



Alzheimer's & Dementia  
Organisation Kenya

*giving a helping hand*

# Care of the caregiver

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# Dementia Definition

- Dementia occurs as a result of a disease process. It is a term used to describe different brain disorders that have in common loss of brain function which is usually progressive and eventually severe.
- Dementia affects memory, thinking, behaviour and emotion. Dementia affects all groups in society and is not linked with social class, gender, ethnic group or geographical location.
- Although dementia is more common among older people, younger people can also be affected.

**NOTE - dementia not a disease and it is not 'normal ageing'**

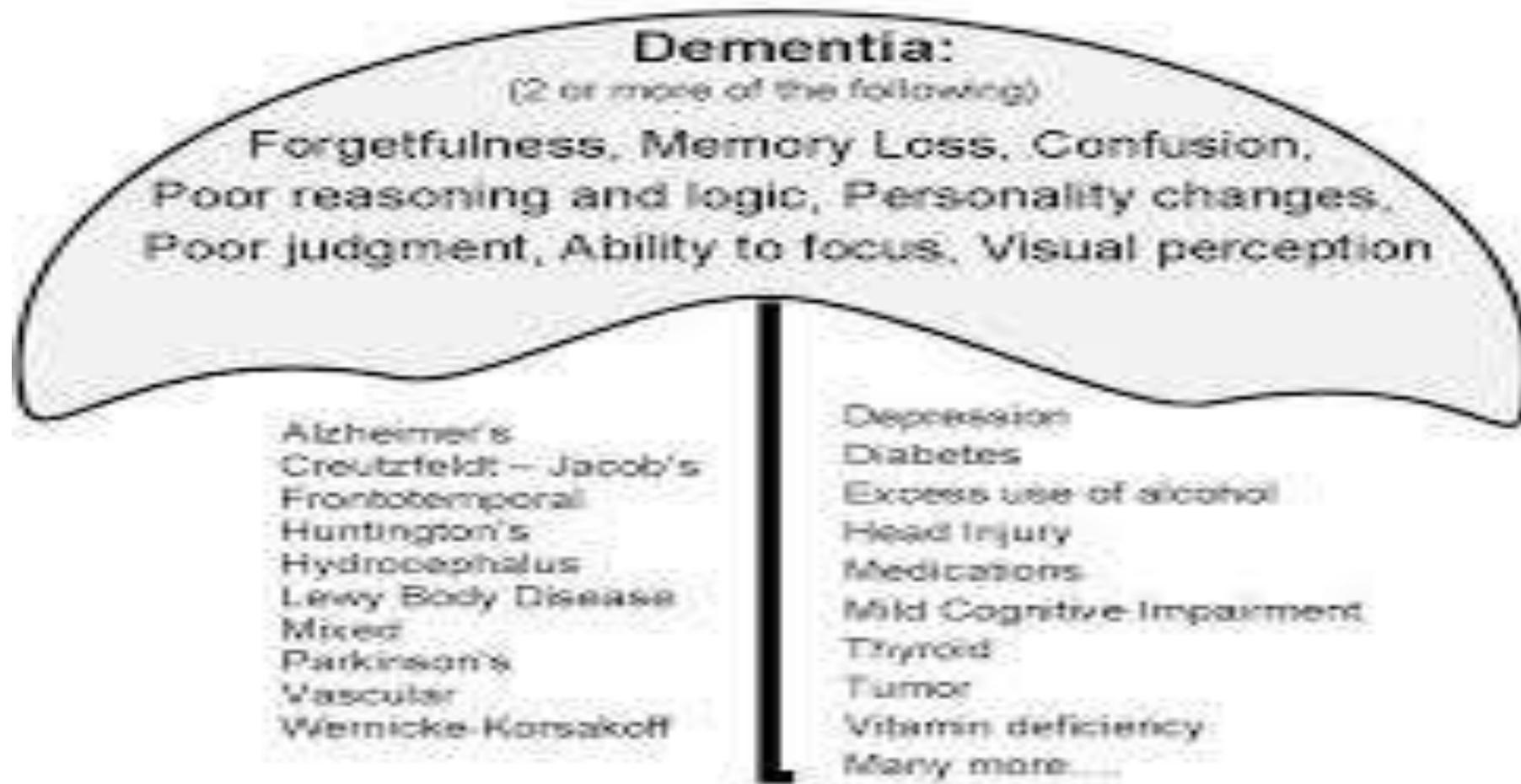


# Alzheimer's Disease

- ❑ [Alzheimer's](#) is the most common form of mental decline, or [dementia](#), in older adults.
- ❑ It is a progressive condition that destroys the connections between cells in the [brain](#).
- ❑ The damage to the brain eventually causes problems with memory, intelligence, judgment, language, and behavior.

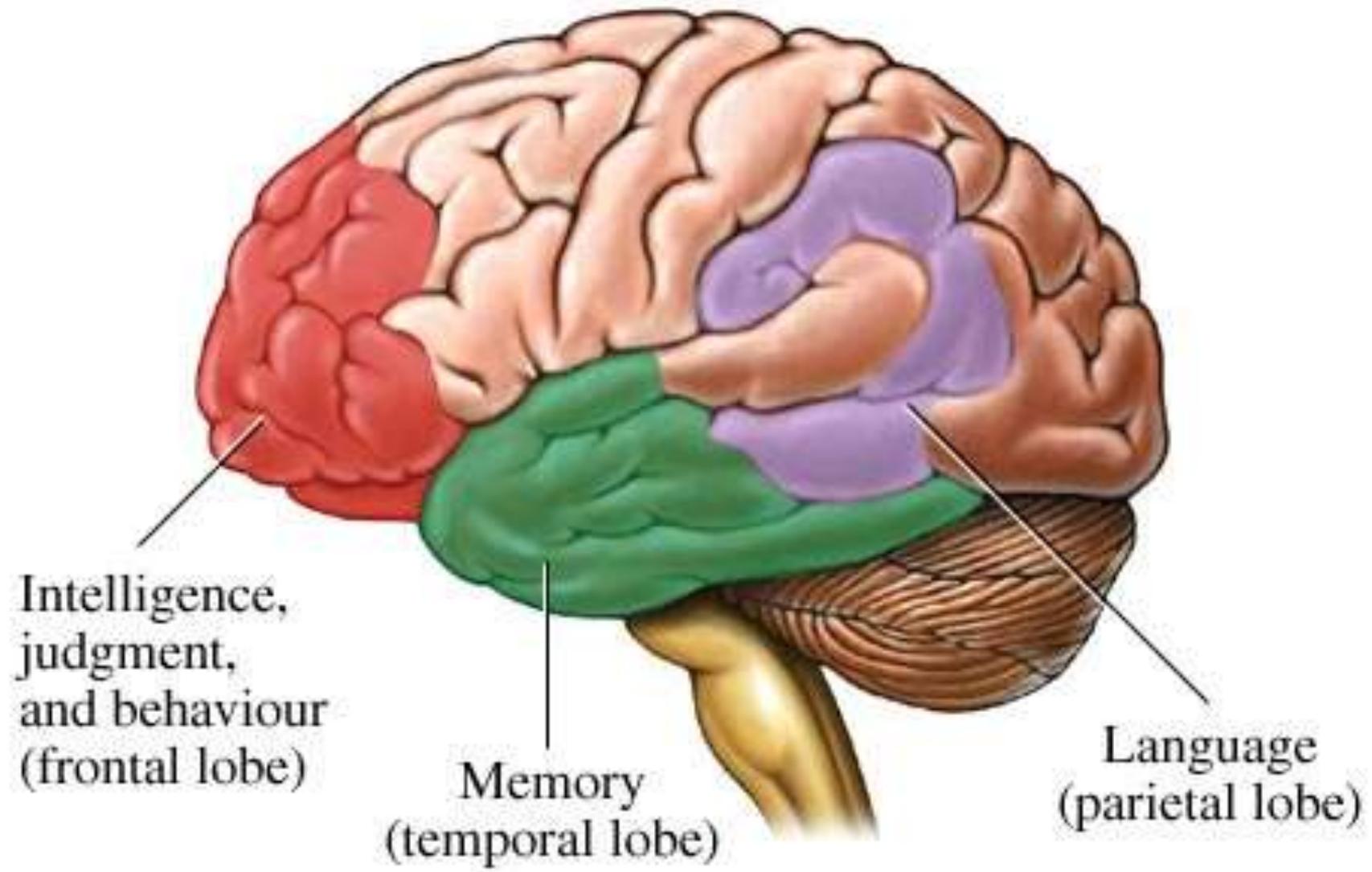


# CAUSES OF DEMENTIA CONT





# Areas of the Brain Affected by Other Dementias





# Symptoms of Alzheimer's

- Memory loss that disrupts daily life
- Challenges in planning or solving problems
- Confusion with time or place
- Difficulty completing familiar tasks
- Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships
- New problems with words in speaking or writing
- Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps
- Decreased or poor judgment
- Withdrawal from work or social activities
- Changes in mood and personality



# Brain teaser



- “If you don't take **care** of yourself, you won't be able to **care** for anyone else.” Mayo Clinic



# Who is a caregiver

- According to the Merriam Webster, a caregiver is someone who provides for the needs :-
  - ✓ people who are ill or cannot provide for their own needs

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- ✓ Unpaid/ paid
- ✓ Helps with activities of daily living



# Compassion fatigue

- According to Dr. Charles Figley, Compassion Fatigue is a state experienced by those helping people or animals in distress. An extreme state of tension and preoccupation with the suffering of those being helped to the degree that it can create a secondary traumatic stress for the helper.
- When caregivers attention is on others without actively caring for self it can lead to destructive behaviors.
  - ✓ Apathy,
  - ✓ isolation,
  - ✓ bottled up emotions
  - ✓ substance abuse head
- secondary traumatic stress disorder now labeled: Compassion Fatigue.
- Caring too much can hurt. Awareness is the the first step toward healing.



# What do they go through

- ✓ Physical
  - ✓ Emotional
  - ✓ Spiritual
  - ✓ Financial
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# Symptoms of Compassionate Fatigue

- Excessive blaming
- Bottled up emotions
- Isolation from others

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- Receives unusual amount of complaints from others
- Substance abuse used to mask feelings
- Compulsive behaviors such as overspending, overeating, gambling, sexual addictions
- Poor self-care (i.e., hygiene, appearance)
- Chronic physical ailments such as gastrointestinal problems and recurrent colds
- Apathy, sad, no longer finds activities pleasurable
- Difficulty concentrating
- Mentally and physically tired



# Symptoms contd...

- Denial is one of the most detrimental symptoms of Compassion Fatigue and Life Stress.
- Easily hinders ones ability to assess the level of fatigue and stress in ones life as well as thwart efforts to begin the healing process.



# Organizational symptoms of Compassion Fatigue include

- High absenteeism
- Constant changes in co-workers relationships
- Inability for teams to work well together

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- Desire among staff members to break company rules
- Outbreaks of aggressive behaviors among staff
- Inability of staff to complete assignments and tasks
- Inability of staff to respect and meet deadlines
- Negativism towards management
- Strong reluctance toward change
- Lack of a vision for the future



# Well being activities





# Self Care

Jobs affects one emotionally.

- Be kind to yourself.
- Enhance your awareness with education.

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- Accept where you are on your path at all times.
- Understand that those close to you may not be there when you need them most.
- Exchange information and feelings with people who can validate you.
- Listen to others who are suffering.
- Clarify your personal boundaries. What works for you; what doesn't.
- Express your needs verbally.
- Take positive action to change your environment



# Self Care Contd....

- Health-building activities such as exercise, massage, yoga, meditation.
- Eating healthy foods
- Drinking plenty of water

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- Use natural healing products to care for and heal your body
- Practicing the art of self-management. Just say no
- Developing a healthy support system: people who contribute to your self esteem, people who listen well, people who care
- Being proactive as opposed to reactive.
- Reserving your life energy for worthy causes. Choose your battles.
- Living a balanced life: Sing, dance, sit with silence



# In a nut shell.....

The Gentry / Baronowsky (1997) model of compassion fatigue

PRIMARY TRAUMATIC STRESS

+X

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SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS

+X

BURNOUT

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= COMPASSION FATIGUE



# What to do when there is CF?

- Wellness is not merely the absence of illness or distress – it is striving for positive physical, mental and social well-being.

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- It is a lifelong process of making decisions that support a more balanced life and enable you to maximize your potential.
  
- There are always opportunities for enhancing your wellness. A good place to start is self-reflection and goal-setting.



# Wellness Wheel

- The **Wellness Wheel** illustrates a **wellness** model . It has eight dimensions:

- ✓ emotional

- ✓ intellectual

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- ✓ physical

- ✓ social

- ✓ environmental

- ✓ Financial

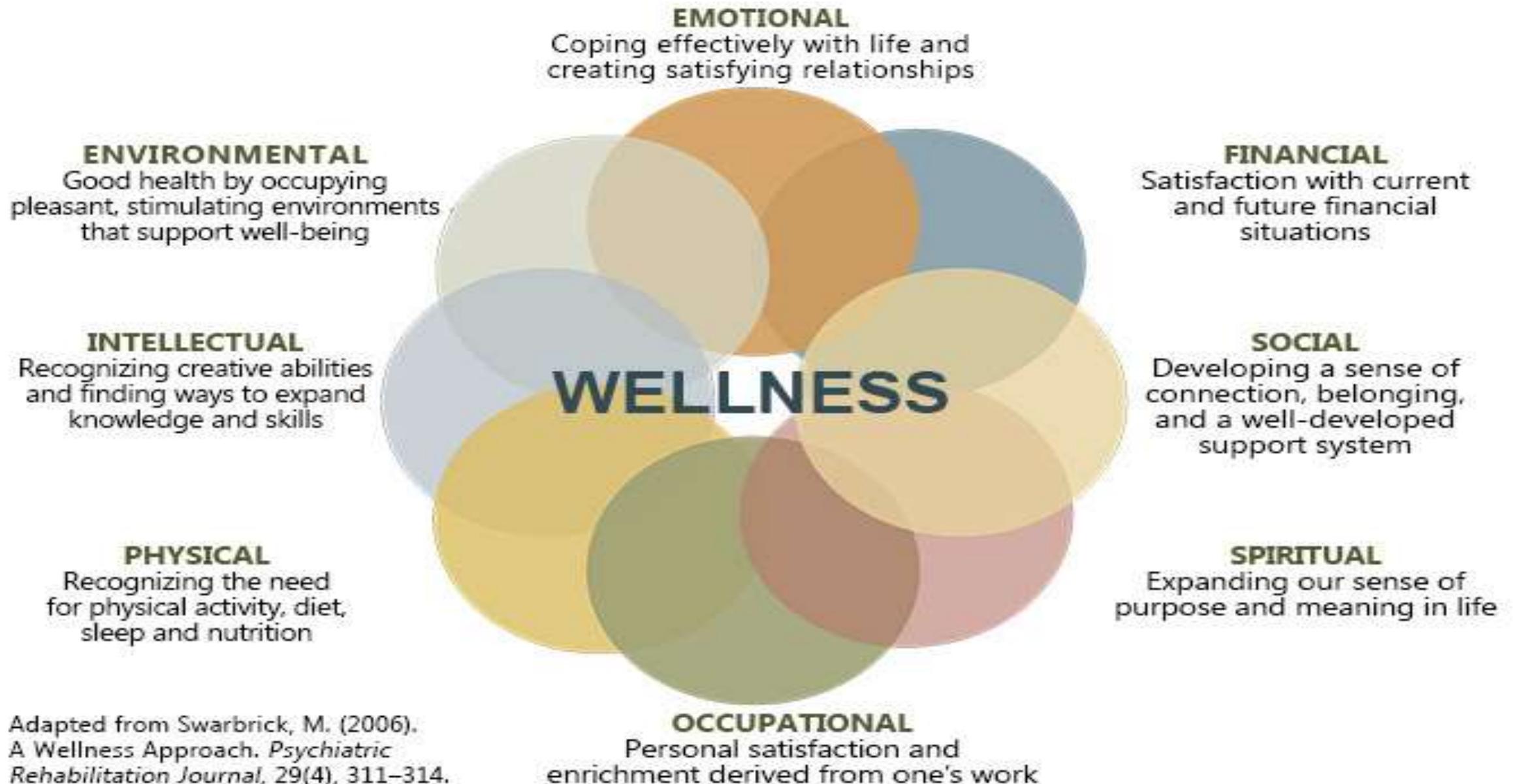
- ✓ Occupational

- ✓ spiritual.

- All of the dimensions are interconnected and important to a well-rounded and balanced lifestyle



# Wellness Wheel



Adapted from Swarbrick, M. (2006).  
A Wellness Approach. *Psychiatric  
Rehabilitation Journal*, 29(4), 311-314.



# How to support a caregiver with CF

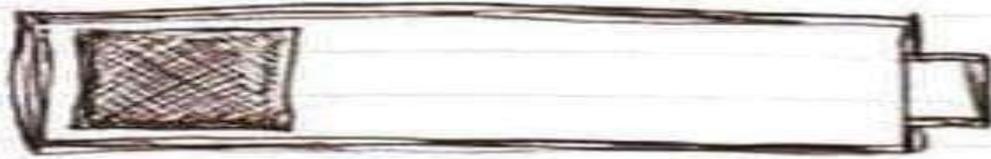
- Active listening
- Maintain eye contact
- Allow them to express themselves – do not interrupt

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- Refer them for counselling
- Do not give solutions – give facts
- Direct them to a support group
- Wellness wheel
- Silence



# Parting shot



YOU WOULDN'T  
LET THIS  
HAPPEN TO YOUR  
PHONE. DON'T  
LET THIS  
HAPPEN TO YOU  
EITHER. *Self care*  
*is a priority, not*  
*a luxury.*





**THANK YOU !!!**