

Caring Connections Chronicle

Caring Connections Information Line: 211

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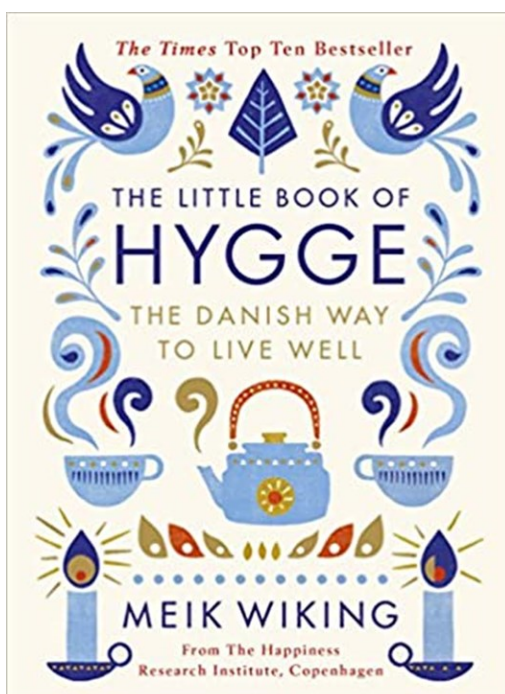
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Don't Get
Your
Tinsel in
a Tangle



A HYGGE CHRISTMAS



The Little Book of Hygge: The Danish Way to Live Well
Meik Wiking
Penguin Life UK
ISBN 978-0-241-28391-2

Submitted by: Susan Bithrey

Hands up if you have no idea what Hygge even is. We certainly had never heard of it until very recently. And now, we're seeing it everywhere, particularly after having read this delightful little book. The author describes himself as having the best job in the world, studying what makes people happy, at the Happiness Research Institute in Copenhagen Denmark. He has created a charming little handbook of hygge (pronounced hooga – or that's close enough) that anyone can understand and live by, whether they are Danish or not.

And happily, it's also a handbook that just might be helpful if you're caring for a loved one and need some ideas to make the days brighter and the hearth a little warmer for both of you.

Hygge is described variously as the art of creating intimacy, coziness of the soul, taking pleasure from the presence of soothing things, or cozy togetherness, and it isn't unique to Denmark. People everywhere seek these things; the Danish have just turned it into a cultural art form and given it a one-word name. **You know hygge when you feel it. It is when you are cuddled up on a sofa with a loved one or sharing comfort food with your closest friends. It is those crisp blue mornings when the light through your window is just right.**

If you need ways to decorate your home for comfort and intimacy, relax alone or with family and friends, prepare foods that feed your tummy and your soul, take the stress out of Christmas celebrations, or choose your wardrobe based on how comfortable it is for lounging rather than how stylish – this might be the handbook for you. It's small, packed with beautiful photographs, recipes, travel tips, and ways to practice hygge every day, anywhere you happen to be.

It is apparently a statistical fact that **Denmark is the happiest nation in the world. This book makes the case that hygge is the magic ingredient that is responsible for this, and here's our chance to read all about it and join in the fun.**



This Winter, Let's Get to Know Our Feathered Friends

One activity that is both relaxing and engaging this time of year is watching birds go about their business outside our windows as we hunker down inside. If you are looking for a practical gift for a friend or family member who spends a lot of time at home, a simple bird feeder and bag of bird seed can provide hours of entertainment!

There are many resources both online and in print that can help you identify the birds in your neighbourhood and learn more about their personalities and behaviours.

For more information to enhance your birdwatching experience, visit these sites:

Birds Canada – www.birdscanada.org

EBird – <https://ebird.org/canada/explore>

Cornell Lab of Ornithology - <https://www.allaboutbirds.org>

Thunder Bay Field Naturalists Christmas Bird Count - <https://tbfnet/projects/christmas-bird-count/>

Or drop into your local library to check out a bird identification guide!



The Christmas Bird Count is held annually across the western hemisphere, including North-western Ontario. Amateur birders get out and report on the number of birds they see in their local area on a single day. For Northern Ontario, Thunder Bay often has the largest number of species sighted, with 42 different species reported during the Bird Count in 2020.

Fun Facts About Birds Common to NWO



Black-capped Chickadee – their calls are complex and language-like, communicating information on identity of other flocks as well as predator alarms. The more dee notes in a chickadee-dee-dee call, the higher the threat level! Other small songbirds often associate with chickadee flocks because of their excellent alarm system.

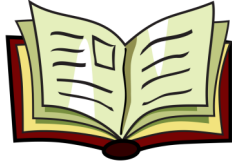


Blue Jay – known for their intelligence and complex social systems. Their fondness for acorns is credited with helping spread oak trees after the last glacial period!



White Pelican – migrate from the Gulf of Mexico; have nested on Lake of the Woods for hundreds of years and more recently have been spotted in greater numbers on Lake Nipigon and Lake Superior as well! Can live to be 20+ years old.

Here are a few titles we've found to be useful and informative for caregivers



Chicken Soup for the Soul: Navigating Eldercare and Dementia: 101 Stories for Family Caregivers. Amy Newmark, June 2021.

The Caregiver's Companion: Caring for Your Loved One Medically, Financially and Emotionally While Caring for Yourself. Carolyn A. Brent MBA, 2021.

Caregiver Daily Logbook: Daily Reminder, Tracker & Record for Caregiving and to Stay Organized | Keep Track of Medication, Meal, Activities, Hygiene, Vitals & Lot More Oliver Shyne, July 2021.

A logbook created especially for primary caregivers. Also helpful for managing your auxiliary caregivers, documenting, and monitoring the quality of care given, and more.

Caregiver's Guide for Canadians: Rick Lauber, Self Counsel Press, 2013.

Provides readers with valuable tips and advice to help them to provide the best eldercare possible while balancing the demands on their time.

How to Lessen the Stress of Caregiving During the Holidays

We know that despite the warmth and excitement of the holidays, this time of year can have added stressors for caregivers on top of the usual tasks of gift shopping, preparing meals, and coordinating visits.

The Ontario Caregiver Organization (OCO) provides some very helpful tips to help lessen the stress during this time of year:

“Fill your cup”: Make sure you are taking the time to care for yourself as well! Go for a quick walk, book respite to give yourself a well-deserved break, take a moment to have a conversation with someone you can confide in...do something you enjoy!

“Be flexible with shopping”: Don't get too caught up in shopping the way you might be used to – try out some new methods such as shopping with someone else and each covering half the store/shopping

list, ordering online, or having a secondary caregiver with you to help out.

“Adjust holiday meals”: Take some pressure off yourself by focusing on spending quality time together instead of spending large amounts of time preparing festive meals. Perhaps adjust the timing of the event (is there another day that works better?), the location (is there another location that is easier or can somebody help with transportation if your care-recipient lives in long-term care?), or the amount (cut back on dishes or bake one dessert instead of three).

“Cut back on décor”: Consider the time it takes to put up and take down decorations as well as possible safety risks involved in doing so. As the OCO puts it, “No one is suggesting you be a Grinch, but maybe you don't need to be mayor of Whoville either.”

“Start a new tradition”: It is important to acknowledge that your holidays may have changed as a result of caregiving, and to let yourself grieve this loss. Then, allow yourself to be open to new and creative traditions!

See the Ontario Caregiver Organization's full article “Reimagine Your ‘Perfect’ Holiday” here: <https://ontariocaregiver.ca/reimagine-your-perfect-holiday/>

The OCO is also hosting a webinar on Dec. 2nd 12-1pm on “Caregiving During the Holidays: Expectations vs Reality, and Self-Care.” Register for this at the following link:

<https://ontariocaregiver.ca/event/oco-webinar-caregiving-during-the-holidays-expectation-vs-reality-and-self-care/>





This year, get the gifts you really want

This holiday season, let family and friends know about the gifts you'd most like to receive. To nudge people in the right direction, you could send a link to an article in an email or your own personal wish list and include a note that says something like, "Hello! In case a hint would help with your holiday shopping, I want to share my wish list with you. #1 or #7 in this article would be wonderful!"

Or even better, why not purchase your own gift. Something that you have always wanted! Bring it home or have it delivered and better yet if delivered have them gift wrap it for you. Place it under the tree for Christmas morning.



COVID CORNER

Staying healthy over the holidays

We wish all of our readers a safe and Merry Christmas. Just in case you need a refresher on details, here's a link to the "how to have a safe Covid Christmas" directive from The Government of Canada.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/guidance-documents/plan-safe-holiday-celebration.html>

*May your holidays sparkle with moments of love, laughter, and goodwill, and may the year ahead be full of contentment and joy.
Have a Happy Holidays*

For further information regarding the Caregiver Support Committee call 1-833-416-2273.
For information on programs and services available to Caregivers in Ontario call the 24/7 Caregiver Helpline at 1-833-416-2273

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