



DECEMBER 2022

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

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN HIRING A HOME HEALTH CARE AGENCY



Home care services range from medical care to help with daily household chores. If you are considering home care services, ask these questions to choose the best provider for your needs.

- Is the agency licensed by the state?
- Is the agency certified by Medicare to meet federal requirements for health and safety?
- What type of employee screening is done? Can the agency provide references?
- What are the aide's credentials?
- Can the aide provide references from at least two employers? Check them thoroughly.
- Are you and your loved one comfortable with the home health aide?
- What are all costs associated with home care? What services are included in those fees?

After you have found a home care services provider, set up a plan to monitor and evaluate the situation. If you're concerned about the care or services provided, discuss the issue promptly with the agency or home health aide. If necessary, involve your loved one's doctor.

MEDICATION MANAGEMENT: HELPFUL TIPS AND TRICKS FOR MANAGING MEDICATIONS



TIPS FOR REMEMBERING

- Use a pillbox.
- Incorporate your medications into your routine.
- Give yourself reminders, place a sticky note where you would see it.
- Set an alarm.
- Use a medical alert device.
- Consider hiring a home care aide.

PROTECTING YOURSELF FROM DANGEROUS DRUG INTERACTIONS

- Keep a detailed list, including over-the-counter medications and creams.
- Communicate with your doctor.
- Pick one pharmacy and stick to it.



Tips for Family Caregivers



Listen to their concerns and frustrations.



Allow the person to keep as much control of their life as possible.



Be realistic about how much activity can be done at one time.



Build quiet times into the day, along with activities.



Tell them what you are doing, step by step while you help them.



Take time for Self-Care.



Respect the person's personal space.



Try distracting a person with dementia.



Try to keep a routine.



Speak calmly.



MANAGING YOUR STRESS

Caregiver stress emotional and physical is common. As a caregiver, you may be so focused on your loved one that you don't realize that your own health and well-being are suffering.

- Recognize warning signs early. These might include irritability, sleep problems, and forgetfulness. Know your own warning signs, and act to make changes. Do not wait until you are overwhelmed.
- Identify sources of stress. Ask yourself, "What is causing stress for me?" Sources of stress might be that you have too much to do, family disagreements, feelings of inadequacy, or the inability to say no.
- Identify what you can and cannot change. Remember, we can only change ourselves; we cannot change another person. When you try to change things over which you have no control, you will only increase your sense of frustration. Ask yourself, "What do I have some control over? What can I change?" Even a small change can make a big difference.
- Take action. Taking some action to reduce stress gives us back a sense of control. Stress reducers can be simple activities like walking and other forms of exercise, gardening, meditation, or having coffee with a friend. Identify some stress reducers that work for you.



DOCUMENT CHECKLIST

A Caregiver Binder is a portable compilation of resources to have at your fingertips to assist you. A caregiver binder should include as much information as required for the care recipient's needs. It should be portable to accompany the caregiver and care recipient when they visit healthcare providers.

- Legal identification documents
 - Social Security cards
 - Birth certificates
 - Adoption papers
 - Marriage licenses
 - Passports
- Tax documents
 - Tax returns
 - W-2s and 1099 forms
 - Any tax-related forms, receipts and records
- Property records
 - Vehicle registration and titles
 - Mortgage statements, deeds and bills of sale
 - Insurance policies (home, auto, personal property, etc.)
- Medical records
 - Wills, powers of attorney or living will
 - Medical bills
 - Burial instructions
 - Health insurance policies
- Finance records
 - Pay stubs
 - Canceled checks
 - Disability or unemployment records
 - Retirement/pension plan records
 - Investment statements



HOW TO CALM A PERSON LIVING WITH DEMENTIA WHO IS WANTING TO GO HOME

"Home" may represent memories of a time or place that was comfortable and secure to the person with dementia. It can be more helpful to respond in a way that comforts and calms your care recipient. The goal is to reduce your care recipient's anxiety or fear.

Ask yourself:

- Are their basic needs met?
- Could they be in pain?
- Is the environment affecting the behavior?
- Is the environment friendly, familiar, functional, and forgiving?
- Could they be wearing clothing that is itchy or uncomfortable?

Here are some suggestions to try:

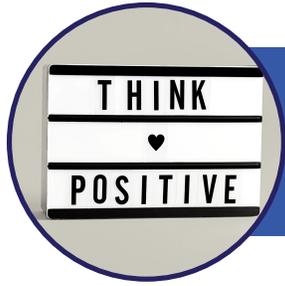
- Find out where "home" is for them.
- Keep a log of when they are asking to go home.
- Encourage them to talk about where they are happy there.
- Consider taking them outside.
- Try changing the topic.
- Reassure them they are safe.
- Looking at pictures from their past and give them a chance to reminisce.
- Avoid arguing about whether they are already "home".



TIPS FOR BATHING A PERSON LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

1. Consider their preferences. Such as do they prefer a shower or bath, morning or evening. Follow their preferred hygiene routine, before dementia.
2. Respect their privacy, have only you and the person you are caring for in the room.
3. Consider a care partner of the same gender. Most people are more likely to feel more comfortable undressing in front of a person of the same gender.
4. Visualize yourself in the role of the person being bathed, and asking how you would feel if you were them.
5. Have your supplies nearby and ready.

6. Turn the heat up so the space is nice and cozy.
7. Drape a towel around their shoulders and one over their lap to create a sense of privacy.
8. Tell them step by step what you are doing, allowing time to process. Try pairing strong visual cues with short verbal cues.



SELF-AFFIRMATIONS FOR FAMILY CAREGIVERS

Self-affirmations are positive statements we make about ourselves to strengthen or build our self-worth. Affirmations can inspire you, motivate you, and increase your self-esteem.

- I deserve time for myself and can attend to my own emotional, physical, and spiritual needs without guilt or apology.
- I am strong and can overcome challenges that come my way.
- I will stay positive and work on one problem at a time.
- I continue to learn and take responsibility for my boundaries by setting limits and advocating for myself.
- I am an essential part of the support that helps my loved one to get well.
- I am grateful for the life I have.
- I have the courage and capacity to overcome challenges that come my way.
- I accept myself as I am.
- I will find joy in the everyday day moments of life.
- I deserve to be joyful, happy, and successful.
- I love and respect myself.
- I am in control of my thoughts, feelings, and choices.
- Or create your own self-affirmation.

If some phrases feel too difficult to say, you can add “I’m learning to” or “I’m learning that...” before the statement.



An “I” statement is a style of communication that focuses on the feelings or beliefs of the speaker. “I” statements are a simple way of speaking that will help you to avoid this trap by reducing feelings of blame. A good “I” statement takes responsibility for one’s own feelings, while tactfully describing a problem.

IMPORTANT DATES

Powerful Tools for Caregivers

VIRTUAL

JANUARY 11- FEBRUARY 15, 2023
10:00AM-11:30AM

Powerful Tools for Caregivers

VIRTUAL

APRIL 29, 2023 - MAY 3, 2023
2:00PM-2:30PM

Powerful Tools for Caregivers

VIRTUAL

JUNE 14, 2023 - JULY 19, 2023
1:00PM-2:30PM

Caregiver Webinar Series 2023:

NOVEMBER 11, 2022: LIVING WELL WITH A CANCER DIAGNOSIS: A PERSONAL STORY PLUS HELPFUL TIPS

DECEMBER 9, 2022: IMPORTANCE OF SELF-CARE

JANUARY 13, 2023:

FEBRUARY 10, 2023: NAVIGATING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

MARCH 10, 2023: UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONDING TO DEMENTIA

APRIL 14, 2023: PARKINSONS



TIPS FOR FAMILY CAREGIVERS

- Seek support from other caregivers. You are not alone!
- Take care of your own health so that you can be strong enough to take care of your care recipient.
- Accept offers of help and suggest specific things people can do to help you.
- Learn how to communicate effectively with your family, doctors, and care recipient.
- Caregiving is hard work so take respite breaks often.
- Watch out for signs of depression and do not delay getting professional help.
- Be open to new technologies and assistive devices that can help you.
- Organize paperwork such as legal, financial, and medical information so it is easy to find.
- Give yourself credit for doing the best you can in one of the toughest jobs there is!



2-1-1 NORTHEAST MICHIGAN

2-1-1 is a trusted gateway for referrals and information to meet essential needs such as housing, food heating, and more. To find local resources and help, click here:

<https://navigateresources.net/nemi/>



WHERE CAN I FIND MORE HELPFUL INFORMATION?

Region 9 Area Agency on Aging's 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 caring for.

Contact Brooke at 989.358.4616 or mainvilleb@nemcsa.org