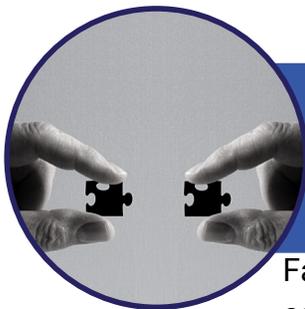


REGION 9 AREA AGENCY ON AGING CAREGIVER NEWSLETTER

Serving the Counties of: Alcona, Alpena, Arenac, Cheboygan, Crawford, Iosco, Montmorency, Ogemaw, Oscoda, Otsego, Presque Isle and Roscommon



FAMILY DYNAMICS: HEALTHY COMMUNICATION

Family dynamics are how family members interact and relate to each other. In caregiving situations, these dynamics can complicate the already challenging work. Arguments may arise over money, lack of involvement, or longstanding family emotions. Here are some ways to help defuse conflicts stemming from family dynamics, and how to keep communication open, respectful, and productive.

- Setting aside one-on-one time to talk to the person before the meeting start.
- Create an atmosphere for openness to discuss the full range of topics.
- Create an agenda, and give it out a couple of days before the meeting.
- Research different options before attending the meeting.
- Use respectful listening.
- Keep an open mind.
- Going over the list of caregiving needs you previously drew up.
- Pointing out areas in which someone might be able to help.
- Asking if they would like to help, and if so, in what way do they feel comfortable.
- Making sure the person understands what would be most helpful for both you and the caregiving recipient.
- Build consensus.
- Designate a note-taker to record.
- Recognize the emotional factors that can surface during a family meeting.
- Consider enlisting the help of an outside facilitator.
- Give people time to digest what is happening.
- Once the meeting has ended, use technology to stay connected.
- Be flexible, be willing to give different ideas a trial run.

Example of activities caregivers need assistance with, included but are not limited to:

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| • Bathing/grooming | • Housekeeping |
| • Filling Medication Boxes/Refilling Prescriptions | • Paying Bills |
| • Making Medical Appointments | • Shopping |
| • Providing Transportation | • Preparing Meals |

COMMUNICATION WITH A PERSON WITH DEMENTIA



Communication with a person with dementia requires patience, understanding and good listening skills. The strategies below can help both you and the person with dementia understand each other better.

- Think about how you are presenting yourself, non-verbal and verbal cues such as tone, posture and facial expressions.
- Try a calm, gentle, matter of fact approach.
- Try using touch to help express your message .
- Do not make assumptions about a person's ability to communicate because of an diagnosis.
- Do not exclude the person with the disease from conversations.
- Speak directly to the person.
- Take time to listen to the person express their thoughts, feelings and needs.
- Give the person time to respond. Do not interrupt unless help is requested.
- Humor lightens the mood and makes communication easier.



EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

Here are tips to consider for having successful communication with your doctor:

- Make a list of your questions and concerns.
- Write down and prioritize those questions, highlighting the main three or four you want to discuss.
- Send a list of the questions to your doctor in advance, if you think that would be helpful.
- Provide a list of medications and supplements you are taking, recent symptoms and the dates at which they occurred, any recent tests and names of other doctors you are seeing can be useful information to share with your doctor.
- Make sure your top concerns are known at the beginning of the visit.
- Tell your doctor if you have trouble hearing.
- Bring someone to take notes and be a second pair of ears.
- Bring a tape recorder and ask the doctor if she wouldn't mind your recording the visit to help you better remember the information you discuss.
- Ask questions.
- Ask about your medications.
- Stick with the same doctor.
- Do not hesitate to ask when words the doctor is using are unfamiliar or his instructions are not clear to you.
- Do not minimize the symptoms or situation.
- Share information about valuable community resources that have helped you.
- Inform your doctor of any cultural beliefs that may affect your treatment choices or preferences.



IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

Planning ahead before you need these documents allows you to stay in control during difficult situations. Make sure you have these documents in a convenient place and a second person knows where they can find them in case of an emergency.

- Will
- Trust agreement
- Life insurance policy(s)
- Health insurance policy(s)
- Long-term care insurance
- Car insurance policy
- Homeowner/rental policy
- Employment contracts
- Partnership agreements
- List of checking, savings account
- List of credit cards and numbers
- List of important friends/neighbors
- Social security cards
- Advance Health Directive/Living Will Power of Attorney – Healthcare Power of Attorney – finance Spouse's/partner's will (original) safe combination
- Retirement papers
- Retirement accounts (IRA, 401K, etc.)
- Funeral arrangements
- Titles and deeds
- Notes (mortgages)
- List of stored and loaned items
- Auto ownership records
- Birth certificates
- Military/veteran's papers
- Passwords (important websites, banking, credit card, social media, computer, wi-fi, phone, etc.)
- Marriage certificate
- Children's birth certificates Divorce/separation records
- Safe deposit box key

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL FAMILY MEETING



The purpose of a family meeting is to foster open communication among family members. It is a safe place where everyone is free to say what they think and feel as they cooperate to make decisions and solve problems. A structured meeting helps this to happen when a family is ready for it.

- Give everyone the agenda a couple days before the meeting.
- Choose a location where most people will feel comfortable.
- Meetings can occur regularly, a narrow focus for each meeting can help.
- Encourage all family members to participate, long distance caregivers they can call in.
- Speaking in a respectful way helps the group stay calm and keep the discussion productive.
- Use "I" messages, instead of you messages.
- Anyone can call a break.
- Remind everyone that the goal is to talk about care for your older adult, not to fix family issues.
- Distributing a calendar with different days marked with responsibilities and commitments can also help each person honor the agreements made.
- Consider having a mediator at the family meeting.
- End the meeting with something fun and that affirms family members.



FINDING A NURSING HOME: DO NOT WAIT UNTIL YOU NEED ONE TO DO THE RESEARCH

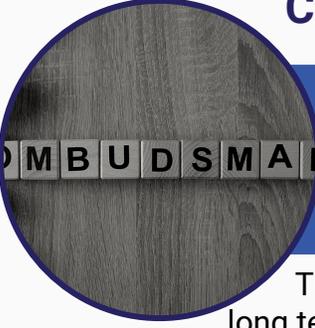
When the needs of an older person can no longer be met in the home setting, finding an alternate living arrangement can be challenging.

- Do not rush into choosing a facility.
- Talk to family, friends, and healthcare providers.
- Examine government records.
- Visit during mealtime.
- Consider the location of the facility.
- Include the care recipient as much as possible.
- Conduct your own facility inspection.
- Observe the environment.
- Look at residents' grooming.
- Ask questions during your visit.
- Make a second visit without calling ahead.
- Pay attention to whether staff members interact closely with residents and know their names.
- Ombudsmen can help you.

How you can be involved during this transition:

- Visit often.
- Talk with the activities director.
- Speaking with the staff.
- Participate in care planning sessions.
- Participate in the family council.
- Practice patience during the adjustment period.

[Click here for a printed Nursing Home Checklist.](#)



LONG TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN

This program provides information and education to families and individuals about long term care facilities and services. The Ombudsman investigates concerns help residents, families and friends resolve problems such as quality of care, residents' rights and state regulating services. The Ombudsman and Ombudsman volunteers act as a liaison between residents, care providers and the state regulating agency. The Ombudsman can also provide you with educational programs and training in residents' rights, guardianship, volunteer advocacy and long term care public benefits.



MI Long Term Care Ombudsman Program
Dakima Jackson
517.827.8028
djackson@meji.org

IMPORTANT DATES

Caregiver Webinar Series

Friday, April 9, 2021
Relatives Raising
Related Children
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Powerful Tools for Caregivers

VIRTUAL ONLINE
MONDAYS, APRIL 26, 2021-MAY 31, 2021
5:30 PM - 7:00 PM

Caregiver Webinar Series

Friday, May 14, 2021
Caring for the Caregiver
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Caregiver Webinar Series

Friday, June 11, 2021
**Understanding and
Responding to Dementia**
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Caregiver Webinar Series

Friday, July 9, 2021
Dealing with Difficult Emotions
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Powerful Tools for Caregivers

VIRTUAL ONLINE
THURSDAY, JULY 15, 2021-
AUGUST 19, 2021
10:00AM-11:30AM

Caregiver Webinar Series

Friday, August 13, 2021
Assistive Devices
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Caregiver Webinar Series

Friday, September 10, 2021
Preparing for the Future
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM



READING FOR SELF-CARE

Are you looking for a book about caregiving? If so, there are plenty of great ones out there. To help you narrow your focus, these books come highly recommended on a variety of caregiving websites:

- *The 36- Hours Day*, Nancy Mace
- *My Two Elaines: Learning, Coping, and Surviving as an Alzheimer's Caregiver*, Martin J. Schreiber
- *Who Cares? The Give and Take of Family Caregiving*, Jerry Bridge
- *Daily Comforts for Caregivers*, Pat Samples
- *Learning to Speak Alzheimer's: A Groundbreaking Approach for Everyone Dealing with the Disease*, Joanne Koenig Coste
- *AARP Meditations for Caregivers: Practical, Emotional, and Spiritual Support for You and Your Family*, Barry J. Jacobs and Julia L. Mayer
- *A Bittersweet Season: Caring for Our Aging Parents, and Ourselves*, by Jane Gross
- *AARP Checklist for Family Caregivers: A Guide to Making it Manageable*, Sally Balch
- *Understanding Difficult Behaviors: Some Practical Suggestions for Coping with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Illnesses*, Anne Robison Beth Spencer and Laurie White
- *AARP Caring for Your Parents: The Complete Family Guide*, Hugh Delehanty



WHERE CAN I FIND MORE HELPFUL INFORMATION?

Region 9 Area Agency on Aging Special Projects Coordinator is available weekdays, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. To answer your questions, register you for caregiver workshops, provide resources and to support you and the person you are care for.

Contact Brooke at 989.358.4616
or mainvilleb@nemcsa.org