AULTCARE

DECLUTTERING AND STRESS RELIEF

Did you know clutter in our homes and workspaces can serve as a significant source of stress? It can leave a person feeling anxious, helpless, and overwhelmed. Clutter can also distract our minds away from what we are trying to focus on such as our quiet times of reflection and other mindful practices.

Thankfully, clutter is one of the simplest stressors to fix! Below are a few ideas to help you get started:

1. **Create breathing room**. Use decluttering to create open space to use for nothing. It's a refuge from chaos, and your home will feel more uplifted when you walk in.

2. **Create places for frequently used items.** Prevent clutter by creating specific areas, such as drawers and cabinets, for the items frequently used.

3. **Follow the three-year rule.** If you haven't used it in three years, recycle it or give it to charity. If you use it rarely and want to keep it, then consider storing it in a well-labeled box.

4. **Use three boxes.** When digging through closets and cupboards, label three boxes for the items: keep, donate, and throw away.

5. **Make a pending folder.** A pending folder is a place to put all of the papers and documents of projects that you are working on; allowing you to free up and clear space on your desk as well as making it easier to find the documents you need.

6. **Don't let papers pile up.** Be sure to quickly pick up and organize any heaps of papers laying around your house. Go through everything as soon as you can and organize them appropriately.

7. **Keep your shoes off the floor.** Shoes have a way of taking up a lot of floor space in closets, entryways and mud rooms. Get some simple shelving, a rack or a hanging shoe holder.

8. **Tidy up your workspace before you leave it.** This habit will leave you feeling accomplished and satisfied after a good day's work. It also makes you feel good when you return to a clean work space the next day.

DECLUTTER CHECKLIST

- ✓ Pens that do not work
- ✓ Socks with holes in them
- ✓ Books you have already (or never will) read
- ✓ Almost empty toiletries
- ✓ Expired makeup
- ✓ Old cell phones
- ✓ Food packaging
- ✓ Expired spices
- ✓ Expired condiments
- ✓ Bottles and jars
- ✓ Receipts
- ✓ Old magazines
- ✓ Chipped coffee mugs
- ✓ Unused or old hangers
- ✓ Broken jewelry or items you do not wear
- ✓ Instruction books or manuals
- ✓ Old grocery bags
- ✓ Old bills and other paperwork
- ✓ Unworn clothing items