

Meeting the Challenges

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The Healing Power of Personal Reflection

For some, who we are, what we are doing and our place in the world remains a mystery. For others, who have always felt comfortable with the answers to these questions, sudden life changes or the onset of illness can bring with them a sense of personal confusion.

Based on the results of prior research “that writing about emotionally traumatic experiences has a surprisingly beneficial effect on symptom reports, well-being, and health care use in healthy individuals”, a study of 112 patients, who were suffering with mild to moderately severe asthma or rheumatoid arthritis, was conducted. This research at the Stony Brook School of Medicine of the State University of New York concluded that “Patients...who wrote about stressful life experiences had clinically relevant changes in health status at 4 months compared with those in the control group”, and that “*These gains were beyond those attributable to the standard*

medical care that all participants were receiving.”

Life-based writing is one of the most reliable and effective ways to heal, change and grow, according to Kathleen Adams, Director of The Center for Journal Therapy.

Journaling is something more than just keeping a diary though. In another study, published in the *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, researchers examined the effect of writing about traumatic events. In this study, some participants wrote only about their emotions related to the event, while others wrote both about their emotions and what they thought about what had happened. It was found that those who focused on their emotions alone increased negative symptoms from the trauma, while those who wrote both about the event and their thoughts and feelings about it developed a sense that the stress-

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DISCLAIMER:

Articles prepared by or presented in *Meeting the Challenges* are for general information purposes only.

The information is not intended to be medical advice. If you suspect that you have a physical, medical or psychological problem, you should always seek care from a qualified professional.

Before taking any action that may impact you personally, consult with your own physician, attorney, investment counselor, or other professional advisor.

Meeting the Challenges

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ful event had produced positive effects in their lives.

Charlene Kingston, author of *Writing the Journey*, says that the difference between a diary and a journal is that in a diary people write what happened each day, while in a journal the facts are enlivened by what the writer thinks and feels about what has happened.

Starting a journal is easy too. Some people use notepads or loose-leaf binders or bound journals that can be purchased at any stationary store. Still others feel comfortable creating a computer journal.

Kingston, who has been journaling herself since 1969, says that there are three important rules for journaling:

- Date each entry to keep things in perspective
- Write when and how you want
- Always tell the truth!

She suggests the following basic topics to begin the writing journey:

- Who am I? How do I know who I am?
- What does it mean to be content?
- Do I listen more or talk more? Why?
- What does it mean to nurture myself?

- Am I comfortable with my feelings? What makes me cry or laugh? When am I comfortable expressing my feelings?
- How much of my time is spent with other people and how much am I alone?
- Why do bad things happen?
- Who is responsible when something bad happens to me?
- How do I handle stress? Do I welcome challenges?
- What is my unique gift to the world?

Other topics might include:

- What is most important to me right now and why?
- In what ways is my life changing?
- What would I like to be different in my life?

The purpose of “journal therapy” is to use reflective writing to improve health and wellness. It helps those who use it to provide focus and clarity to issues, concerns, conflicts and confusions.

Journaling is something that everyone can easily start doing on their own, or classes are often offered at local colleges. Books on journaling are also available in most libraries or from your favorite bookstore.

Reflective Writing: Alone or in a Group?

by Cheryl M. Svensson, Ph.D.

Writing can either be a very personal, solitary affair or as a member of a writing group. Guided Autobiography® (GAB) is a method that uses the group process to bring the personal writing experience to a new dimension. Participants write their own story, privately, personally, and then read it aloud to others in their group.

GAB consists of ten sessions and the class is divided into small groups of no more than eight participants each with a facilitator trained to maximize the benefits of the group process. At each weekly meeting, a new life theme is presented and all participants write on the same theme for the coming week. The life themes have been carefully chosen by psychologist and gerontologist, James E. Birren, Ph.D., who developed GAB more than thirty years ago while acting as founding dean of the

Andrus Gerontology Center at the University of Southern California. Research, books, and further information on GAB may be found at the GAB website:

www.guidedautobiography.com

The benefits of group writing and Guided Autobiography are numerous. The writing is focused on a life theme—a topic that applies to all of us as we develop our unique life tapestry, but with great leeway for interpretation. Sensitizing questions are provided for each theme that guides writers to delve deeply into their own personal life story. The questions are not answered literally; rather serve as a prompt to uncover issues, concerns, and unfinished business relevant for that particular person. Participants gain personal insights through their own investigation into their past and writing about it. Also, when they read their stories aloud within their group, they benefit from the comments and reflections shared back to them. For instance, in one class one of the women was a child survivor of the Holocaust while one of the men had been a WWII fighter

pilot. They became close friends, honoring one another for what each had done to survive and end the war. We often become so enmeshed in our own life drama that ‘we can’t see the forest for the trees.’ But the compassionate and dedicated listeners in the GAB group provide a new, broader perspective to one’s life story.

Self-reports from GAB participants reveal increased self-efficacy, connectedness with other and new friendships, enhanced self-awareness, and better understanding and integration of events from the past.

It appears that the GAB process improves the general well-being of older persons and increases their motivations for active roles in volunteering and family. In the words of one of the members, “It has made a difference in my outlook. I have found solace in looking back and courage to go forward.”

To begin the writing of an autobiography can seem daunting, but with the camaraderie of like-minded participants, GAB opens the doors to self-discovery, increased self-esteem, and unleashes the potential for new growth in the future.

*“I’m not really the way
you think I am.....
it’s just my upbringing.”*

- John D. Hackensacker III,
(played by Rudy Vallee)
The Palm Beach Story, 1942

E. coli — Should We Be Worried?

First there was the spinach scare and then people started getting sick after eating at Taco Bell restaurants. Both outbreaks were blamed on eating foods contaminated with *E. coli*.

E. coli is a naturally occurring bacteria. Actually there are hundreds of strains of this bacteria, and most are harmless. The O157:H7 strain that produces dangerous toxins is found in the intestines of healthy cattle, deer, goats, and sheep. Through normal farming procedures, it can contaminate water supplies, crops, milk, and meat products.

Eating undercooked meat, especially ground beef, that looks and smells normal, can cause infection. Other known sources of infection are consumption of sprouts, lettuce, spinach, sa-

lami, unpasteurized milk and juice, and by drinking contaminated water.

Here is what to do to prevent infection?

- Cook all ground beef until a thermometer inserted into several parts of the patty, including the thickest part, reads at least 160° F. Persons who cook ground beef without using a thermometer can decrease their risk of illness by not eating ground beef patties that are still pink in the middle.
- If you are served an undercooked hamburger or other ground beef product in a restaurant, send it back for further cooking. Ask for a new bun and a clean plate, too.
- Keep raw meat separate from ready-to-eat foods

in your kitchen.

- Wash hands, counters, and utensils with hot soapy water after they touch raw meat.
- Never place cooked hamburgers or ground beef on the unwashed plate that held raw patties.
- Wash meat thermometers in between tests of patties that require further cooking.
- Drink only *pasteurized* milk, juice, or cider. Commercial juice with an extended shelf-life that is sold at room temperature (e.g. juice in cardboard boxes, vacuum sealed juice in glass containers) has been pasteurized, although this is generally not indicated on the label. Juice concentrates are also heated sufficiently to kill pathogens.
- Wash fruits and vegetables under running water, especially those that will not be cooked. Bacteria are sticky,



What does it take to be a Volunteer Driver for TRIP in Riverside County ?MAINLY a willingness to share your ride with someone in your neighborhood or community who has no way to get to the store or travel for other purposes.



How Much Time ? There are no set hours, no clocks to punch. TRIP volunteers are *not on-call*—travel is arranged between you and your riders, as mutually convenient.



What's The Catch ? None. Help when you have time. Each month you will get a mileage reimbursement from your rider to help cover your vehicle expense, and we provide extra insurance too!



If you think you would like to help, call 1-800-510-2020 and ask for TRIP.....

so even thorough washing may not remove all contamination.

- Remove the outer leaves of leafy vegetables.
- Immune compromised persons, and the elderly should avoid eating alfalfa sprouts.
- Persons at high risk of complications from food borne illness may choose to consume cooked vegetables and peeled fruits.

All persons who suddenly have diarrhea with blood should have their stool tested for *E. coli* O157:H7.

Most people recover without treatment within 5 to 10 days. Antibiotics should not be used to treat this infection, and it is thought that treatment with some antibiotics could lead to kidney complications. Antidiarrheal agents should also be avoided.

In some people, *E. coli* O157:H7 infection can hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS), a life-threatening condition that is usually treated in an ICU with blood transfusions and kidney dialysis.

Persons with diarrhea, should wash their hands carefully with soap after bowel movements to reduce the risk of spreading infection.

[SOURCE: US Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control]

Is Raw Fish

Safe to Eat?

The answer appears to be **YES and NO.**

According to the Food and Drug Administration, "People in the at-risk groups should not eat raw or undercooked fish or shellfish. People with liver disorders or weakened immune systems are especially at risk for getting sick. Foods made with raw fish are more likely to contain parasites."

The Sushi Discussion Group (shushifaq.com) warns that **IT IS NOT SAFE TO EAT RAW FISH PURCHASED AT THE STORE.** The reasoning is that restaurants have sources that are different than the market, and specifically buy food items that are intended to be eaten raw (commonly referred to as 'sushi grade'). They say that fish purchased in your local market is intended to be cooked, and is therefore not treated with the same care as what you eat in a restaurant.

Marine food experts, at the University of Delaware, warn that home freezing is not sufficient to make raw fish safe to eat. "Commercial freezing at a temperature of -40°F for 15 hours" is required to kill all parasites. Alternately, cooking to an internal temperature of 145°F will make fish safe to eat.

NEW LAWS

Several new California laws are now in effect:

- The Department of Health Services is now required to negotiate discounted prescription costs with drug manufacturers for uninsured and underinsured Californians.
- The owner of any "unattended hot vehicle" containing a pet will now face a fine of up to \$500 and up to six months in jail.
- And also, animal control officers now have the authority to break into any vehicle so save pets.
- It is now illegal to tie a dog to a "stationary object" for more than three hours. It is punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000 and up to six months in jail.
- DUI drivers, with a blood alcohol content of .2 percent or higher will now have their license suspended for 10 months, instead of 6 months.
- Landlords of month-to-month tenants are now required to give at 60-day notice before being able to evict them without cause, if they have lived in the rental for 1 year or more.

[SOURCE: San Francisco Chronicle]

Caregiver Stress — Taking Control

by Mary Mason Hrinko, Family Caregiver Support Program, Riverside County Office on Aging

Taking care of a loved one has a lot of rewards. But in some cases caregiving can take a toll on the caregiver's emotional and physical well being, especially if the situation includes caring for someone with a chronic or long term illness. There are many factors that may contribute to your ability to handle a difficult situation and there are steps to take to help prevent burn-out.

A certain amount of stress is helpful. The stress of meeting a deadline or the adrenaline that is required to escape a threatening situation enables an individual's fight or flight response. However when the amount of stress overwhelms our ability to cope, we can feel "distress" or "burn out." Illness comes from events that constantly stress us, the nagging stressors or major life events. The one time stressors such as a flat tire or missing a meeting can easily be forgotten, but the

responsibility and demands of caring for a family member or friend can result in increased chronic stress. The feeling of stress is subjective and unique to each person. The stress we feel is a result of our situation and also our perception of the situation.

Steps to avoid distress and maintain health:

Step 1 - Recognize your warning signs of stress.

How do you respond following a stressful event? Do you indulge with comfort food? Do you find yourself sleeping more? Do you use alcohol or other substances to numb the reality of the situation? Your reaction is personal and once you recognize your response, you can use this information as a warning sign to stop, evaluate and make changes.

Step 2- Identify your source of stress

Are you pressured by financial decisions and lack of resources? Do you feel a loss of freedom, to the point of being trapped? Is it painful to

watch the care receiver's condition get worse? It is important to identify the causes of stress before they become overwhelming. This can take some time and introspective analysis. Journaling is a good method to clarify what are the main stressors. Don't wait until you are too ill to identify these causes. Seek professional help if needed.

Factors that affect the stress of caregiving:

- Whether the caregiving is voluntary or not.
- Your relationship with the care receiver.
- Your caregiving situation.
- Whether support is available.

Step 3 - Identify what you can change and what you cannot change.

Identifying what you can change gives you a sense of control over the situation. Can you change yourself? Can you change your response or perception of the event? Can you change the situation? Trying to change the unchangeable only leads to feelings of frustration and hopelessness. Here are some Guidelines to help determine what can and cannot be changed:

24/7 Information & Resources

Vital
Connections

www.vitalco.net

...government resources....even News, Weather and Sports!
...AND...you can read prior Meeting the Challenges articles!

**FREE....no pop-ups
....non-commercial
...links to services**

Braille Institute....(760)321-1111 Department of Rehabilitation (Riverside)....(951)782-6650

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- Accept the reality of your situation.
- Educate yourself about the disease process.
- Identify unrealistic expectations.
- Seek and accept social support.
- Identify what you still have.
- Let go of what cannot be changed.

Step 4 – Take action to manage your stress.

There are many different tools for managing stress. Each one of us must find what is most effective at this time in our lives. These tools may include:

- **Managing your thought beliefs and perceptions.** This can entail reframing negative thoughts into a more positive light. Reframing takes practice and diligence. Self-talk is also important in managing your beliefs; the more you shower yourself with positive affirmations the more likely you will be able to change your perception of a difficult situation.
- **Practicing self-care.** Learn and use stress reduction techniques. Attend to your own health care needs. Get proper rest and nutrition. Exercise regu-

larly. Take time off without feeling guilty. Participate in pleasant and nurturing activities. Seek and accept social support. Identify and acknowledge your feelings. Set goals and prioritize.

- **Get social support.** Caregivers often report that they feel lonely and isolated. Support from family and friends is an important stress buffer. Support groups are valuable tools for caregivers. The meetings are an opportunity to share concerns, frustrations, ask questions and get advice. Support groups are made up of your peers who have had similar experiences and can relate either their success or the lesson of hindsight.
- **Use techniques that lower stress.** Identify what regime of stress reducing activities works for you. Do you require more sleep? Do you exercise regularly? Do you take care of your physical health? Do you participate in fun, leisure or recreational activities? Don't forget to include breathing techniques and humor in your daily routine.
- **Develop an action plan.**

Action plans are useful ways to identify and plan specific activities for reducing stress. Action plans can also include the cause of the stressor and practical steps that can influence change within the situation.

- **Accept that the situation has meaning and find hope.** Ask yourself what there is to learn from this experience? Reflect on the challenges, your accomplishments and the skills you've developed. Talk with a trusted individual who can serve as a positive force throughout the journey. Write about the triumphs and the trials. Seek spiritual renewal.

For information on Caregiver programs, including the Working Caregiver Initiative or assistance in locating resources, support groups and care management services contact the Riverside County Office on Aging, Family Caregiver Support Program. (951) 867-3800. [In Riverside County, call 1-800- 510-2020]

Many helpful web based resources for family caregivers are available through the Vital Connections website at www.vitalco.net, including : www.rcaging.org, www.rcaging-caregiverslibrary.org, and www.riverside.networkofcare.org.

Study Links Green Tea to Better Health

A 11-year study by Oh-saki National Health Insurance in Japan found that “green tea consumption is associated with reduced mortality due to all causes”.

More than 40,000 healthy men and women, aged 40 to 79 years, were included in the study that began in 1994.

The study, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, concluded that drinking green tea daily had definite health benefits.

Those who drank 5 or more cups a day did the best and women benefited more than men. But all who drank green tea daily had less cardiovascular disease mortality, especially from stroke. The study did not establish a link between drinking green tea and a decrease in cancer deaths, however.

According to the Center for Integrative Medicine at the University of Maryland Medical Center, other studies, in both animals and people, have demonstrated the ability of green tea to lower total cholesterol and raise HDL (“good”) cholesterol. They also assert that “The

cancer-protective effects of green tea have been reported in several population-based studies”, although the research has so far been inconclusive in demonstrating that drinking green tea actually prevents cancer.

Still, it is thought that the *polyphenols* found in green tea, which are chemicals that act as powerful antioxidants, may help prevent certain cancers. On-going research may provide the answer to this question.

Green tea is a powerful herb, however, and can result in adverse reactions with other medications that people may be taking.

People who are currently taking anxiety medications, like diazepam and lorazepam, Beta-blockers to treat high blood pressure and heart disease, blood-thinners, lithium, anti-depressives, and other medications are warned to talk with their physician before drinking green tea.

People who are undergoing chemotherapy are also advised to talk with their doctor, as studies have suggested that green tea can adversely alter the effects of some treatments.

MOST EFFECTIVE USE OF THE



“PLUMBER’S HELPER”

Have you been mis-using this important household tool? It has always seemed perfectly logical to us to place it in the bowl and PUSH to impel a blast of air forward to open the pipe—WRONG, it turns out!

Put the plunger’s cup below the water level [most of us are seldom lucky enough for it to be only water.] Push down gently but rapidly 5 to 10 times, then pull up quickly. Repeat this several times until the water drains freely. Use a pail of water to test the drain and repeat plunging as necessary.

[SOURCE: Common (though not universal) knowledge]

**“There are over
14 million headaches
going on in this country
today.”**

- Television Commercial

Call TRIP at 1-800-510-2020 to become a TRIP Escort-Driver Volunteer

VERTIGO—What It Is and How is It Treated

by Laine Waggoner, MA, MS

Vertigo refers to a feeling of spinning or whirling that results in a disturbance of balance.

Other feelings of vertigo include: dizziness, floating, light headedness, wooziness, a loss of balance, falling or a feeling of falling, visual blurring, and disorientation.

The vestibule and semi-circular canals of the inner ear maintain balance - small crystals from the gelatinous wall loosen and move freely in the inner ear fluid. The vestibular system works with the visual system to keep objects in focus.

There are several reasons why a person may suffer from vertigo:

- BPPV- *Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo* is usually acute and episodic and caused by damage to sensory units of inner ear and semi-circular canals. Head trauma or ear infection cause 15-50% of cases.
- Labrinthitis (PVD)-is a central vestibular disorder (in the brain or connecting nerves), systemic disorder (elsewhere in the body, vascular (blood flow) problems.

- *Vestibular neuronitis*- is an abrupt sustained vertigo lasting 1-7 days. 25-50% are associated with fever and respiratory tract virus. Hearing loss may be absent.

- *Perilymph fistula*- is a leakage of inner ear fluid into the middle ear. It can be caused by blood flow problems including changes in blood pressure, diabetes, high blood fats, poor cardiac function or anemia. It can also result from too much nicotine, caffeine, or salt. Medications may be at fault, as well as allergies to certain foods or airborne particles.

- *Meniere's disease*- often sensed as a ringing in the ear or a feeling of tightness or fullness in the ear, causes a balance problem. There are many causes but in older patients 23% may be caused by central vestibular disorder of the brainstem or restricted blood flow to the cerebellum at the base of the brain.

Two million per year see their doctor for dizziness or at least 1% of the general population. In the over 60 age

group, 20% have severe enough dizziness to affect their daily activities.

General precautions to avoid vertigo symptoms include:

- Avoid rapid changes in position or extremes of head motion.
- Decrease use of foods/products that impair blood circulation.
- Minimize stress and anxiety.
- Avoid greasy, spicy foods.

The treatment for inner ear vertigo is medication to suppress nausea and reduce vertigo. Surgery may cure an underlying ear disorder, such as mastoid surgery to treat chronic ear infections, or to disable an ear's balance signals. Physical therapy may include sensory substitution to teach a person to neglect faulty information and to pay attention to visual cues of spatial orientation to maintain balance. The Epley Maneuver of head rotation can be used to move particles trapped in the inner ear to relieve symptoms of vertigo. Meniere's disease may be treated with diet changes and antibiotics.

Different Stroke Locations and Their Symptoms

The left side of the brain controls the right side of our body and visa versa.

So, when people suffer a left brain stroke, one of the tell-tale symptoms is paralysis of the right side of the body and the left side of the face. Other symptoms of a stroke on the left side of the brain include speech disruption, memory loss, and quick “inquisitive” behavior. According to neuropsychologist Paul Fedio, Ph.D., “with damage to the left brain, the right brain becomes over stimulated and runs out of control. The patient becomes anxious, pessimistic, and tense.”

In contrast, a stroke on the right side of the brain can result in paralysis of the left side of the body and the right side of the face, as well as problems with vision, memory loss, and a slow “cautious” behavior pattern caused by difficulties with awareness of things that are going on. In particular, spatial and perceptual abilities are impaired making it difficult to judge or to use hands to pick up an object, button a shirt or tie shoes. Frequent instruction and feed-

back may be needed to complete tasks.

Strokes can also occur, but less frequently, in the cerebellum where many of our reflexes and much of our balance and coordination are controlled. A cerebellar stroke can cause dizziness, nausea and vomiting.

Brain stem strokes are the most dangerous, as the brain stem controls all of our involuntary body functions—breathing, blood pressure and heartbeat. The brain stem also plays a role in vision, hearing and speech.

When a person suffers a stroke they require immediate medical care.

Early stroke symptoms can vary considerably in “range and severity”, but they always come on very suddenly. Warning signs may include some or all of the following symptoms:

- very severe headache
- confusion, disorientation or memory loss
- numbness, weakness or clumsiness of an arm, leg or side of the face
- abnormal or slurred speech
- loss of vision

- poor balance or lack of coordination.

According to the National Stroke Association, “Rapid and accurate diagnosis of the kind of stroke and the exact location of its damage is critical to successful treatment.”

If you suspect that you or a friend or loved one has suffered a stroke event, seek medical care immediately.

[SOURCES: American Stroke Association; Center for Neurological Disorders; www.medicalnewstoday.com; National Stroke Association]

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for RTA's

Senior & Disabled Riders

Persons age 60+, who show a Medicare card, driver's license, California identification card, or RTA Senior ID card, when they board an RTA bus, receive the discounted fare.

Passengers with disabilities receive the discounted 60 cent fare when presenting an RTA Disabled ID card or their Medicare card.

TIPS to Help Make Driving More Comfortable

These tips from Kristy Schultz, MS, CIE, an "Ergonomics" Consultant writing in Safety News from the California State Comp Fund, should help make driving short or long distances more comfortable:

- To improve circulation and flexibility, warm up with simple stretches before beginning. Stop every one to two hours and repeat simple stretches, and then stretch again when the drive is completed.
- Adjust the vehicle's seat to avoid "slouching". The seat height should be as high as comfortable to improve vision of the road. Adjust the seat back to support the natural curves of the spine and reduce muscle fatigue and pressure on the lower back. If the back seat does not provide this ad-

justment option, add an insert or pillow. The seat should also be adjusted so that the pedals can be reached easily. A seat that is too far back will add pressure and discomfort to the leg behind the knee.

- The steering wheel should be adjusted to prevent excessive reaching and to keep wrists straight, reducing arm fatigue and promoting better circulation. The most comfortable way to hold the wheel is with both hands on the lower section and not too tight.
- Avoid leaning elbows on car door or center consol, which puts pressure on the nerve that passes through the elbow and can cause hands to fall asleep. If you drive a lot, long term elbow leaning can actually cause nerve compression injury.

Signs that a Driving Tune-Up is Needed

- Is there difficulty using turn signals appropriately?
- Is it easy to see behind and on the sides using the mirrors?
- Is there difficulty working the vehicle pedals?
- Has turning on busy streets or merging on freeways become difficult?
- Does the vehicle drift or end up straddling other lanes?
- Is driving in familiar places sometimes confusing?
- Have there been two or more misses or collisions in the past two years?

Do not ignore the signs:

- Discuss noted problems with your physician.
- Enroll in an Auto Club or AARP driver improvement course.
- Get help from a Certified Occupational Therapist or Driver Rehab Specialist.

SunLine's HALF-FARE Program

Persons 60 years of age and older or persons with disabilities, who are able to ride SunLine's fixed routes, qualify for this program. Applicants must be able to show proof of age or disability with either a DMV Disabled I.D., their DMV License, SunLine's ADA Certification Card, proof of SSI, a Medicare Card, or a Veterans Administration Letter of 50% Disability. To apply, call 1-800-347-8628 for more details. SunLine's discounted fare is 50 cents.

"There will come a time when you believe everything is finished. That will be the beginning."

-- Louis L'Amour, author

TRIP TIPS

Q. I am a new TRIP rider. How do I make appointments and arrange for rides?

- A. The way TRIP works, travel is arranged as “mutually convenient” for the rider and the volunteer. You call up your volunteer and ask if they will be able to take you on such and such a day at whatever time. If not, the volunteer may say, “No, I am busy then, but I could take you on the next day anytime.” Often your volunteer has other things to do that will affect when they can help you: ask your volunteer if there are days and times that are more convenient for them and make your appointments accordingly. Sometimes this means telling the appointment clerk at the doctor’s office that the “only days I can get a ride are Tuesdays and Thursdays in the afternoons (or whatever) and I will need to have my appointment then.” Whenever possible, check with your



volunteer for their availability before you schedule an appointment. For example, if they are with you, ask them to get involved in scheduling the next appointment.

Q. I am a TRIP rider and I have two neighbors who are my volunteer drivers. I am sure that the mileage reimbursement that TRIP provides helps them pay for their gas, but I would like to do more to show them how thankful I am.

- A. A hearty “Thank You!” is always welcome. Can you send them a thank you card? Maybe you can give them something you have baked, or flowers, or vegetables from your garden? How about inviting them to lunch, or to have an ice tea? Any kindness works wonders. When people feel appreciated, they will want to help you more!



WHAT IS “TRIP”?

is an award-winning supplemental transportation program for seniors (STP), operated by the non-profit **Partnership to Preserve Independent Living**, since 1993, throughout the 7200 square miles of Riverside County. *TRIP*, short for the *Transportation Reimbursement and Information Project*, was designed in collaboration with social service agencies, transportation interests, and the non-profit Partnership.

By design, *TRIP* first provides an essential coordination service through the 1-800 *HelpLink* department of the Riverside County Office on Aging. Trained *information* specialists discuss transportation and other needs with callers and make referrals to providers who can assist them. If callers are referred to *TRIP*, needed transportation is provided by encouraging ridesharing through mileage reimbursements to volunteer friends and neighbors for transporting individuals who cannot otherwise meet their travel needs.

**In Riverside County,
call 1-800-510-2020
for information about
transportation alternatives
in your area,
- It’s a free call !**

SPECIAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES
of the
Southern California Gas Company

California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) provides income-qualified customers with a 20% rate discount. For information or a program application, call 1-800-427-2200.

The **Direct Assistance Program (DAP)** provides income-qualified customers with free energy-saving home improvements, such as ceiling insulation, door weather-stripping, caulking, minor window repair, and furnace repair or replacement services homeowners. For more information about DAP, call 1-800-331-7593.

The **Gas Assistance Fund** helps income-qualified customers pay their gas bill with one-time winter bill assistance. Call 1-800-427-2200.

The **Medical Baseline Program** offers additional gas at the lowest rate for customers with certain medical conditions. If someone in your household has a life-threatening illness, is seriously disabled, or requires regular use of life-support equipment powered by gas, you may qualify for this assistance. Call 1-800-427-2200 for program details.

4-A LOWER GAS BILL

- Lower the thermostat by 3 to 5 degrees to reduce the monthly bill by 10 to 20%.
- Clean or replace furnace filters regularly.
- Use cold water to wash clothes and reduce your bill up to another 10%.
- Wash only full loads in the dishwasher.
- Caulk and weather-strip drafty windows and doors to save up to 5% more.

[SOURCE: Southern California Gas Company]

Riverside Police Department
and Janet Goeske Center
**Conference on Senior
Concerns and Issues**

- Crime prevention
- Health and safety
- Fraud and scams
- Other important topics

Janet Goeske Center
5257 Sierra Ave.
Riverside, CA
Wednesday

March 21, 2007
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

**To reserve your seat,
contact Nancy Castillo
at (951) 826-5674**

**CARING.....
FOR AN OLDER DOG**

Many older dogs are quite healthy into their teens, but most do not see as well as they did when they were younger. Dogs, however, can get along very well with limited sight when it is augmented by the love and concern of their companions. If both hearing and sight are diminished, it is up to us to take extra care to protect them and keep them safe.

Things to be especially aware of include ear infections, which are more common in older dogs, and tooth and mouth problems. Uncared-for teeth, just as in humans, are painful and can lead to general infections that will adversely affect their overall health.

Older dogs need a special diet that is low in calories and protein. They need to be kept warm in winter (and cool in summer). They need to be loved by someone who understands the simple problems of life and realizes that the senior years can be some of the very best, despite the odd aches and pains and inconveniences. But the best thing is that when they hug you, it is very clear they mean it.

[Excepts included, with permission from: "Senior Dogs Living with Senior Citizens", copyrighted by Pam Bishop]

Superando nuestros retos.....

La fuerza de Curacion de la Refleccion Personal

Para algunos, lo que somos, lo que estamos haciendo y nuestro lugar en el mundo es un misterio. Para otros, que siempre se han sentido comodos con las respuestas a estas preguntas, cambios en la vida o el inicio de una enfermedad pueden traer un sentido de confusion personal.

Conforme al filosofo griego Socrates, "La vida sin examinar no vale vivir." Sale a relucir, que hay evidencia cientifica que sostiene esta proposicion.

Basado en resultados de investigaciones pasadas "escribir acerca experiencias traumaticas tiene un sorpresivo efecto beneficiario en reportes de sintomas, el bienestar, y cuidado de la salud de individuos", un estudio de 112 pacientes, que sufrían desde leve hasta severa asma o artritis reumatica, fue realizada. Esta investigacion fue realizada en la escuela de medicina de Stony Brook en la Universidad de Nueva York y concluyo que: "Pacientes...que escribieron acerca de sus experiencias

dolorosas tuvieron cambios pertinentes en el estado de salud de 4 meses, comparado con las personas en el grupo que no escribio", y que "estas ganancias fueron mas aya de la contribucion medica que todos los participantes estaban recibiendo."

Escritura basada en la vida es un camino confiable para curar, cambiar y crecer, conforme a Kathleen Adams, Director del Centro de Terapia con un Diario.

Escribir es mas que mantener un diario. En otro estudio, publicado en los *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, investigadores examinaron el efecto de escribir eventos traumaticos. En este estudio, algunos participantes escribieron solamente de sus emociones relacionadas con el evento, otros escribieron de sus emociones y lo que ellos pensaban de lo que habia pasado. Lo que encontraron es que los que enfocaron en sus emociones solamente, aumentaron sintomas negativos del trauma, los que escribieron de sus pensamientos y emociones desarrollaron un sentido de que el doloroso evento habia

producido efectos positivos en sus vidas.

Charlene Kingston, autor de *Writing the Journey*, dice que la diferencia entre escribir y escribir un diario es que en el diario personas escriben lo que ha pasado cada dia, y escribiendo, los hechos son revividos como el escritor piensa y siente sobre lo que ha pasado.

Empezar a escribir es facil. Algunas personas usan cuadernos u hojas y una carpeta que pueden ser comprados en cualquier tienda. Otros se sienten comodos con la creacion de un diario en la computadora.

Kingston, quien ha escrito desde 1969, dice que hay tres reglas importantes para escribir:

- Poner la fecha para tener las cosas en perspectiva
 - Escribir cuando y como usted quiera
 - Siempre diga la verdad!
- Ella sugiere los siguientes asuntos para empezar a escribir:
- Quien soy? Como se quien soy?
 - Que significa estar con-

.....*Superando nuestros retos*

<p>tento?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Escucho mas o Hablo mas? Por que? • Que significa el alimentar a mi mismo? • Estoy comodo con mis emociones? Que me hace llorar o reir? • Cuando estoy comodo con mis emociones? • Cuando tiempo paso con otras personas y cuanto tiempo estoy solo (a)? • Por que ocurren cosas malas? • Quien es responsable cuando algo malo me pasa? • Como trato el estres? Recibo desafios? • Cual es mi regalo unico para el mundo? 	<p><i>PROGRAMAS Y SERVICIOS ESPECIALES</i> <i>De La Compania de Gas del Sur de California</i></p>
<p>Otros asuntos pueden incluir:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Que es lo mas importante para mi en este momento y por que? • De que manera mi vida ha cambiado? • Que me gustaria hacer diferente en mi vida? <p>El proposito de la “escritura terapeutica” es de</p>	<div style="display: flex;"> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Alternativas del Costo de Energia de California (CARE) facilita a clientes que califiquen, basado en ingresos, con 20% de descuento. Para informacion o una aplicacion, llame al 1-800-427-2200.</p> <p>El Programa de Asistencia Directa (DAP) facilita a clientes que califiquen, basado en ingresos, con arreglos en el hogar para ahorrar energia, como el aislamiento del techo, aislamiento de puertas, reparaciones menores de</p> </div> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>puertas exteriores y ventanas, y reparacion del calentador o servicio de reemplazo. Para mas informacion de este programa llame al 1-800-331-7593.</p> <p>El Fondo de Asistencia de Gas ayuda a clientes que califiquen, basado en ingresos, a pagar su cuenta de gas por una vez en la cuenta de invierno. Llame al 1-800-427-2200.</p> <p>El Programa Medico ofrece mas gas al precio mas bajo para personas con ciertas condiciones medicas. Si alguien en su hogar tiene una enfermedad que pone su vida en peligro, esta seriamente incapacitado, o requiere equipo medico para sobrevivir y necesita gas, usted podria calificar para esta asistencia. Llame al 1-800-427-2200.</p> </div> </div> <p>usar la escritura para mejorar la salud y el bienestar. Ayuda aquellos que lo usan para enfocar y ver la claridad de preocupaciones, cuestiones, conflictos, y confusiones y es algo que todos podemos hacer por nosotros mismos.</p>

Translations provided by Ivet Saavedra

ADMINISTRACION DE SERVICIOS

Asistencia en asesoria de las necesidades individuales y coordinacion de servicios de cuidado, asi permitiendo a personas fragiles de salud o adultos desabilitados a permanecer en sus hogares. Estos servicios pueden ser gratuitos o bajos en costo, dependiendo de su edad, ingresos y condicion fisica. **1-800-510-2020**

Recursos Para Personas Mayores.....AYUDA CONEXION...1-800-510-2020

If You Love of Chocolate.....

You might be interested to know that a spicy, but bitter, chocolate drink was used by Mayans and Aztecs thousands of years ago! Mostly reserved for royalty, the drink was also used during religious ceremonies. By the mid-1500s, the Spanish were enjoying a similar drink that they sweetened and spiced with cinnamon and other spices. 100 years later enjoyment of the chocolate drink had spread to the rest of Europe, but its expense excluded use by anyone but the wealthy. By the 1800s chocolate had become more affordable and available. Many drank chocolate because they believed it could induce sleep, aid digestion and purify the blood. In the early 1800s advances in technology resulted in the production of cocoa butter, which allowed the 1847 production of the first chocolate "bar".

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