

# The Uncensored Caregiver Podcast

with Master Certified Coach Iryna Ishchenko

## Episode 37:

### How to calm down when you are stressed.

Iryna Ishchenko [00:00:01]:

There is one thing I know about you. You are a brave person, because being a caregiver requires a lot of courage. Saying it's not easy is an understatement. It brings a lot of stress to your nervous system, and you have to deal with that to be able to keep going. The more you are wound up, the more time your nervous system needs to come down. Unless you use some tools or practices that help you calm down faster. Those tools and practices are called nervous system regulation. Let's talk about it.

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I am not going to talk about going to spas, taking bubble baths, and the rest of the usual self care tips for caregivers today. I will leave my opinions about those for another conversation, And instead, I'm going to share what works for me and my clients and what takes little time with maximum effect. Ready? Number 1, naming your emotion at the moment you are experiencing it. I'm stressed. This is frustration. I am angry. I have a lot of resentment right now. It is shame.

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It is fear. Just naming what you feel calms down your amygdala and takes you out of that flight or fight mode of fight or flight mode. The important part here is being honest with yourself and naming what it is, not what you think it should be or would be appropriate. In other words, if you are fuming with anger and telling yourself If you are just upset, your brain won't believe it, and your anger will stay with you. After you name the emotion, Or if you can't find the right word for what you feel, you can locate that

feeling in your body. Usually, it's something tight or constricting stricting and heavy. Shake it off. Shake that part of the body the way the dogs shake off the water.

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Make silly faces if it is in your face. Do some jumping jacks or silly dance, Whatever helps you relax those muscles. My own stress is usually in the shoulders, and I just throw them up and back and down as if I were fixing my posture. And, yes, I will I'm fixing my posture along the way. Number 2, Deep belly breathing. Make them loud. Sometimes, I put my hand hand on my belly to make sure this is where I am breathing in and out. Belly breathing signals safety to our brains, But don't overdo it and get dizzy because of hyperventilation, of course.

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3 to 5 breaths are enough. If you do any affirmations or practice new thoughts you want to adopt, you can say those sentences after each breathing out. I am a good person. Another reason variation that is very Calming, and I do it often when I want to relax faster and fall asleep, it's 3 4 3 or 4 Short braces in and 1 big breath out. I hope you hear that. It sounds like the kids at the moment when they are almost done crying and about to calm down. Number 3, Funny cats videos or funny puppy videos or any other funny videos you can find online and you are laughing. They are short and sweet, and sometimes I laugh so much that I start crying.

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My son and I I regularly send each other those videos whenever we find them, and I go back to those messages, which became my collection of those funny videos, Whenever I need a quick stress release, seriously, those cat videos should be officially recognized as a form of therapy. Where to get them? Anywhere you can find videos or and watch short videos. YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, There are some dedicated threads on Reddit according to my child. Just Google funny cat video, and you will find planting. Number 4, adult coloring books and watercolors. I don't have the skill to draw or paint something recognizable beyond the basic shapes, And it's just something that

I haven't learned to do, and I'm okay with that. But I like to watch the colors when they blend in the water and how they change the intensity based on how much water is there. And it could be just simple strokes or shapes on the paper.

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And just watching that is very calming for me. However, I also found that I can resist Water coloring sometimes because it takes some preparation and cleanup time, and I can't always keep everything ready on my desk all the time because I need that space for something else. So I don't do watercolors anytime when I feel stressed. So I start using the coloring books. It doesn't have to be the whole page colored at once. It can be just 1 element, one section or one detail of the whole design colored at a time. My current favorites are flowers, So I can literally do just 1 flower with 1 pencil on a page when I need a quick stress release. There are also coloring books with anything from flowers and animals to paint by number replicas of famous masterpieces.

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There are also mandalas, circular designs with repeating elements, and many people swear there is calming magic in those designs. And number 5 is affection. Hugs, kisses, back rubs, cuddling, whatever is available to you at the moment. In our family, anyone can make a request, I need a hug, anytime, and the hug will be granted. No questions asked. Just a hug and a bit of a back scratch because who doesn't like a back scratch? If there is nobody around, there is a backscratcher. Pets, obviously, are also affectionate stress relievers. Even if it is something not furry, like fish or reptiles, they greet you every time when you come.

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And watching them, just observing them is very relaxing. No pets? Check if there are any birds outside your window. Can you put a bird feeder for them and observe them? If there is not even birds around, how about smiling to another human being? It doesn't matter if it is a stranger or someone you know. Just smile even to the person you're taking care of. No pets, no birds outside, no people around you. Okay. Let's pretend for

a moment it is so. I'm pretty sure there is at least 1 mirror somewhere in the place where you are.

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Smile to yourself. Give yourself a high five. Whatever is the stressful situation in your life right now, You are managing it. You are taking care of it. You are taking care of people in your life, and you're taking care of yourself while doing it. That deserves a smile and a high five. Right? So these are my top 5 tools that work for me. This is by no means a complete list, And you then you don't have to do all of them.

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Just pick 1, try it, and see how you feel. You might want to practice some of them ahead of time, especially things like breathing or naming emotions in the situations when you are calm and safe. So you will be familiar with the process and remember to do it at the times when you are stressed and you need those tools. You might do any of these as daily short practices to keep your nervous system in a good shape. And add your own. Maybe it's singing or dancing or kneading or pulling Within your garden, it works for me, but unlike stress, it's seasonal. If you try any of my suggestions or have your own that you can share with me, please send me a message at the uncensored caregiver.com. I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

Iryna Ishchenko [00:09:30]:

I am Master Coach Iryna Ishchenko and I will talk to you next week.