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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



TIPS FOR ORGANIZING MEDICAL HISTORY

In an emergency, having your medical records ready can also be helpful to you and your healthcare providers. However, getting started can seem overwhelming, so use these tips to help you get your medical information organized.

Tips:

- Create a table of contents.
- Create a doctor directory.
 - Include the names, their contact information, and the role they play in your care.
- Keep documents (See list below) from the past year readily accessible.
- Call your doctor to request copies of your medical records.
- Log symptoms and side effects.
- Take advantage of technology (Health Care Portals).

List of Items:

- Family health history.
- Personal health history.
- Health insurance cards.
- Medicare cards.
- A list of medications including dosages, frequency, date started, and reason.
- A list of emergency contacts, relationships, addresses, and all phone numbers.
- A sheet for recording the date of visits, the provider, and any tests performed or instructions.
- Any special logs include blood pressure readings, blood sugar levels, or symptoms.
- A copy of a health care proxy, advanced directives, or living will.
- A power-of-attorney, if one is used.
- Test results, hearing, vision, and dental records.
- History of childbirth.
- Immunizations records.
- Invoices and billing.
- A list of allergies, including drug or food allergies.





ADVANCE CARE PLANS

Having meaningful conversations with your care recipient is the most important part of advance care planning. Having a plan in place may help your care recipient grieve more easily and feel less burden, guilt, and depression. Advance care planning can give you and your care recipient a sense of control over an uncertain future.

What is advance care planning?

Advance care planning is the process of learning of and taking action to prepare for future decisions about one's care.

Why is advance care planning so important?

Advance care planning is important because it allows individuals to plan and take control of their care and affairs before they are no longer able to voice their wishes.

Thinking through these questions can help you prepare for the journey ahead.

- What is motivating me to create an advance care plan?
- What do I hope to get out of my advance care plan?
- Do I have any concerns or barriers holding me back from creating my plan?
- Who can support me in creating my plan?

[Click here, for a guide on advance care planning resources, which contains tools, materials, and information about an array of advance care planning elements like financial, housing, medical, legal and palliative care/hospice](#)

"PREPARING FOR DEATH IS ONE OF THE MOST EMPOWERING THINGS YOU CAN DO. "

- CANDY CHANG





A CAREGIVER'S BILL OF RIGHTS

As caregivers shoulder more responsibilities, they may neglect their own needs, often at the expense of their physical and mental health. It is common for caregiving responsibilities to become priority number one.

The Caregiver's Bill of Rights outlines individual rights belonging to those caring for their care recipient, such as the right to take care of themselves, the right to seek help, and the right to protect their individuality. The Caregiver's Bill of Rights is not a checklist, but rather an ongoing reminder. Feel free to add other rights that are specific to you.

I HAVE THE RIGHT:

- To take care of myself by eating well, exercising, and getting plenty of rest.. This is not an act of selfishness. It will give me the capability to take better care of the care recipient.
- To ask and seek help from others even though my care recipient may object. I know the limits of my own endurance and strength.
- Seek out and use caregiving resources in my community so I can take time for myself.
- Maintain aspects of my life that do not include the person I'm caring for, just as I would if they were healthy. I know I do everything I can for this person, and I have the right to do some things for myself.
- To get angry, be depressed, and express other difficult feelings occasionally.
- To reject any attempts by the care recipient to manipulate me through guilt, and/or depression.
- To receive consideration, affection, forgiveness, and acceptance for what I do, from my care recipient, for as long as I offer these qualities in return.
- To take pride in what I am accomplishing and to applaud the courage it has sometimes taken to meet the needs of my care recipient.
- To protect my individuality and my right to make a life for myself that will sustain me in the time when my care recipient no longer needs my full-time help.
- To expect and demand that as new strides are made in finding resources to aid physically and mentally impaired persons in our country, similar strides will be made towards aiding and supporting caregivers.

From: Jo Horne in [Caregiving: Helping an Aging Loved One](#)

"PLACE YOUR OXYGEN MASK OVER YOUR OWN FACE FIRST, BEFORE ASSISTING ANYONE ELSE."





GRIEF

Grief is your emotional response to loss. While grieving, it is normal to feel sadness, regret, anger, and other feelings. The grief process is different for everyone. It can come and go for months even years. However, it is a process of healing.

Possible Reasons for Grief:

- Loss of someone.
- Serious illness of someone.
- Relationship ends.
- Death of a pet.
- Change in job.
- Moving to a new home.
- Loss of physical ability.
- Loss of independence.
- Loss of financial security.

SYMPTOMS OF GRIEF

PHYSICAL



Sleep disturbance



Low energy, exhaustion, weakness or fatigue



Change in Appetite



Headaches

SOCIAL



Feeling alone



Wanting to isolate yourself from socializing



Angry that others' lives are going on as usual and yours is not.

EMOTIONAL



Sadness, crying spells



Worry, anxiety, and panic



Anger, frustration, or rage



Guilt

SPIRITUAL



Anger at God



Questioning the reason



Questioning your faith or meaning of life

Grief affects our whole being —physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually. Each of us will have different symptoms.

MYTHS ABOUT GRIEF



MYTH: The pain will go away faster if you ignore it.

Fact: Trying to ignore your pain or keep it from surfacing will only make it worse in the long run. For real healing it is necessary to face your grief and actively deal with it.



MYTH: If you do not cry, it means you are not sorry about the loss.

Fact: Crying is a normal response to sadness, but it is not the only one. Those who do not cry may feel the pain just as deeply as others. They may simply have other ways of showing it.



MYTH: Moving on with your life means you are forgetting the one you lost.

Fact: There is no right or wrong time frame for grieving. How long it takes can differ from person to person.



MYTH: Friends can help by not bringing up the subject.

Fact: People who are grieving usually want and need to talk about their loss. Bringing up the subject can make it easier to talk about.





WELLNESS WHEEL

Our wellness has eight dimensions. If any of these dimensions are off, we may be upsetting the balance of our healthy situation. Here are things we can do at our own pace, in our own time, and within our own abilities that can help us feel better and live longer.

SOCIAL

Healthy relationships with friends, family, and the community, and having an interest in and concern for the needs of others and humankind.

FINANCIAL

Being financially well such as income, debt, and savings, as well as a person's understanding of financial processes and resources.

SPIRITUAL

One's personal beliefs & values. This involves having meaning, purpose, and a sense of balance and peace.

- Recognizing our search for meaning and purpose in human existence.
- Developing an appreciation for life and the natural forces that exist in the universe.

EMOTIONAL

The ability to express feelings, adjust to emotional challenges, cope with life's stressors, and enjoy life. It includes knowing our strengths.

PHYSICAL

Having and maintaining a healthy body. Good physical health habits. Nutrition, exercise, and appropriate health care.

OCCUPATIONAL

Participating in activities that provide meaning and purpose and reflect personal values, interests, and beliefs, including employment.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Being able to be and feel safe.

- Accessing clean air, food, and water.
- Occupying pleasant environments that support our well-being.
- Promoting learning and relaxation in natural places and spaces.

INTELLECTUAL

Keeps your brain active and our intellect expanding.

Participating in brain games, such as crosswords or sudoku can maintain brain health.



HEARING AIDS

A National Institute on Health-funded research team found an association between hearing loss and the development of dementia in older adults. By using hearing aids to treat hearing loss, it may help slow the development of cognitive problems. Hearing aids reduced the rate of cognitive **decline in older adults at high risk of dementia by almost 50% over a three-year period.** In the trial participants who received hearing aids had an almost 50% reduction in the rate of cognitive decline compared with people in the health-education group. The researchers are continuing to follow the study participants to see how changes in cognition develop over time. It is recommended for general health and well-being that older adults have their hearing checked regularly and any hearing issues properly addressed.

Data found at: NIA and NIH National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; Eleanor Schwartz Charitable Foundation.



DRIVING AND DEMENTIA

As a person's dementia declines so does their driving skills. Eventually, they will have to give up driving all together. However, people associate driving with self-reliance and freedom and the loss of driving tends to be upsetting.

- Driving requires highly complex and sophisticated thinking processes.
- Cognitive deficits seriously compromise driving abilities.
- The problem is the disease, not the person.

Ways to Reduce the Need to Drive:

- Arrange to have prescriptions, groceries and meals delivered, reducing the need to go shopping.
- Have hairdressers make home visits.
- Schedule people to visit regularly, either as volunteers or for pay.
- Create a driving calendar with friends and family members.
- Arrange for friends and family to take the person with dementia on errands or to social events.
- Contact your local Senior Citizen Center about drop offs and pickups.

Resource:

- **Region 9 Area Agency on Aging Driving Factsheet**
- **At the Crossroads: Family Conversations about Alzheimer's Disease, Dementia & Driving:** Helps families determine when it's time for loved ones with dementia to stop driving and offers strategies for coping with driving cessation.
- **We Need to Talk: Family Conversations with Older Drivers:** Provides families with practical information to help them plan ahead and initiate productive and caring conversations with older adults about driving safety.

50 PERCENT OF MARRIED, OLDER DRIVERS WOULD PREFER TO HEAR ABOUT THEIR DRIVING FIRST FROM THEIR SPOUSE.





Mi Caregiver Connection is your starting point for finding real, local support.

Whether you're helping a parent, partner, or friend, Mi Caregiver Connection here to help you. By providing trusted information and connecting you with critical resources.

Website:
www.micaregiverconnection.com

CAREGIVER CORNERS

Region 9 Area Agency on Aging partnered with twenty-nine Northeast Libraries to provide family caregivers with resources, tools, and information.

Library items included caregiver books, dementia toolkits, touchscreen computers, literature stands, and dementia DVD sets.

DEMENTIA TOOLKITS:

Dementia toolkits are available to help caregivers and the care recipient. These kits contain items that stimulate conversations, keep them engaged, and trigger memories.

PARTNERING LIBRARIES BY COUNTIES:

Alpena, Alcona, Cheboygan, Crawford, Ogemaw, Oscoda, Otsego, Montmorency, Presque Isle, and Roscommon.

[Click here, for the webiste.](#)



NEW MEDICATIONS

Any time you are prescribed a new medication, make sure to ask your health care team:

- What are the benefits of this medication?
- What are the risks of this medication?
- What are some side effects that can occur?
- What other treatment options are available?



TIPS FOR SWALLOWING PILLS

- Drink a full glass of water with pills.
- Take pills while standing or sitting up.
- Check with the pharmacy or doctor to see if the pills can be crushed.
- Check with the pharmacy to see if the medication comes in liquid or chewable form.
- Mix it with yogurt, apple sauce, or pudding.
- Consider the benefit (Vitamin) versus the risk of choking on it.
- Take to smaller mg pills of the same dosage instead of one large pill.
- Some pills can be cut in half.
- Take the pill with a carbonated beverage.
- Tell your physician about the problem.
- Non-prescription spray that coats the pill for easier swallow.
- Practice taking pills, with small fake pills.
- Caregivers demonstrate the technique.
- Do not rush, eliminate distractions, and take a deep breath before taking the pill.
- Try a two-gulp method by placing the pill on the tongue, taking a sip of liquid, and swallowing it, not the pill. Take a second sip immediately and swallow the pill together with it.
- Chew a cookie, cracker, or small piece of bread after moistening your mouth. Just before you swallow, put the pill in your mouth.

Data found at: Today's Caregiver



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 caring for.

Contact Sydney at 989.358.4667 or funnels@nemcsa.org