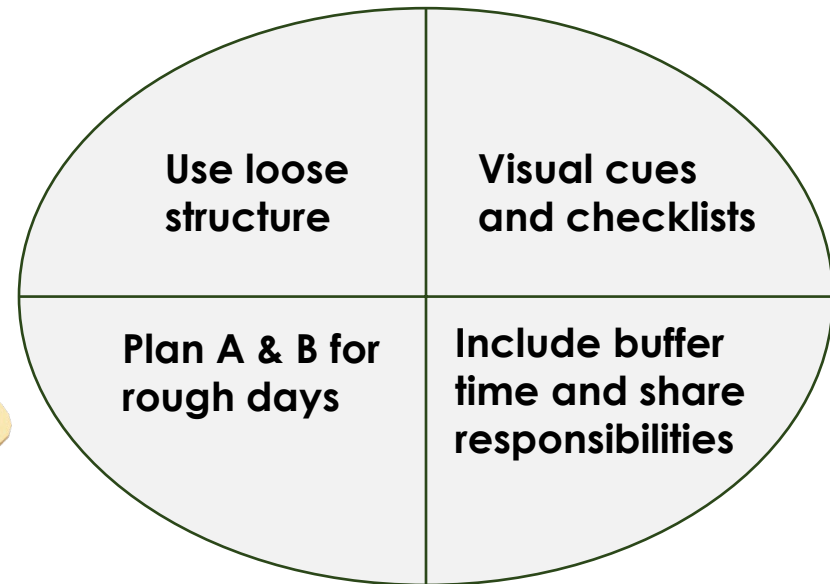
Building Balance

Family Routines with Flexibility

Creating Flexible Family Routines



- Life is unpredictable — flexibility reduces stress and guilt
- Build structure around what matters most (meals, mornings, connection)
- Focus on progress, not perfection



In This Together

Staying Connected & Adapting as a Family

Tips for Family Engagement



- Hold a weekly 15–20 min family check-in to review and adjust
- Celebrate small wins and teamwork
- Prioritize connection over activity — even brief moments count
- Shift from “should” to “can” to stay realistic and compassionate



Building Calm Through Communication

With Dr. Jessica Leavell

Communication That Reduces Conflict



- **Acknowledge the barrier:** Stress and pain break down clear talk
- **Use core skills:** Apply active listening and validation techniques
- **Prioritize empathy:** Reduce fights by leading with empathy and clarity
- **Go deeper:** Address the real sources (guilt, frustration), not just the argument



Sustaining Connection

Communication & Partnership Under Stress

The Caregiver-Patient Trap



- Recognize the “**connection crisis**” pain can create
- Avoid the caregiver-patient trap—your roles are partners first
- Create **caregiver-free time** for shared moments and fun
- Protect pre-pain identities to keep **individuality** alive
- Maintain emotional connection through small, **daily rituals**



Reset

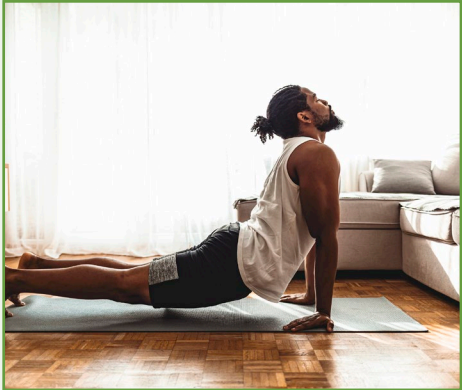
Preventing Caregiving Burnout

Understanding the Risks of Burnout

- **Define Burnout:** Exhaustion resulting from chronic, unmanaged stress
- **Watch for Signs:** Monitor for irritability, detachment, and persistent exhaustion
- **Acknowledge Resistance:** Self-care resistance is common, not a sign of selfishness
- **Reframe Self-Care:** View rest and personal time as necessities, not optional luxuries



Daily & Weekly Self-Care Foundations



Nonnegotiable daily basics

Rest, nutrition, hydration,
movement



Plan for weekly self care

Social, physical, creative,
restorative



Recharge

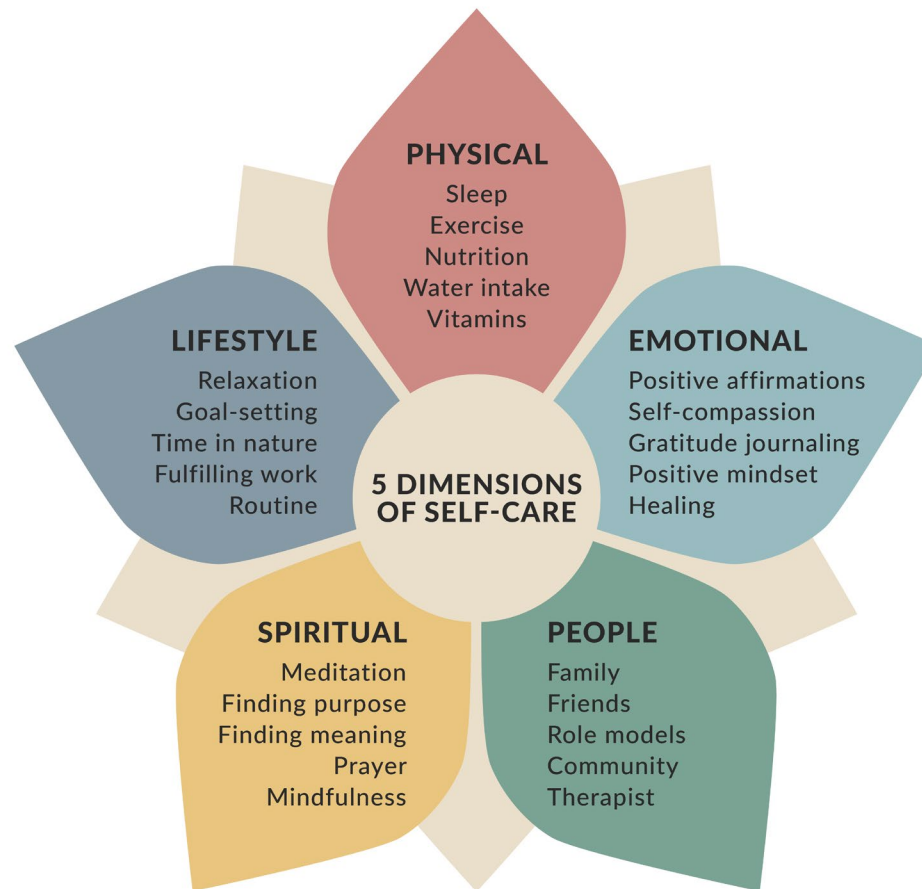
Use respite care or divide
duties



Set boundaries

define your limits to avoid
exhaustion

Daily & Weekly Self-Care Foundations



PositivePsychology.com



It's Okay to Ask for Help

Getting support as a service member

Getting Support

[Arthritis.org](https://www.arthritis.org) – Programs, events, and education for patients and families

[Caregiver Resources Page](#) – Tools for managing caregiving and emotional load

[Arthritis Foundation Helpline](#): 1-800-283-7800

[JA \(Juvenile Arthritis\) Family Network](#) – Connection and education for families with kids living with arthritis

Therapy

Support
Programs

Respite
Care

DAV
(Disabled
American
Veterans)



Getting Support

[Home Base Program at Mass General](#)

[Hospital:](#) Department of Psychiatry: Mental Health and Support Resources for veterans and their families.

[VA Access to Care:](#) The National VA website offers guidance on accessing care and information on support programs for veterans and their families.



The Unseen Strength

A Conversation with Patients and Caregivers

ED ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
FLYNN



With Ed Flynn

Q&A

Please add questions to the Q&A box. We will answer as many as time permits.

Questions?

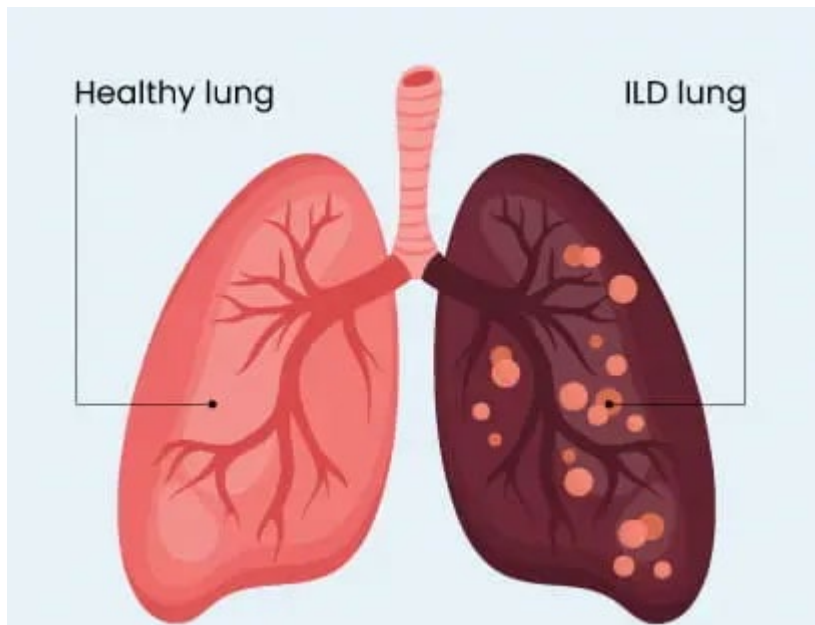
1.800.283.7800 / helpline@arthritis.org

- Better understand your disease
- Interpret your insurance coverage
- Connect with other people like you
- Get involved and Volunteer



Arthritis Symptoms Could Be Much More

Rheumatoid arthritis related interstitial lung disease (RA-ILD) is a broad term for a collection of over 150 disorders that inflame or scar the lungs, leading to pulmonary fibrosis



Risk Factors

Older age at RA onset
Male gender
Smoking history

Watch for:

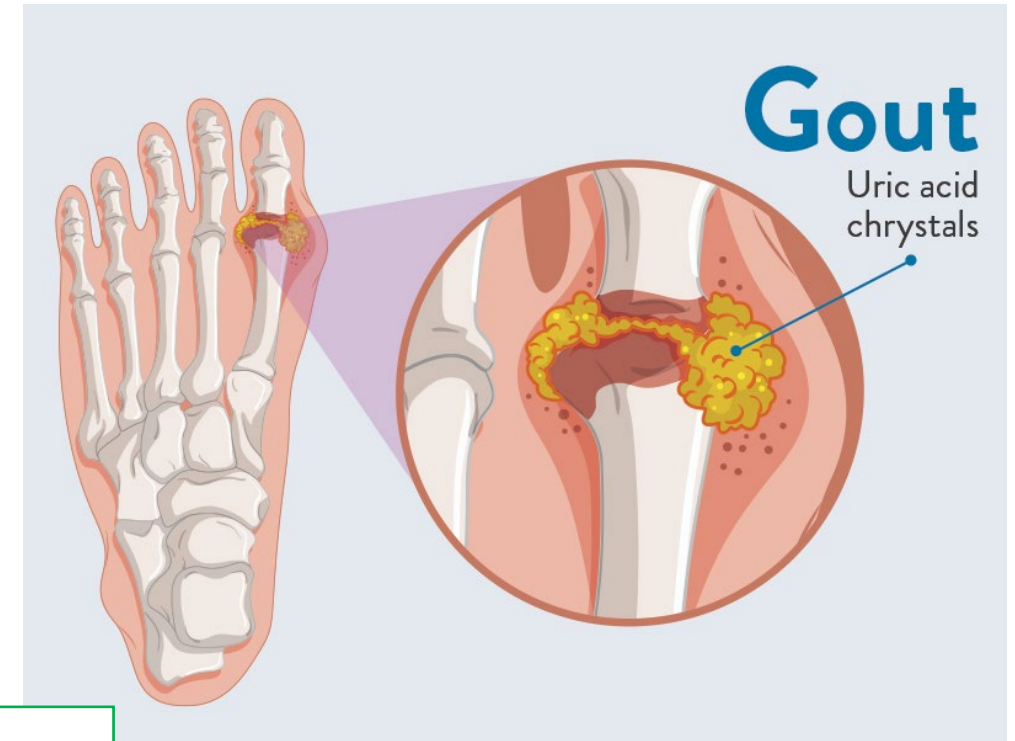
Dry cough, exertional shortness of breath, "velcro" crackles.

Over 150 disorders fall under interstitial lung disease (ILD). RA-ILD is one of the most common autoimmune ILDs.



Gout: An Unexpected Military Issue

- Elevated risks amongst veterans and service members
- A chronic, progressive and inflammatory form of arthritis
- Strong connection between gout and other common health issues like hypertension, obesity and kidney disease



Disease management focuses on healthy lifestyle choices and medication

For more information on gout, visit [arthritis.org/gout-patient-education](https://www.arthritis.org/gout-patient-education)

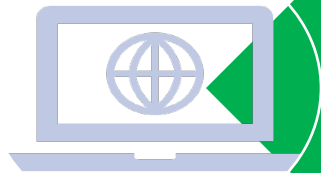


Upcoming Webinars



November 20: Aging Gracefully
with Arthritis

December 18: Balancing Act:
Caregivers & Arthritis



Register Here:
[Arthritis.org/webinars](https://www.arthritis.org/webinars)



Military & Veterans Connect Group

**Join us tomorrow night at 6 pm
ET/3 pm PT!**

What are some of your tips and tricks for getting a good night's sleep? Come share and learn with fellow military members and veterans who just "get it."



Sleep Solutions for Arthritis



Thank You!

Take the survey and let us know what you think!

Join us next time – recordings:

[Arthritis.org/webinars](https://www.arthritis.org/webinars)



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