

The Caregiver's Voice

For People Caring for Family, Friends, and
Neighbors

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The Caregiver's Voice is a quarterly publication of the AA County Department of Aging & Disabilities' National Family Caregiver Support Program. Contact us at: 410-222-4464 ext 3043, at caregiver_support@aacounty.org

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How Do I Know When They Need Help?



As people age, their needs and abilities change. They may have trouble getting around the house or difficulty driving. They may not remember things as easily as they once did. And they may be having difficulty with their finances or with personal hygiene. We all want to support our older loved ones' desire to live independently, even when we have concerns about their safety and well-being. But how do we know when it's time to step in? Start with an assessment, a full review of a person's mental, physical, environmental and financial condition which helps determine his or her ability to remain safely independent. It identifies risks and helps determine options to reduce

them. It's very important to involve your parents in the discussion and decision-making about their options. While it is possible for families to complete assessments on their own using standard check lists, there also are experienced professionals who can help. Here are some basic areas you and your older family members may want to focus on:

- **Physical Health.** Have they been diagnosed with any chronic diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, arthritis or emphysema? Or other diseases, such as bowel or bladder problems, heart disease, stroke or cancer? Do they have vision or hearing problems, excessive weight loss or gain, or difficulty walking?

Updating Your Subscription to the Caregiver's Voice



In an effort to "go green", we would like to offer you the option to receive the Caregiver's Voice newsletter electronically. If you would prefer the newsletter to be emailed to you in a PDF format, please contact us at 410-222-4464, ext 3043 or email us at caregiver_support@aacounty.org.

Back issues of the newsletter are available on the Family Caregivers' website at www.aacounty.org/aging/aging_services/famCareSupport

Fall Workshop Series

- Annapolis Senior Center**
119 South Villa Ave.
Thursdays: Nov 6, 13, 20
(6-8 pm)
- Arnold Senior Center**
44 Church Road
Mondays: Nov 3, 10, 17
(6:30-8:30 pm)
- Brooklyn Park Senior Center**
202 Hammonds Lane
Mondays: Nov 3, 10, 17
(1-3 pm)
- Maryland City Activity Center**
Resurrection of Our Lord
8402 Brock Ridge Road Laurel
Mondays: Oct 6, 13, 20
(1-3 pm)
- O'Malley Senior Center**
1275 Odenton Road Odenton
Tuesdays: Oct 14, 21, 28
(6-8 pm)
- Pasadena Senior Center**
4103 Mountain Road
Wednesdays: Oct 8, 15, 22
(1-3 pm)
- Pascal Senior Center**
125 Dorsey Road, Glen Burnie
Tuesdays: Sep 16, 23, 30
(6:30-8:30 pm)
- South County Senior Center**
27 Stepney's Lane, Edgewater
Thursdays: Sep 4, 11, 18
(6:30-8:30 pm)

Art of Personal Care

South County Senior Center
27 Stepneys Lane, Edgewater
Thursday, Oct 2—6:30-8:30 pm

For more information, or to register for the Workshops, call 410-222-4464, ext 3043 or register on-line at:
<http://www.aacounty.org/Aging/needinCare/compCaregiver.cfm>

Caregiver Resources

National Family Caregivers Association (NFCA): www.thefamilycaregiver.org

Alzheimer's Association: www.alz.org

Association for Frontotemporal Dementias: www.ftd-picks.org

Medline Plus—Caregivers:
www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/caregivers.html

Lewy Body Dementia Association:
www.lewybodydementia.org/index.php

National Parkinson Foundation:
www.parkinson.org

Well Spouse Foundation:
www.wellspouse.org

National Alliance for Caregivers:
www.caregiving.org



Anne Arundel County residents are eligible for a **free** Adult Evaluation and Review (AERS). To schedule, call the Department of Aging & Disabilities at **410-222-4257**.

When Do They Need Help *(continued from page 1)*

- **Mental Health.** Have they been diagnosed with any psychiatric disorders such as depression, anxiety or psychosis? Alzheimer's or another form of dementia? Are they showing signs of confusion, disorientation or isolation? Mood swings or forgetfulness, sadness or loneliness?
- **Medication Use.** Are they taking their medication as directed?
- **Daily Living Skills.** Are they able to dress, bathe, get up from a chair, use a toilet, climb stairs, use the phone? Do they know how to get help in an emergency? Can they shop, prepare meals, do housework and yard work? Can they safely drive?
- **Home and Community Safety.** How safe is their neighborhood? Does their home have smoke alarms they can hear? Can they avoid telephone and door-to-door fraud? Can they maintain their house?
- **Support Systems.** Do your older loved ones have frequent visitors or see friends? Do they go to a Senior Center, or get out of the house for other social reasons? Do family members live close by?
- **Appearance and Hygiene.** How is their

overall appearance? Hair clean? Teeth brushed? Shaved? Do they dress appropriately in clean clothes?

- **Finances.** Can they live on their current income? Can they meet future needs with their current income? Are there any legal documents such as trusts, living wills, and/or durable power of attorney? Do they pay bills on time and make informed financial decisions?
- **Interests/Lifestyles.** Are they still engaged in the activities they have always enjoyed?

There are good assessment tools and professional consultants who can help you and your older loved ones decide when assistance is needed. An assessment can lead to solving problems and **allowing a parent to remain independent longer**. It can result in fewer accidents and illnesses, a longer life, and a higher quality of life. It's not always easy to recognize when an older loved one needs help. Learning how to assess their needs will make it easier to know when, and how, to help.

Condensed from <http://www.aarp.org/families/caregiving/>

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Are you one of the 2.4 million grandparents raising a grandchild—putting your plans on hold while taking care of grandchildren when the parents could not? Many of you feel all alone. And most don't know where to get the help they need.

Your Legal Status: Some grandparents ask to be made legal guardians for the grandchild they are raising allowing them to make important decisions such as enrolling the child in school or giving permission for a doctor to treat the child. Ask an attorney to help you decide what legal status is best for you and your grandchild.

Your Finances: See if you can get assistance from government programs. Your grandchild may be able to get Social Security or may be eligible to get money from your state's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. Your

family might qualify for food stamps. Ask the IRS about the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit.

Your Grandchild's Education: Get to know the child's teacher. Tell the teacher about your grandchild's living situation. And be sure to speak up if you think your grandchild needs special services.

Your Grandchild's Health: A grandchild with a serious medical condition can accumulate hefty medical bills; but even a healthy grandchild needs regular check-ups and immunizations. You may be able to get help from the Medicaid program which pays health care bills for people with low incomes or your grandchild may be able to get benefits from the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

Your Health: You must take extra steps to protect your own health so you will be able

to "be there" for your grandchild for many years to come. Take time each day to relax.

Ask for help from other so you can get a break from caregiving. Get regular checkups, take your prescribed medicines & join a support group. Tell your doctor if you feel depressed. The issues facing grand-families are many. But there are many people out there who understand what you're going through and want to help. Remember, you are not alone!

<http://www.aarp.org/family/grandparenting/>



The AA County National Family Caregiver Support Program has a limited amount of funding available to assist grandparents raising their grandchildren. To check if you are eligible, call: 410-222-4464, ext 3043.

Five Things You Should Know About Caregiving

(Linda Rhodes, Ed.D.)

- Understand how your parent's disease may affect his/her thoughts, behavior, and attitude. Inappropriate outbursts may be caused by an underlying condition -- not something you did.
- Set up a support system to help you care for your parent. Caregiving is not a solo act.
- Take breaks. Arrange for respite care, and look at adult day services for your parent, especially if you work.
- Keep up your interests, forgive yourself and do not allow your caregiving to consume you.
- There may come a time when nursing home care is the best thing for your parent. Do not feel guilty about this.

Support Groups



Mary Fridley, RN, BSN, BC, facilitates a monthly support group at the Department of Aging & Disabilities office, 2666 Riva

Road, Suite 400, Annapolis. Sessions are held on the **third Tuesday of the month from 1-2:30 pm.** Please note: If AA County schools are closed, or close early due to inclement weather, there will be no meeting that day.

For information on other community support groups, or cancer, diabetes, cardiac, stroke or Parkinson's support groups, call Patty Brandenburg at 410-222-4464, ext 3043, email us caregiver_support@aacounty.org or download the Community Support Group flyer from the web at:

www.aacounty.org/aging.

11th Annual Respite Awareness Day Conference

The Maryland Respite Care Coalition invites you to its 11th Annual Respite Awareness Day. This year's event is scheduled for Monday, October 27th at the Maritime Institute and Conference Center (692 Maritime Boulevard, Linthicum Heights). For more information and registration, check out: <http://www.respitecoalition.org>

And Then There Was Hope

(Mary Fridley, RN, BSN, BC)



We all experience times when life hands us lemons: when a difficult situation grows out of proportion; or an event makes life seem hopeless. The renowned writer and business guru, Dale Carnegie, gave us this famous recipe for hope: "If life gives you lemons, make lemonade...".

The caregiving journey can be long and arduous. Hope is the emotion that illuminates silver linings in the dark clouds that hover. It is a powerful motivator that supports us in time of despair and makes us believe in possibilities. Hope is not wishful thinking that ignores the severity of a problem; instead, it gives us the courage to act upon it and succeed. Hope is born of the desire for - and the belief in - change.

In his book, *The Anatomy of Hope*, Dr. Jerome Groopman defines hope as "...the elevating feeling we experience when we see – in the mind's eye – a path to a better future. Hope acknowledges the significant obstacles and deep pitfalls along the path. True hope has no room for delusion...hope gives us the courage to confront our circumstances and the capacity to surmount them."

Expecting positive results and believing they will happen are the basic elements of hope. Time and again this has been proven by the placebo effect: unknowingly, a placebo (fake drug) is given to someone who ends up experiencing the effects of the real drug.

Not surprisingly, there is a spiritual connection to hope. People with strong faith and religious beliefs tend to remain hopeful in stressful times. They believe they are not alone in their struggles and rely on a higher power. Those whose spiritual health is ailing suffer greater emotional pain. They see the glass as half empty and despair that now is forever; feeling isolated and abandoned. Hope is also a learned behavior. People who grow up in hopeless

environments tend to avoid risking hope. They may use the word but believe the worst is inevitable. They can, however, learn the skill of hopefulness.

Hope is an important coping skill that spurs us onto action to find meaning in tragedies and seek solutions to problems. An active way to rekindle and sustain hope is to talk to others. Support groups are known for their ability to generate and nurture hope. They provide a venue for sharing emotions, experiences, and tips on how to handle seemingly hopeless situations. The services of a mental health professional are invaluable for those suffering from depression – a state of pronounced hopelessness. And the guidance of a spiritual leader can help make sense of the "whys?"

Mind exercises, like word association games, can stimulate hopeful feelings that promote self-care. Take for example the word "smell". What kind of hopeful image and/or feeling do you associate with it? Is it "cookies" and the memory of baking them in anticipation of Christmas as a child? Or is it "coffee" and the peaceful smell of it brewing on a quiet morning before the household wakes? How about the word "sound"? Does it trigger an image of the Good Humor truck and feelings of excitement on a hot summer day; or the singing of cicadas on a lazy August afternoon? Indulge in a few minutes of quiet time each day to experience hopeful feelings words such as these create for you: sound, smell, event, person, peace, and smile.

Hope is not the end-all for the misfortunes in the journey of life. It is, however, the guiding light at the end of the tunnel. As Wendy Edy of the *Hope Foundation of Alberta* says, "A journey guided by hope is more manageable than a journey with no guide at all."

Blessings ~ Mary

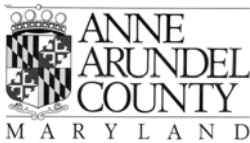
Holiday Gift Ideas for Seniors: Stationery, note cards, greeting cards, pens and stamps. Calendar with dates marked on it for upcoming birthdays, anniversaries, etc. Clocks with large numbers. CDs of a loved one's favorite music. DVDs of favorite TV shows from years past such as I Love Lucy, The Jack Benny Show. Large-print magazines such as Reader's Digest; large print books; large print crossword puzzle or word-find books. Framed family photographs. Gift certificates to beautician, barber shop or grocery store.

Anne Arundel County Department of Aging & Disabilities
National Family Caregiver Support Program

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We're on the web!
www.aacounty.org



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- Maryland Access Point (MAP)
- Adult Evaluation and Review Service (AERS)
- Foster Grandparents
- Handy Cab Program
- Senior Centers & Senior Center Plus
- Respite Care Referral Program
- Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)
- Medicaid Waiver Program
- Community Care Partnership
- Friendly Visitors Program
- Senior Housing Assistance
- Adult Public Guardianship
- Senior Legal Assistance
- Long-Term Care Ombudsman
- Senior Nutrition Program
- Telephone Reassurance
- Van Transportation
- Pets on Wheels/MOM AND ME
- Senior Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)
- Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP)
- Medical Assistance Personal Care Program (MAPCP)
- Carrier Alert
- Disabilities Information & Awareness Line
- National Family Caregiver Support Program

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