

THYCA Conference 2025: Caregiver Sessions

The “I’m Fine” Club: How Caregivers Can Reset When Life Feels Unravelling

Session Summary & Key Takeaways

Why This Matters

As caregivers, we often respond with “I’m fine” when we are anything but fine. It feels easier, safer, or more efficient—but over time, it drains our energy and creates a split between how we really feel and how we present ourselves. Every “I’m fine” costs you. The antidote isn’t more strength—it’s a reset. This session introduced a simple three-step reset: Pause – Breathe – Choose (P-B-C). It’s a tool to move from survival autopilot into steadiness and self-honoring choices.

Step 1: Pause – Acknowledge Your Truth

The pause creates space between the automatic “I’m fine” and what’s actually true. Ask yourself: “If I didn’t have to be fine right now, what would I say instead?” or “And underneath that, what else is true?”

Micro-Pause Practices:

- Three-Second Truth Check – pause before answering and check what’s real
- Bathroom Reset – privately ask, “What am I not letting myself feel?”
- Car Decompression – place hands on heart, say “The truth is…” out loud

Step 2: Breathe – Reset Your Nervous System

Your body reflects the tension of 'I’m fine vs. I’m not.' Breath is your bridge back to calm. The Safety Valve Breath: Inhale gently, exhale a little longer than inhale, repeat 3–5 cycles. Variations: Elevator Breath (quick, discreet), Waiting Room Breath (3 cycles while seated), Midnight Breath (10 cycles in bed).

Step 3: Choose – Take One Intentional Action

After pausing and breathing, make one self-honoring choice. Not a big fix—just a small, intentional action.

Three Categories of Choices:

- Truth-Telling – “I’m struggling today. Can I be honest with you?”
- Boundary-Setting – “I need to cancel. Hosting is too much right now.”
- Self-Care – “I’m taking five minutes before the next task.”

Practice: The Choice Menu

Write three lists:

High Energy Choices (e.g., conversations, delegating, boundaries);

Medium Energy Choices (asking for small help, short walk, saying no to one thing);

Low Energy Choices (one breath, lying down for 5 minutes, saying “I need a minute”).

Even micro-choices build self-respect and create momentum.

Overcoming Common Barriers

- “I don’t have choices.” → You may not choose circumstances, but you can choose how you move through them.
- “It feels selfish.” → Would you want your loved one to sacrifice their health for you?
- “I’ve tried before, nothing changed.” → This isn’t about fixing everything. It’s about practicing one different choice at a time.

Closing Thought

“I’m fine” doesn’t have to be your only option. With P-B-C, you can reset in minutes: Pause to get honest. Breathe to get grounded. Choose to move forward with intention. Every small act of honesty and self-care restores your energy and helps you keep showing up—not just efficiently, but with presence and compassion.

Today’s Challenge: Use P-B-C within the next 24 hours. For resources, exercises, and breathing guides, visit the provided QR code or website.