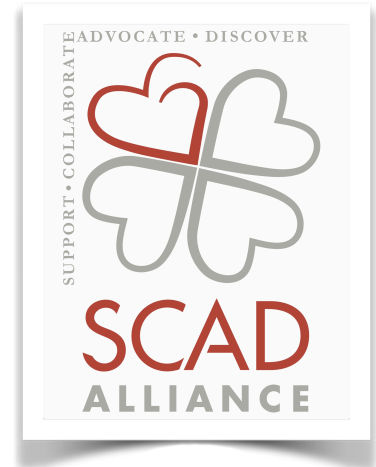


Dear SCAD Survivor,

We are SCAD Survivors! We share our courage, experience and hope through our community of support, collaboration, advocacy and discovery. Understanding our individual SCAD experience and its impact provides a foundation to apply tools and strategies for healing and thriving. We use this time of healing to strengthen ourselves and to gain resources to support our needs. We utilize the power of the SCAD Alliance community to move forward on our paths with strength and courage.



Feeling Overwhelmed?

This is a sensory awareness grounding technique that can help us relax or work through difficult emotions. To yourself, name the following:

- ♥ 5 things you see in the room
- ♥ 4 things you can feel
- ♥ 3 things you hear right now
- ♥ 2 things you can smell right now or think of 2 smells that make you enjoy
- ♥ 1 favorite thing about yourself

At the end you should feel calmer and more present. Repeat these steps when needed.

I Pledge To Myself

- ♥ To be kind to myself
- ♥ To celebrate my successes, including the smallest ones
- ♥ To seek help and support when needed and to accept help when offered
- ♥ To make my physical and mental health a priority
- ♥ To respect myself
- ♥ To take steps to achieve my goals as I am able
- ♥ To adjust my goals as my priorities change
- ♥ To learn from my setbacks but not to dwell on them
- ♥ To say “no” to things that do not support well-being or my goals
- ♥ To not let the fear of the unknown hold me back from leading a happy life

Self-care

Making sure you are routinely caring for yourself is important for healing and maintaining health. Self-care is:

- ♥ Taking action to maintain or improve your physical and mental health, especially during periods of stress
- ♥ Responding to your needs with compassion and care
- ♥ Practicing mindfulness
- ♥ Intentionally doing activities that you enjoy, improve your mood and lower your stress
- ♥ Prioritizing actions and emotions that help to improve your relationship with yourself
- ♥ Taking a break

Healthy Behavior Checklist

- ♥ I keep up with my medical needs, including annual check-ups with my primary care physician, regular dental cleanings, etc.
- ♥ I keep my cardiologist informed about changes in my well-being.
- ♥ I take all medications as prescribed.
- ♥ I talk to my healthcare team about my mental health.
- ♥ I practice self-care.
- ♥ I do things to manage stress.
- ♥ I connect with others who I care about and who care about me.
- ♥ I eat well.
- ♥ I exercise regularly.
- ♥ I ask for and accept help when needed.
- ♥ I establish my boundaries and say “no” when that is what is best for me.
- ♥
- ♥
- ♥

Did you leave any of these statements unchecked? If so, please consider working on these aspects of your lifestyle. Discuss healthy behaviors with your physician and ask for referrals to professionals for help with specific issues (mental health professional, registered dietitian, physical therapist, social worker, etc).

What are some other steps you would like to take to improve your overall health and well-being? Add them to the above checklist.

Mental Health

Mental health, like physical health, is important to your overall well-being. Even years after a SCAD diagnosis, some people continue to struggle with feelings of sadness, anxiety, anger, fear irritability, and/or moodiness. Some feel a sense of loss or grief for their life before their SCAD. Having these feelings at anytime after a SCAD can be normal; however, if these feelings are interfering with your daily life or you have a sense of hopelessness, please seek help. Talk to members of your healthcare team about your mental health concerns. You may benefit from the support of a medical health professional, such as a therapist or counselor, or, in some cases, medication to help with depression or anxiety.

Do not be afraid to seek help! Reach out to your physician or call your insurance provider for a mental health referral. If you are having difficulty coping and experiencing a mental health crisis, contact the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline by calling or texting 988.

Many people who have been diagnosed with SCAD fear that they will experience another SCAD or that their condition may get worse. For some, these fears surface around the anniversary of their SCAD or around the dates of medical checkups and screenings. For others, these fears surface at random times or from a non-SCAD specific trigger. These fears are normal, and there are things you can do to manage them. To help lessen your fears the following checklist may offer tips to support you.

Fear Management Checklist

- ♥ Talk to your cardiologist about your risk of SCAD reoccurrence or disease progression and the signs and/or symptoms that may indicate a reoccurrence or disease progression.
- ♥ Talk to a mental health professional to help you fine-tune your awareness of your emotions so that you feel more in control and help you learn coping strategies.
- ♥ Make lifestyle changes to improve your overall health and well-being. Discuss these changes with your physician so that you incorporate them into your life in a safe and effective manner specific to your health needs.
- ♥ Find a hobby to occupy your mind.
- ♥ Keep a journal to provide an outlet to express yourself and help identify and cope with your emotions.
- ♥ Connect with other SCAD Survivors. These connections can be very beneficial but be sure to routinely check in with yourself to make sure that these connections are helping you and not causing you to carry additional emotions that negatively affect your self-care.
- ♥ Identify your emotional triggers, manage the triggers as much as possible and learn coping mechanisms for when the triggers are unavoidable.
- ♥ Identify and develop stay calm strategies. Some strategies include the sensory awareness grounding techniques listed at the beginning of this document, deep breathing exercises, repeating a meaningful mantra/affirmation/prayer, closing your eyes and sitting in silence, counting to ten slowly, standing and stretching, taking a walk or calling a close friend or family member.

Future Personal Goals

Your SCAD does not need to define your future and while you learn about and heal from your recent SCAD event, you have many things to look forward to. What goals do you want to set for yourself that are not related to your SCAD?

- ♥ Traveling
- ♥ Education/Learning New Skills
- ♥ Creating Things
- ♥ Spending Time Outdoors
- ♥ Building Healthy Lifestyle Habits
- ♥ Exercising Or Moving More
- ♥ Trying New Things
- ♥ Improving Mental Health
- ♥ Spiritual or Religious Pursuits
- ♥ Getting Out Of Your Comfort Zone
- ♥ Saying “Yes” To New Experiences
- ♥ Saying “No” To Things You Do Not Enjoy
- ♥ Giving Back/Volunteering
- ♥ Career Building
- ♥ Financial Independence
- ♥ Planning For Retirement
- ♥ Gardening
- ♥ Reading
- ♥ Writing
- ♥ Taking Up A New Hobby/Activity
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