



MARCH 2023

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 LIVING A WONDERFUL LIFE WITH DEMENTIA



The quality of life for someone living with dementia can be improved through participation in pleasant and meaningful activities, social interactions, and music. Being physically active and eating nutritious meals in a relaxed atmosphere can also help make each day better.

1. Focus on the person, not the disease.
2. Look at their remaining abilities.
3. Start planning ahead.
4. Build a team to support for the both of you.
5. Build your knowledge, awareness, and skills around the disease.
6. Encourage social interaction.
7. Enrich life through music and art.
8. Offer the person with dementia choices.
9. Practice Self-Care.

EXERCISE PROVIDES AN OUTLET



For caregivers finding ways to fit exercise into their daily routine, can be a struggle. However, physical activity has many immediate benefits as well as long-term benefits. View the chart on page two to see the benefits.

**Examples of
Physical Activities**

- Yoga/Meditation
- Stretching
- Walking
- Household Chores
- Gardening
- Weekly Exercises Classes

Health Benefits of Physical Activity for Adults



IMMEDIATE

A single bout of moderate-to vigorous physical activity provides immediate benefits for your health.

LONG-TERM

Regular physical activity provides important health benefits for chronic disease prevention.



Sleep

Improves sleep quality



Less Anxiety

Reduces feelings of anxiety



Blood Pressure

Reduces blood pressure



Brain Health

Reduces risks of developing dementia (including Alzheimer's disease) and reduces risk of depression



Heart Health

Lowers risk of heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes



Cancer Prevention

Lowers risk of eight cancers: bladder, breast, colon, endometrium, esophagus, kidney, lung, and stomach



Healthy Weight

Reduces risk of weight gain



Bone Strength

Improves bone health



Balance and Coordination

Reduces risks of falls



Emerging research suggests physical activity may also help boost immune function.

Nieman, "The Compelling Link," 201-217.
Jones, "Exercise, Immunity, and Illness," 317-344.





KEEPING A MARRIAGE TOGETHER

How do you find the time to maintain a relationship while you are raising kids, working full-time, and caring for someone? At times like this, you really need to cut yourself and your spouse a lot of slack.

- **Acknowledge the crisis.** Recognize that this situation is going to require a lot of time, effort, and energy. Talk with your spouse about what needs to be done to meet your care receiver's immediate needs, and identify what each of you can do to help support the other in order to maintain some balance in your family's routine.
- **Express your fears.** Facing your fears and talking about worst-case scenarios will not bring them to fruition. It can actually help you and your spouse and other family members get organized and make decisions.
- **Ask for help.** It's important to understand our own limits.
- **Ask for forgiveness and be willing to grant it.** If you make a mistake or say something mean or thoughtless in a tense moment, apologize immediately.
- **Establish a plan for some pleasure after the crisis.** make some plans for you and your spouse that are not centered on hospital or nursing home visits, kids' activities, or work obligations.



SELF-CARE FOR CAREGIVERS

Self-care includes anything you do to keep yourself healthy: physically, mentally, and spiritually. Not practicing Self-Care has consequences such as burnout, depression, anxiety, resentment, and other negative implications.

- **Get organized.** Make to-do lists, and set a daily routine.
- **Ask for help.** Make a list of ways others can help. For instance, someone might pick up groceries or sit with the person while you do errands.
- **Take breaks each day, and spend time with your friends.**
- **Keep up with your hobbies and interests.**
- **Join a caregiver's support group.** Meeting other caregivers may give you a chance to exchange stories and ideas.
- **Eat healthy foods, and exercise as often as you can.**
- **See your doctor regularly.** Be sure to tell your health care provider that you're a caregiver, and mention if you have symptoms of depression or sickness.
- **Build your skills.** Free Caregiver, and Health and Wellness workshops are offered. To find these classes, contact 989.358.4616 or mainvilleb@nemcsa.org.



DEPRESSION - WHAT IS IT?

Major depression is significantly more than feeling sad, unhappy, or moody. Most people experience these feelings for short periods. Major depression is a mood disorder in which feelings of sadness, loss, anger, or frustration interfere with everyday life for an extended time and requires a doctor's supervision.

A family caregiver suffering from major depression experiences a combination of at least five of the following for at least a 2-week period:

- Depressed mood, loss of interest or pleasure in most daily activities.
- A significant change in weight or change in appetite.
- Trouble sleeping or excessive sleeping.
- Feeling tired and a lack of energy.
- Feelings of hopelessness and helplessness.
- Feelings of worthlessness, self-hate, and inappropriate guilt.
- Feelings of low self-esteem.
- Sudden outbreaks of anger.
- Difficulty in thinking, concentrating, or making decisions.
- Recurring thoughts of death or suicide.



TIPS FOR RETIREMENT PLANNING

- Talk with your significant other about retirement spending.
- Working longer can add significantly to your retirement.
- Focus on physical health, health care expenses can burden retirement funds.
- Start saving, keep saving, and stick to your goals.
- Monitor your investments before retirement.
- Find out about your Social Security benefits.
- Get a good investment professional.
- Budget for unexpected expenses.
- Don't touch your retirement savings.
- Know your retirement needs.
- Create a budget and follow it.
- Pay off your mortgage.
- Plan for inflation.





BUILDING YOUR CARE TEAM

Caregiving for someone can be quite challenging. Too often the responsibilities land on the shoulders of one individual, either by choice or default. Whether the care receiver is a parent, spouse, adult child, or sibling, upholding the total weight of someone's needs can take its toll on even the strongest of caregivers. That's why a caregiver needs to build a care team and form a circle of support.

Plan a family meeting to evaluate the caregiving situation and discuss any concerns. Quite likely, each family member has a skill or ability to contribute. However, consider the family dynamics and how this may influence the caregiving scenario.

Consult with professionals and seek support and skills from people outside of the family.

There are many benefits to building a strong team. Communication, cooperation, and partnerships can support a successful caregiving experience.

HERE IS THE FOLLOWING LIST OF TEAM PLAYERS WHO CAN GET YOU STARTED:

- Family members
- Long-distance family members
- Caregiver Social worker
- Counselors
- Adult day program staff
- Home Care Providers
- Medical organizations
- Friends
- Volunteers
- Physicians
- Pharmacists
- Medical professionals
- Clergy/Church members
- Neighbors
- housekeeping
- Therapists



EMOTIONAL FATIGUE

Symptoms of emotional fatigue tend to come and go. Listen to what your emotions are telling you.

- Nervousness or tension.
- Sadness, "the blues" or tearing-up.
- Forgetfulness.
- Frustration, anger, or guilt.
- Feelings of resentment, impatience, and/or irritability.
- Poor or interrupted sleep.
- Feeling of isolation.
- A growing realization of the sacrifices: time, money, opportunities, etc.
- An increase in aches, pains and, blood pressure.
- Find information.
- Join a support group.
- Identify as a caregiver.
- Embrace change.
- Recognize their limitations.
- Give yourself permission to let go.
- Delegate some of the responsibilities.
- Get help.



SELF-AFFIRMATIONS

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.



WHAT ARE THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF CAREGIVING?

We often hear about the sacrifices caregivers make, but often we do not hear enough about the benefits of being a caregiver. Caregivers gain a lot from their role.

- A sense of fulfillment.
- Establishment of extended social networks or friendship groups associated with caregiving
- Feeling needed and useful.
- You understand what you truly value.
- Learning something about one's self, others, and the meaning of life.
- Sense of giving back to someone who has cared for them.
- Satisfaction of knowing that their loved one is getting excellent care.
- Personal growth.
- You will learn who your true friends and family are. You become confident in your ability to handle anything.



CAREGIVER SHARED STORY: SHOPPING INCIDENT

Here is a story from a fellow family caregiver in our Region.

My wife and I were shopping at a mall for pants that had an elastic waistband. My wife's symptoms also include that she does not walk very well and kind of just shuffles along slowly. I had an emergency and had to leave the store for a short period of time. Because of her walking difficulties, she could not accompany me. I thought it would be okay if she looked for some jeans on her own while I was gone. I gave her instructions to not leave the store and that I'd be back in a few minutes.

Upon returning, I saw her at the checkout counter. But knowing that she did not have a wallet, money, or credit cards because I have had to remove them from her possession because she misplaces them, I was wondering "what's happening". I rushed over to the checkout and saw that the cashier was looking for a tag on the pants my wife gave her. There weren't any and then the clerk started looking at an online catalog trying to find the name of the pants. I asked my wife if she knew where she picked up the pants and then told the clerk we'd go back to where my wife found the pants and get another pair with a tag.

We left the checkout and as we were walking towards the pants area, I noticed my wife was wearing different pants than I dressed her in that morning. As you have probably guessed, my wife tried on the pair of jeans she wanted to buy and never took them off. She had given the clerk the pants she wore into the store. So besides trying to checkout without any means to pay, she had given the clerk her own pair of pants. All's well that ends well. I simply had her go back into the dressing room and switch the jeans around. I embarrassedly explained what happened to the clerk and we proceeded with the transaction. The clerk was very understanding.

Lesson learned ... I cannot ever leave my wife alone because even though she has good intentions, things can go wrong quickly. I believe, she never realized what happened that day and simply considered everything normal.



CAREGIVER EMPOWERMENT AND WELLNESS CONFERENCE



MONDAY, APRIL 24, 2023 • 10:00 AM TO 4:00 PM

NORTHERN MICHIGAN BANQUET & EVENT CENTER • 7784
STONE SCHOOL ROAD • HOUGHTON LAKE, MICHIGAN 48629

Caregiver Topics Include:

- Coping with Change, Grief, and Loss
- Community Resources: Trualta
- Caregiver Survival
- Stress Less with Mindfulness

- Informational Resources
- Continental Breakfast
- Complimentary Lunch
- Great Prizes and Giveaways!
- Vendors

**For more information or to register contact 989.358.4616
or email mainvilleb@nemcsa.org**

IMPORTANT DATES

Caregiver Empowerment and Wellness Conference

ROSCOMMON COUNTY
April 24, 2023
The Northern Center
7784 Stone School Rd, Houghton
Lake, MI 48629
10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Powerful Tools for Caregivers

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

Powerful Tools for Caregivers

HILLMAN
MAY 16, 2023 - JUNE 20, 2023
1:00 PM - 3:30 PM

Powerful Tools for Caregivers

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

Caregiver Webinar Series

- MARCH 10, 2023: UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONDING TO DEMENTIA
- APRIL 14, 2023: PARKINSONS DISEASE

Dementia Webinar Series

- JUNE 8, 2023: DEMENTIA FRIENDS MICHIGAN
- JULY 14, 2023: ALZHEIMERS ASSOCIATION: COPING WITH CHANGE, GRIEF, AND LOSS
- AUGUST 11, 2023: COPING WITH DEMENTIA CARE STRESS



FOUR TYPES

There are four kinds of people in the world: those who have been caregivers, those who are currently caregivers, those who will be caregivers, and those who will need caregivers.

- **Former First Lady Rosalynn Carter**



CAREGIVING STATISTICS

- About 1 in 7 Americans is caregiving for someone at any given time.
- These family caregivers - about 53 million - make it possible for a loved one to remain independent. Without their support, the cost of paid caregiving services would amount to \$470 billion each year.
- Family caregivers put their financial futures at risk to the tune of \$522 billion in lost income each year. They also do not have the training, support, and opportunities for rest and self-care.

Source: Administration for Community Living.



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 Brooke at 989.358.4616 or
mainvilleb@nemcsa.org