Self Care Topic: Meditation
Developed by the AAHFN Membership Committee and Area Representatives

As heart failure nurses, we are constantly battling the stress of caregiving. Outside of the work environment, we are also faced with daily life stressors such as driving in traffic, appointments, and relationships. It is equally hard and imperative to incorporate stress-relieving activities in our lives.

Meditation, although ancient, is gaining popularity. It doesn’t take long, can be as little as 15 minutes daily, effortless, and best of all, it’s FREE. Meditation reduces psychological stress by decreasing activation of the sympathetic nervous system. Therefore reducing stress hormones such as cortisol and catecholamine. The goal of meditation is to eliminate our distractions and put our mind in a standstill position referred to thoughtless awareness. This involves not thinking about the past or the future, rather keeping the mind on the present being.

Here are some simple tips to start your meditation journey:

1. Practice Regularly- 10-15 minutes daily on your break at work, in the am before work, and/or in the evening before bed
2. Choose a quiet place – away from distractions. Be sure to turn off your cell phone, radio, and television. You may burn a candle or play nature sounds
3. Find a comfortable position - a chair is fine, lay flat, or maybe sit with your legs folded with hands on your knees and palms facing upwards
4. Keep your mind still- don’t think about past or future events; focus your vision on something peaceful or keep your eyes closed
5. Focus – keep your focus on the top of your head
6. Take breaths – take deep breaths from your diaphragm, hold for a second and blow out while pulling in your abdomen

Over a couple of sessions, you will easily filter out your minds distractions and feel the energy from mediation.

Good Luck!