

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

The Caregiver's Voice

For People Caring for Family, Friends, & 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 or caregiver_support@aaacounty.org

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Spring Caregiver Workshops The 'Caring for You' Series

Workshop #1: Is There Help Out There?

There are community resources and services available to help caregivers care for disabled loved ones. Participants will learn what they are and how to access them.

Workshop #2: I'm Not Waving, I'm Drowning!

The caregiver's job is a difficult but rewarding one that can seem endless. Participants will learn how to effectively manage stress and appreciate the caregiving journey.

Workshop#3: Maintaining Energy, Vitality, & Spirituality

Physical, emotional, and spiritual health are a package deal with one being dependent on the others. Caregivers will gain knowledge and valuable tips in this workshop on how to strengthen and maintain the "package deal".

What to Take to the ER



Anyone caring for an elderly person should have these items ready for those unexpected trip to the

emergency room.

- **Medications:** Take medications in the original bottles if possible. Have a complete, accurate list of all medications, noting the dosage, strength and times to be taken.
- **Medical History:** Lists tests, surgical histories and recent doctor summaries.
- **Insurance:** Have a single sheet of paper with insurance and identification information. In case you forget the originals, you should have back and front copies of the insurance card, driver's license, supplemental insurance card, drug prescription card and credit cards.
- **Legal Documents:** You should have:
 - 1) A medical power of attorney for patients who cannot make their own decisions.
 - 2) A living will/advance directive about what the patient would want regarding a ventilator or cpr. Have two copies of medical directives—one for the hospital and one for the emergency technicians in the ambulance.
 - 3) A HIPPA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) form, with the caretaker or child listed as an approved name so that medical staff can share information without the patient's approval. Without this form, federal law prohibits medical staff from talking to anyone but

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Spring Workshop Schedule

Annapolis Senior Center

119 S. Villa Avenue .
Mondays: March 1, 8, 15
2:30-4:30 pm

Arnold Senior Center

44 Church Rd.
Tuesdays: April 13, 20, 27
6:30-8:30 PM

Brooklyn Park Senior Center

202 Hammonds Lane
Mondays: May 3, 10, 17
1:00-3:00 pm

O'Malley Senior Center

1275 Odenton Road
Wednesdays: June 9, 16, 23
1:00-3:00 pm

Pasadena Senior Center

Thursdays: June 3, 10, 17
1:00-3:00 pm

Pascal Senior Center

125 Dorsey Rd.
Tuesdays: March 9, 16, 23
6:30-8:30 pm

South County Senior Center

27 Stepneys Lane
Thursdays: April 1, 8, 15
6:30-8:30 PM

*Sponsored by: Somerford Place
Alzheimer's Assisted Living*

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/needngCare/compCaregiver.cfm>

Slow-Stroke Massage

(Mary Fridley, RN, BSN, BC)

Whether you are the caregiver for a senior or a grandchild, sometimes a different approach is needed to manage behaviors or just to assist in calming an agitated loved one. Long-term benefits are achieved when it is done on a daily basis at the same time each day.

Always start by explaining what you are going to do. Seat your loved one at a table in a quiet room. Place a pillow on the table and have her lean over it with arms hugging the pillow. Before touching her, center yourself by taking a few slow, deep, cleansing breaths to release your tension and then follow these instructions:

1. Place one hand on each shoulder and gently knead (like kneading dough) the area for 2 minutes.
2. Move your hands to the base of the skull and place your thumbs just below it. Make small gentle circular motions for 30-40 seconds.
3. With one hand following the other, use long sweeping strokes and gently stroke down from the base of the skull to the spine. Repeat for 1-2 minutes maintaining continuous contact with your hands.
4. Place one hand on each side of the person's neck under the ears. Slowly

stroke downward over the collar bones to the shoulders. Repeat several times with each stroke lasting about 45 seconds.

5. Starting at the shoulders, place a thumb on each side the spinal column. Walk the thumbs down to the waist and back up again to the neck. Repeat the process several times.
6. Return your hands to the shoulders and knead the shoulders and upper back for 1-2 minutes.
7. Place one hand on each side of the person's neck and hold for 1 minute.
8. Finish by sweeping your hands down the neck, across the shoulders, and down the back close to the spine - repeating 3 times.

Slow-stroke-massage takes about ten minutes. It may be necessary to make adjustments in time and pressure. Some individuals will have difficulty sitting for that length of time and others will lose interest. Older adults have less muscle mass and heavy pressure may cause them pain. Even if you cannot perform the exercise in its entirety your loved one will benefit from your nurturing touch

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren



Benefits QuickLINK: New Online Tool for Grandfamilies

Raising children takes a lot of money. Any parent can tell you that. Grandparents who are raising their grandchildren in "grandfamilies" have an even harder time making ends meet. The same holds true for relatives like aunts and uncles who are raising others' children.

There is good news, though. Many government programs could help some grandfamilies pay their bills. These are called "public benefits" programs. Some programs could help grandfamilies pay for food and electricity. Other programs could help these families pay other monthly expenses. Some programs could provide you with health insurance and help you pay the premiums.

Do these programs come as a surprise to you? You're not alone. Many grandparents do not know about public benefits programs or how to apply for help. Have you tried to get help and had no luck? Join the club. Sometimes, grandparents get the wrong information when they ask about programs that could help them raise their grandchildren.

The AARP Foundation wants to help families like yours. The Foundation's Benefits Outreach Program has a new online tool. It's called Benefits QuickLINK. This tool can help adults who are 50+ find out if they or the children in their care qualify for any of the 15 benefits included in the tool.

Benefits QuickLINK is free. It is easy to use. And it is fast. It will take you only 20 minutes to use the tool. This could be

What to Take to the ER (continued from page 1)

the patient. The form is available at www.hhs.gov.

- **Call List:** Emergency contact information (a spouse, adult child, or power of attorney), names and phone numbers for primary-care physicians and specialists.

Respite Care Referral Program

The Respite Care Referral Program maintains a registry of self-employed caregivers who have been screened and trained by the Department of Aging & Disabilities. Call us at 410-222-4464 ext 3094/3045 for a list of home care workers or companion caregivers to provide you with some much needed time-out!

Go Green!

To receive the Caregiver's Voice by email, please contact us at 410-222-4464, x3043 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

the most important 20 minutes you've ever spent on a computer! The tool could connect you with the help you need to raise your grandchildren.

You can use Benefits QuickLINK on any computer connected to the Internet. First, log onto www.aarp.org/quicklink. Then, answer a few simple questions. Benefits QuickLINK will give you information about each public benefit for which you or your children or grandchildren may qualify. You may be able to download an application for a program right on the spot. You might also be able to apply for benefits online.

Information obtained from AARP website:
http://www.aarp.org/families/grandparents/raising_grandchild/benefits_quicklink_for_grandfamilies.html

Nature's Alarm System (Mary Fridley, RN, BSN, BC)



Like life, stress happens; there is good stress and there is bad stress. Good stress is experienced when planning for a happy event like a wedding or the birth of a baby. Bad stress is experienced during difficult times such as financial hardship or illness. Stress is a normal reaction to life's demands. It exerts psychological and physical strain that, if not handled well, can cause cardiovascular and digestive disorders, sleep and memory problems, as well as depression and cancer.

Stress sets into motion the body's alarm system. It triggers the brain to produce "flight or fight" hormones which start a cascade of events that affect the whole body. The alarm is sounded first in the hypothalamus: a small cone-shaped gland in the brain. The hypothalamus sends an emergency message to the adrenal glands (located over each kidney) instructing

them to release the powerful hormones adrenaline and cortisol. Adrenaline immediately increases heart rate and blood pressure to stimulate the production of energy while Cortisol increases blood sugar (vital for energy and cellular function) and enhances the brain's ability to use it. Cortisol also stimulates the production of essential chemicals and other substances needed for tissue repair. But, in its efforts to respond to a threat it inadvertently disrupts the immune, digestive, and reproductive systems, as well as the growth process.

The alarm system is programmed to turn-off when the threat is gone - returning the body to normal function. If threat and stress remain constant, the alarm continues to sound and the person is put at greater risk for physical and emotional ill health.

Each person's stress response is unique because it is linked to heredity and experience. Genes contribute to how quickly

and forcefully the alarm system is activated, while experience is the learned response to stress. And, although this is true, a person can learn healthier ways to respond. One way is by identifying and sorting through stressors and then letting go of those that cannot be controlled.

Engaging in regular exercise, practicing daily relaxation techniques, and getting enough sleep also contribute to a healthy stress response. Developing positive relationships, attending a support group, and seeking professional counseling when needed are important, too.

Employing positive coping skills that worked in the past can help you in the present. Discover what works and practice using them daily...for the reward of learning how to respond to stress healthfully is peace of mind and a happier outlook on life.

Blessings, Mary



SAVE THE DATE!

18th Annual Caregivers' Conference
Saturday, April 10, 2010
9:00 am—3:00 pm
Annapolis Senior Activity Center

If you would like to join the NFCSP mail list and receive information regarding upcoming workshops and conferences, call ext 3043 or email us at caregiver_support@aacounty.org.

The Future is Now! Are You Ready?

This very popular series of workshops continues in 2010, focusing on financial planning. The January series focuses on financial planning issues.

◆ Wednesday, Jan. 13: Attorney Robert Bohan will present "**Financing Long Term Care Through Maryland Medical Assistance**".

◆ Wednesday, Jan. 20: Amy Rubino, the department's Senior Health Insurance Assistance Program Director, and a representative from the Maryland Insurance Administration will discuss "**Long Term Care Insurance**".

◆ Wednesday, Jan. 27: Robert Ready, of Jacob Dean Mortgage Inc., will discuss "**The New Faces of Reverse Mortgages**".

March workshops focus on "Planning for the Expected – and Unexpected."

◆ Wednesday, March 10: Mary Fridley, registered nurse and founder of Gero-Resources LLC, has titled her workshop "**Now What? Preparing for Your Older Loved One's Hospital Discharge**".

◆ Wednesday, March 17: Marjorie Cotterman, registered nurse, will speak on "**When Your Loved One Can No Longer Live Independently**".

◆ Wednesday, March 24: Lauren Parker, Register of Wills, will present "**After the Loss of Your Loved One**".

The planning workshops series are sponsored by: AAMC Life Line, Heartlands Assisted Living at Severna Park, and Generations

To register for the series, call 410-222-4464, Ext. 3094, or register online at <http://www.aacounty.org/Aging>.

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

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Annapolis, MD 21401

Phone: 410-222-4464 ext 3043
Email: caregiver_support@aacounty.org

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

KRIS LEIGH

Assisted Living
Severna Park~Gambrills~ Davidsonville
800.293.1011~ www.kris-leigh.com



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- Maryland Access Point (MAP)
- Adult Evaluation & Review Service (AERS)
- Foster Grandparents
- Handy Cab Program
- Senior Centers & Senior Center Plus
- Respite Care Referral Program
- Retired & 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 & 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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For information on sponsoring an edition of the *Caregivers' Voice*, contact Mary Chaput at 410-222-4464, ext 3045 or email caregiver_support@aacounty.org.

The newsletter is published quarterly and distributed to more than 2,500 caregivers and available on the world-wide web.