

How about... We laugh?



Do you ever find yourself laughing at situations that, at first glance, don't seem very funny?

This tool aims to highlight laughter and de-dramatization as a strategy for contributing to the well-being in caregiving. We discuss the impact of laughter on everyday situations that can be difficult, stressful or embarrassing.

Humor strengthens our survival instinct and our sanity.

-Charlie Chaplin



First of all, we know that not **EVERYTHING** is an excuse to laugh; respect remains essential in the caregiver-care receiver relationship. Allowing ourselves to live with the situation as it arises is just as acceptable.

Here are two definitions from the Larousse to guide us:

Dedramatize: *Take the drama out of a situation or event.*

Humor: *A form of wit that emphasizes the comic, ridiculous, absurd or unusual nature of certain aspects of reality.*



But what benefits can I get from it?

When you're a caregiver, using humor and laughter to good effect can ease the various emotions associated with the role you play so well. Try to play things down as much as possible when necessary. Tension, bad moods and impatience often disappear quickly when you can laugh about them with the person you're caring for or those around you!

As a caregiver, when can humor and laughter be a strategy?

- When my thoughts get carried away, my view of reality can become distorted;
 - For example, when I tend to devalue myself because I've made a mistake.
- When I have to repeat the same thing over and over again;
- When I feel confronted in a situation and have difficulty finding the right words;
- When my emotions take up a lot of space in my body and show through in my speech at the time;
- When I feel the need to alleviate the discomfort I feel in a situation;
- When the situation seems less dramatic in light of my own experience.



Humor is the shortest route from one man to another.

-Georges Walinski



A good laugh is good for everyone, whatever their physical, psychological or emotional state. What's more, laughter is contagious and free! We like to laugh because it feels good and triggers pleasant, healthy physical changes.



Did you know that humor and laughter ...

- Are good for your health
- Boost energy
- Can help reduce pain
- Help reduce the harmful effects of stress
- Laughing with others brings us closer together, creates bonds
- May even have an effect on longevity 🤔



Humor and laughter in situations that can be embarrassing, confronting or simply exasperating :

Here are a few suggestions for thinking through this type of situation. It can sometimes be difficult to find space for humor and laughter, but it can be done, one step at a time and depending on the context you find yourself in.

- Check whether you have any control over the situation; humor is an effective way of letting go;
- Try a different approach; use your creativity to help de-dramatize the situation;
- Try to take a step back; this can sometimes change the way you look at the situation;
- Introduce a wacky word, quote or gesture into the situation;
- Bring out the positive aspects of the situation to lighten the mood.

Here are a few scenarios that illustrate how, at times, it's possible to play down a situation and laugh about it! :)

We were in a hurry to get to a medical appointment. As we were leaving, my father, who suffers from Alzheimer's disease, put on my shoes. He insisted on keeping them mentioning that they were his; he was getting angry and I was getting impatient.

I let go and put on other shoes. We had a good laugh on our return when he said: "What am I doing with these? They aren't mine?"

When giving my son hygiene care, he didn't cooperate very much and told me to leave him alone. I was starting to get annoyed when the shower phone fell and sprayed me. He burst out laughing, telling me I looked like a wet cat, and I couldn't help laughing back.

My sister is visually impaired and sometimes loses her bearings. The other day, despite her great dexterity, she missed a step on the stairs. The next day, having taken a step back, we burst out laughing at the thought of her fall. We both laughed, especially when I described what I saw when she tumbled on her bottom. Luckily, she was unharmed.

Suggested reading, activities and tools :

- *What life owes to laughter - Boucar Diouf*
- *Listen to videos that make you laugh*
- *Dance with messy gestures*
- Tool #SolidairementProcheAidant "Doser son contact with suffering".
- Tool #SolidairementProcheAidant "Letting go"