



TOMPKINS COUNTY
OFFICE FOR THE AGING

Aging Better, Together



Summer 2019

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In Support of Caregivers

***A Publication of the Caregivers' Resource Center and Alzheimer's Support Unit at the
Tompkins County Office for the Aging***

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Local Caregiver Support Services

Caregiver's Resource Center & Project Care Services
Tompkins County Office for the Aging

Rodney Maine 274-5491

Dawn Sprague 274-5499

The Caregiver's Resource Center & Alzheimer's Support Unit offers family caregivers information, consultation services, workshops, this newsletter and a lending library of books on family caregiving topics. Stop by or call for an appointment.

Volunteers with **Project CARE** offer caregivers a needed break and help in other ways as needed. We may also be able to arrange for paid home care services or short-term

respite for stressed caregivers having difficulty paying for those services. Call Dawn to discuss your needs.

Caregiver Counseling
Family and Children's Services
Ann Dolan 273-7494

A caregiver counselor will meet with family caregivers periodically in her office to help them work through complex caregiving issues or provide emotional support. Special circumstances may be considered for in-home service. No charge. Donations accepted.

Adult Day Program
Longview Adult Day Community
Monday through Friday, 9am-3pm
Pamela Nardi 375-6323

Adult day programs offer older adults companionship along with planned social and recreational activities. It often provides a break from caregiving and time for other matters. Fee: \$55/day includes lunch and snack.

Support Groups 

Caregiver Support Group
3rd Tuesday of each month
6:30pm-8:00pm
Family & Children's Service
127 W. Martin Luther King Jr./State St., Ithaca

Facilitated by Ann Dolan, LCSW. Especially for caregivers of older adults. Call for information, 273-7494, before attending first time. Please ring buzzer located next to the front door for entry.

Caregiver Support Group
Last Thursday of each month
5:30 - 7:00
Brookdale
103B Bundy Rd. Ithaca

Facilitated by Robert Levine, LMSW. A support group for caregivers which includes a light meal. To RSVP, or for further information, contact Robert Levine at 256-5094 or by email at rlevine@brookdale.com.

Alzheimer's Caregiver Groups

1st Wednesday of the month at 5:30pm at Lifelong, 119 W. Court St., Ithaca. For information call the Alzheimer's Association at 330-1647

3rd Wednesday of the month at 12:30 at Walden Place, Cortlandville. Call 756-8101. Companion care for your loved one available during the meeting.67910

Cancer Caregiver Group

2nd Tuesday of the month, 5:30-7:00pm

at the Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes, 612 W. State St., Ithaca. For family, friends and caregivers of individuals with Cancer. For information call 277-0960.

Parkinson's Caregivers Group

1st Monday of each month, 11:00am-12:30pm at The *Office for the Aging*. Call the Office for the Aging. 274-5491 for more information.

How to Motivate Without ‘Bullying’ During Caregiving

Develop a range of strategies so the care receiver feels supported, not challenged

by Barry J. Jacobs, AARP, January 2, 2019

During my caregiving years, my mother and I had many tense moments about rousing her from bed to get ready for medical appointments. I’d pop into her bedroom and wake her, then remind her a few minutes later that she really needed to get up, then cajole her, plead with her, and ultimately use my sternest, I-mean-business tone. I thought I was helping motivate her in those instances. She’d say she felt like I was bullying her.

I never liked being called a bully and denied it was so. After all, we were always in a rush. If I pressured her, I reasoned, then it was for her own good. But in retrospect now, 20 months after her death, I wonder if I was in the right. What really mattered to her during those times? Was she clinging to the comfort of her pillow because she was still tired or even depressed? Was it more important for her to have control over her own life and sleep in than submit to another routine exam with a doctor who couldn’t help her much anyway? Instead, I overruled her and expected her to “obey” me.

I don’t think I’m the only family caregiver to transgress the blurry line between supportive guidance and arm-twisting. Sometimes when tired or frustrated or impatient — or when there really is a situation of dire urgency — many caregivers are prone to pressure care receivers too hard to conform to schedules and regimens. We rationalize the approach we’ve taken on the basis of practicality and expedience. But many of us second-guess ourselves later about whether it was necessary.

Certain things do have to get done. Otherwise, family caregivers might feel that they are guilty of irresponsibility and neglect. But how can we manage to be coaches, not bosses, and effective motivators, not feared bullies? Here are some ideas.

Rarely put tasks over the relationship: There are few caregiving tasks so crucial that they warrant trampling a care receiver’s feelings in the process

of accomplishing them. Rather, there are what I think of as front- and back-burner issues. On the front burner are mostly issues having to do with safety, such as taking medications appropriately or driving capably, for which the caregiver should be firm and persuasive. However, most other issues are on the back burner of importance and need for action. For these items, caregivers should allow care receivers to exercise as much choice as possible and shift plans accordingly. That means being more flexible and accommodating, as well as respectful. In retrospect I could have scheduled my mother's doctor's appointments later in the day, even if it was less convenient for me, or canceled them altogether.

Develop a range of approaches and strategies: Great coaches are attuned to the moods of their players and apply the right touches at the right time to encourage maximum effort and performance. Great caregivers, too, can sense what care receivers are feeling at a given moment and tailor their requests — for instance, appealing to reason, resorting to silly humor or changing the subject entirely — to the approach that will motivate. In general, I found that a gentler style was more apt to work with my mother, but there were also times that she wouldn't agree with me at all. That's when I would turn to my wife, who, with a smile and an even softer tone, could somehow win my mother's cooperation making the same request she'd already rejected from me.

Solicit and heed feedback: We can sometimes get so wrapped up in the hectic pace of caregiving life that we lose a sense of how we are coming across to others. But we can listen to feedback from family members about how we are conducting ourselves. Take a moment to say to the care receiver, "We are having to work together more closely nowadays than we ever have before. Am I treating you the way you want to be treated?" Regard the answer seriously.

Beware of creeping bullying: No caregiver sets out to be the sort who pushes others around. But if he finds that applying pressure to the care receiver is the most efficient way of completing his many tasks, then he may slowly tend toward using sheer force. Caregiving isn't about efficiency, however; it's about caring. And nothing could be less caring than bending people to one's will. We need to be aware of the excesses of our own styles and never convince ourselves that the ends justify the means.

Barry J. Jacobs, a clinical psychologist, family therapist and healthcare consultant, is the co-author of the book AARP Meditations for Caregivers (Da Capo, 2016). Follow him on Twitter @drbarryjacobs and on Facebook.



Office of the State Long Term Care Ombudsman

Educating

Empowering

Advocating

Certified Long Term Care Ombudsmen provide free-of-charge advocacy to and serve as a resource for residents of long-term care facilities (nursing homes, assisted living and adult-care facilities).

Ombudsmen respond to a variety of concerns about long-term care including:

- Quality of care
- Abuse and neglect
- Rights violations
- Lost and stolen belongings
- Dietary concerns
- Discharge, eviction or termination of services
 - Public benefits programs
 - Cost of care

For information or assistance, please call your local ombudsman serving Tompkins, Chemung, and Schuyler counties at 607-274-5498.



TOMPKINS COUNTY
OFFICE FOR THE AGING

Aging Better, Together

Are you concerned about the safety of a family member or a friend? Are you, or someone you know, at risk for falling in their home? Tompkins County Office for the Aging can help!

We contract with Doyle Medical Monitoring to provide Personal Emergency Response Systems (PERS) to residents of Tompkins County. Standard pricing starts at \$25 a month and there is no installation, cancellation, or service call fee. When you get a PERS through our office, an Outreach Worker will visit your home, install and test the device, and explain how it works. With our Personal Emergency Response Systems, you will receive personalized in-home service, peace of mind, services and connections from a local agency, and 24/7 monitoring service. Call the Office for the Aging today at 607-274-5482 to speak with an Outreach Worker about our devices!



Caregiver Guilt and Finding Balance
by Sheryl Leary

How do you find the balance? Is there a balance? Am I doing the right thing? Should I be doing more? These are important questions for a caregiver. They can dominate a caregiver's daily thoughts. The experts all talk about balance. How do we find the balance when we are so busy doing the things that upset the balance?

Here is the key: there is no magic answer. You may be searching for an answer that is elusive and forever changing. Our ability to handle all that comes our way changes over time just as the needs of others around us change over time. Sometimes, just when we think we have a handle on life, something changes and we have to start from scratch.

Let me define my view of balance. I believe we achieve balance when we meet our own needs as well as the needs of those who depend on us. What are our needs? Needs can be physical (our general health), emotional (happiness, joy, love), and material (housing, clothing). Some may want to add spiritual needs as paramount in their lives as well.

Are caregivers meeting their own needs? Caregivers often neglect their yearly check-ups although they would never skip one for their loved ones. Caregivers often put aside their own emotions as they devote their energy to their loved one. Caregivers put off buying themselves new clothes, or items needed because it is so hard to get to a store by yourself and for yourself. When attention is paid to caregiver needs, the caregiver often thinks "Am I doing enough for my loved one?" and this starts the guilt process.

How do we create a system to ensure that caregivers and their loved ones both have their needs met? I suggest keeping an accounting of sorts so that care you provide for another can be matched with care you provide for yourself. You can start with a journal and divide each page in half. Put your loved one's name on one side and your name on the other. Did you help your loved one in the shower? You can list that on the side under your loved one's name. Did you take the time to take a shower yourself today? If yes, then list it on the side with your name. If you enjoyed a nice lunch with your mother today, you can list it on both sides. If you prepared her lunch but never sat down yourself to eat, then your side will run a deficit.

The activities you are writing down do not have to match perfectly. For example, you may have played cards with your father for his enjoyment. However, if this is not relaxing or enjoyable to you personally, you cannot put in on your side of the page. In this case, you need to find a source of relaxation that you can put on your side. For example, maybe you read for 30 minutes before going to bed. This may be your source of relaxation. Not all your activities or the time invested in each will add up equally. In many circumstances, there are not enough hours in the day to devote to yourself as you devote to others. However, the goal is to try and create a day that is shared with the one you love, not dominated by your caregiving. You will become more experienced at this as you practice. No caregiver can create a perfectly balanced spread sheet the first time out. The goal should be to continue trying so that you can achieve more balance in meeting the needs of yourself and your loved one.

By writing down the things you do for your loved one, perhaps you will feel less guilty. Your early journals may be very one-sided. Once you start to even things out, you may realize that you can be a better caregiver when there are some things you can list on your side. Learn from this, being a good caregiver is not always equal to the amount of care provided. If you are constantly frazzled and stressed, the care you provide may reflect your anxiety and weariness. This may not be the kind of caregiver you set out to be.

If you simply cannot balance the two sides to your journal, it is definitely time to call in help. Respite care can be what you need it to be, whether through a professional organization or through family and friends. You can contact your local Area Agency on Aging to learn more about the Family Caregiver Support Program. Professionals within this program can go over your caregiving experience with you and find sources of support you may not have known existed.

What do you do when your loved one's demands are so great, you have nothing to write on your side of the page? Sometimes our loved ones have care needs that are so extensive the demand on the caregiver is extreme. Caregivers need to recognize that if the balance sheet does not match up over time, the risk is far greater to both of you. Acting preventively to keep from burning out is a necessity. Caregivers who burn out are sometimes too physically and or mentally exhausted to provide any care.

It is hard to call in professionals when all your mother wants is you. It is hard to say “no” to someone you have loved all your life. If this is your circumstance, putting things into perspective becomes necessary. Let’s look at the case of providing care for your parents. If your mother or father never said “no” to you all your life, where would you be? Were you allowed to go to school? Essentially, your care was placed into the hands of others. At times you may not have been happy about this but for the most part you were probably safe and had your needs met. Did you ever visit with friends or extended family? These times were important in shaping your life. The same analogies can be applied to care for those in need. If it is always provided by one person, and in one way, it can rob both individuals from opportunities needed to sustain personal growth.

Start your balance sheet today. The search for balance is hard but needs to continue. When we achieve a healthy balance, the guilt will not feel as prevalent. The answer is never obvious. As long as our search continues and we keep our minds open to new ways to explore it, balance is never that far away.

This article by Sheryl Leary was taken from the caregiver.com website.



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Project CARE

Project CARE is a **friendly visitor program**. Project CARE provides companionship by having a volunteer make a weekly visit. Volunteers can provide conversation over coffee or tea, play games, go for a walk, work on a puzzle together, help with paperwork, organization, help with gardening, do a cooking or baking project together, manicure, and so much more. Project CARE can be a great comfort to Seniors and can provide in-home support to family caregivers. Volunteers provide opportunities for socialization to those who are homebound and isolated.

Project CARE is currently working on establishing two new options to the program that we hope to be able to offer in the near future;

- On-call option; to meet a one time or short-term need such as grocery shopping due to illness or injury, light yard work, running an errand, one-time respite and more for those who do not want to commit to a weekly visit.
- Telephone Reassurance Program; weekly check-in phone calls to Seniors, especially those Seniors that are socially isolated.

If you are interested in this program please contact:

Dawn Sprague at (607) 274-5499 to be added to the list and so we may collect your information.

Call (607) 277-4500 or
visit ithacanhs.org/seniorliving



Affordable & Safe Senior Living.
Because that's what you deserve.

OPPORTUNITY #1:

- 1 & 2 bedroom apartments
- 24 hour emergency maintenance
- Off-street parking
- Community rooms
- Interactive activities
- Close to grocery stores, library, and other shops

Locations:

- *Newfield Garden Apartments (Newfield)*
- *Juniper Manor I & II (Trumansburg)*

OPPORTUNITY #2:

- 1 bedroom, 1 bath cottage-style home with living area and kitchen

Modular home can be installed next to a family member's home. Perfect for someone looking for the support of family as they age, but would like to maintain their independence.



INHS



NeighborWorks
CHARTERED MEMBER



The Registry at FLIC



The Registry is a compiled list of private pay aides who have been screened through a face to face interview with the Registry Coordinator at FLIC. References are provided and verified to make sure the aide has the necessary skills and compassion that are important for someone to have when taking care of people in their homes. The Registry also contains a list of skilled nurses varying from pediatrics to palliative care.

For more information **contact Teri Reinemann at 272-2433.**

The Registry program is made possible through funding from the Tompkins County Office for the Aging and the New York State Office for the Aging.

NEWS AND NOTES

Oral Health Tips for Caregivers

Do you take care of an elderly parent or other older adult? If so, remember that a healthy mouth can help them enjoy food, chew better, eat well, and avoid pain and tooth loss.

Plaque puts a healthy mouth at risk. It can collect on teeth that aren't brushed well. The build up can cause bad breath, tooth decay, and gum disease.

Some older adults need to be reminded to brush and floss teeth. Others may need help actually getting it done.

You can take steps to help make brushing easier. For example, try a power or multiple-sided toothbrush. You can also modify the toothbrush handle to make it easier to hold.

If older adults need help, remember to wash your hands and wear disposable gloves before you begin. Use the "tell-show-do" approach. Tell them what you are doing to do, show them and then do what you've described.

Regular dental visits are important too. At a dental visit, you can ask for ways to help the person you care for.

NIH has a series of facts sheets to help caregivers learn more about protecting oral health in older adults. To download, visit www.nidcr.nih.gov/caregivers.

How to Have "The Talk" About Medical Alert Systems with Your Loved One

We know how stressful it can be when your parent or loved one gets older. Often, they are reluctant to make small lifestyle changes, like using a medical alert service-even if it could save their life. Getting acceptance of a medical alert, or Personal Emergency Response System (PERS), can be tough -but it's not impossible if done with understanding and focus on the bigger picture. These tips will help you have a conversation with your loved ones about using a medical alert system and creating a safety plan that everybody is happy and comfortable with.

1. **LISTEN:** Overcome objections by listening to understand what they are really saying. Present facts, figures and evidence that are harder to dispute than personal opinions. Like 1 in 4 Americans aged 65+ fall each year, of which 20% results in a serious injury. *
2. **FOCUS ON SAFETY:** Being prepared is key. Whether it's an emergency or not, a lot can happen when they're alone. Help buttons are for anyone and can be used for a variety of circumstances-not just emergencies.

3. EMPOWER INDEPENDENCE: Tech that connects family and aging adults gives everyone the freedom to be independent and do what they want to do without worry-go & know that help is always available, and just one button away.

4. INSPIRE CONFIDENCE: When there's a plan, everyone feels good and is able to do the things that make them happy.

*U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Reprinted from Greatcall.com

Reminder!!! You can always contact the Office for the Aging for information and referral on Caregiver and Long Term Care services at 274-5482.

If you would like to be taken off our mailing list, or if you would like to be taken off our mailing list but added to our Email list, please contact us!

Thank you!!!

The Caregivers' Resource Center and Alzheimer's Support Unit

Please call or visit us at the
Tompkins County Office for the Aging
214 W. Martin Luther King, Jr./State Street, Ithaca

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Websites of Interest to Family Caregivers:

Tompkins County Office for the Aging: www.tompkinscountyny.gov/cofa

- *Click on "Local Resources for Older Adults" to access our Tompkins County Resource guides.*

Family Caregiver Alliance: www.caregiver.org

CaringBridge: www.caringbridge.org

Caregiver Action Network: www.caregiveraction.org

AARP Caregiver Resource Center: www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving

Next Step in Care: www.nextstepincare.org

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