



The Caregiver's Voice

For People Caring for Family, Friends, &

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Spring 2021



The Caregiver's Voice is a quarterly publication of the AA County Department of Aging & Disabilities' National Family Caregiver Support Program. Contact us at: 410-222-4339/4375 or caregiver_support@aaacounty.org

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Spring Caregiver Educational Workshops

Making Health Care Decisions Before a Crisis: What Are They & Why Do They Matter
April 13, 2021
7:00 pm (via Zoom)

Planning for future health care is not just about old age. At any age, a medical crisis could leave you too ill to make your own healthcare decisions. Even if you are not sick now, planning for health care in the future is an important step toward making sure you get the medical care you would want, if you are unable to speak for yourself and doctors and family members are making the decisions for you. This presentation will help you understand the types of decisions that may need to be made and how to share your wishes with others. *(Jessica Whittemore, LCSW-C, Chesapeake Supportive Care)*

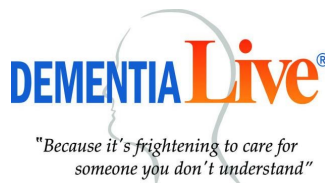
Legal and Financial Advance Planning
May 6, 2021
7:00 pm (via Zoom)

It is normal to feel overwhelmed by the details of legal and financial planning but creating a plan for your future can be empowering and ensure your wishes are met. The sooner you establish your legal plans, the better prepared you and your family will be. *(Elena S, Sallitto, J.D.)*

Stop Asking How Their Day Was: Connecting More Meaningfully with People Who Have Dementia
June 9, 2021
7:00 pm (via Zoom)

When someone has dementia, asking questions like, "how was your day, Mom?" is often counterproductive. Join us for this interactive program on what to say to someone you love who has dementia and how to establish and maintain more meaningful connections. This program is particularly helpful for those who are visiting their loved ones in senior living communities or at another person's home. *(Jennifer FitzPatrick, MSW, LCSW-C, CSP)*

Register on-line at aaacounty.org/aging or call 410-222-4375/4339.



We are pleased to share with you a new opportunity to participate in the Dementia Live® experience *virtually!* Dementia Live® offers a unique inside-out understanding of dementia and aging. Family caregivers will gain a heightened awareness of the challenges faced by their loved ones who live with dementia. Caregivers will also learn new communication skills to help improve care and minimize disruptive behaviors—thus reducing caregiver stress!

Please join us at one of the upcoming sessions via the Zoom platform. Space is limited for each session. Pre-registration is required. To register, call 410-222-4375/4399.

- April 14, 2021 – 2:00 pm—FULL
- April 28, 2021—6:30 pm—FULL
- May 12, 2021 – 6:30 pm
- June 10, 2021 – 2:00 pm

The Anne Arundel Co. Department of Aging & Disabilities is grateful for our sponsors; however the Department does not endorse any particular vendor or business. Anne Arundel Co. reserves the right to approve and/or refuse potential sponsors.

Wellness House of Annapolis (Marshall Kaputsos, Volunteer at Wellness House of Annapolis)



Words of Wisdom from a Caregiver Coach

Being a caregiver is not only a difficult job, but one that is often overlooked in our society. Here are some words of wisdom from Wellness House of Annapolis' very own Teri Jacobson, Conscious Living Coach/Educator, Sacred Passage Doula and

Advanced Care Planner, who has her own personal experience with a legacy project, and facilitates a program called A Compass for Conscious Living. Teri is an integral part of these organizations, enabling caregivers to get the self-care that they need to be the best for themselves and the patients and loved ones they support.

Caregivers Are Lifesavers!

Caregivers are the glue of the support community in many ways. We are relying on caregivers now more than ever, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. Many times, the caregiver is the foundation of all families and communities. "Self-care as a caregiver is really important, especially while caring for the person who is being cared for. This action is selfless because you are better able to care for the other person when you are balanced and grounded," says Teri. There will always be a need for the caregiver in a whole variety of ways: for children, those dealing with illness, aging, or death. It is a universal role that needs to be elevated and given the appropriate amount of honor and respect.

Dual Caregiving: Kinship Care and Caring for Someone with Dementia



Many kinship caregivers are also caring for a spouse or parent who has been diagnosed with dementia. The children in the household will probably have many concerns and

questions as they see the physical and cognitive changes in their grandparent, aunt, uncle, or other beloved family member. Give them opportunities to ask questions and answer them honestly and in language they can understand. Explain that "Pop-Pop's behavior is not intentional but is the result of the disease.

Keep your explanation simple and geared toward their ages. Explain that even though "Pop-Pop" looks the same on the outside, something is happening in his brain that makes it hard for him to remember people and to remember how to do things. While the disease takes away factual memories, emotional memories – such as love and happiness – are retained for a very long time. Explain that even though the dementia may make him forget their names, he still holds love in his heart.

Explain the declines and changes as they see them. A while back, I came across a saying that had a real impact on me: "Please remember the real me when I cannot remember you." Make time to share memories with the children about "Pop-Pop" before the dementia took over. Talk about the vacations you all took together; his favorite ice cream; how he read to them or gave them piggyback rides. Keep those memories alive!

When Caregiving Stinks

Caregiving is hard to begin with, but it is even more difficult during Covid-19. Joining a Zoom support group can be especially helpful. Even if Zoom is cumbersome for you, it can provide a safe space for caregivers to speak freely. Finding this space can be incredibly helpful and empowering for caregivers. When people can open up and talk about what's been going on with them and share their feelings with others, this helps them to manage and process their thoughts. Knowing they aren't alone brings the carer into community and belonging. Finding an online support group like the AA County Caregivers group eases some of the daily stressors of being a caregiver.

The Gift of Receiving

The core issue that remains at the heart of caregiving is that caregivers need to remember to receive care as well. Since they tend to be very empathetic, caregivers can take on many of the emotions of those around them and without an outlet this can build up and turn into resentment. "Society says we can do this on our own, but this is not how we are wired. It's hard to be vulnerable and invite help. I encourage carers to lean in and welcome trusted neighbors, family, friends, church, and whoever else may be in your

Encourage them to share different activities with the individual who has dementia. Maybe the children can practice their reading, share something they wrote or their most recent artwork, or show a dance they learned. Keep in mind that "Pop-Pop's" attention span may be quite short.

There are numerous books written about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for various ages. Check with your local library or bookstore to see what is available. Some ideas are: *Remember Grandma?* (Laura Langston); *Belle Teal* (Ann Martin); *What's Happening to Grandpa?* (Maria Shriver); *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge* by Mem Fox; *Still My Grandma-Written* by Veronique Van Abeele; *Striped Shirts And Flowered Pants: A Story About Alzheimer's Disease For Young Children* by Barbara Schnurbush. The Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral Center has an excellent resource list of books for children and teens about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias on their website at www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers/resources. The Alzheimer's Association has a list of short videos for children and teens to learn more about the disease; you can find these at www.alz.org/living_with_alzheimers_just_for_kids_and_teen.asp.

In addition, middle school and high school age youth can participate in the Department of Aging and Disabilities Dementia Live® experience (now being done virtually) along with an adult family member. See page 1 of the Caregivers' Voice for the current schedule.

Wellness House of Annapolis (continued)

circle. You will benefit by letting them in and allowing them to support you,” says Teri.

How Others Can Help

In addition to this, “Asking people to do what they can, grocery shopping, picking up prescriptions, making meals, doing phone calls, and other errands that can be performed by someone else. Establishing a support team for the caregiver is just as important as providing support for the loved one,” says Teri. Caregivers can reach out for assistance and allow those closest to them to walk along side in very practical ways. Having someone come and sit with the loved one for an hour while the carer takes a rest can make all the difference. This is often the best way to alleviate day to day stress that can build from having to take care of others.

Resources for More Information:

Wellness House of Annapolis: Email us at admin@annapoliswellnesshouse.org and ask about Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and other caregiver programs.

The American Heart Association: <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/caregiver-support>

Anne Arundel County Department of Aging and Disabilities (DoAD): <https://www.aacounty.org/services-and-programs/national-family-caregiver-support-program>

Teri Jacobson, Volunteer at Wellness House of Annapolis, is a Conscious Living Coach/Educator, Sacred Passage Doula and Advanced Care Planner. In addition,

she works with those living with dementia in a senior care community and provides spiritual, physical, intellectual, cultural, and emotional programs. She also volunteers for Hospice of the Chesapeake (HOC) providing patient care, aroma therapy, and comfort touch modalities as well as workshop leader and trainer.

Article by Marshall Kaputsos, Volunteer who

Reframe, Replenish and Restore

- ◇ Reframing the Role – Remember that you get to be cared for too instead of only taking care of the other person.
- ◇ Community – Remember to reach out to your support team of friends and family on a regular basis to talk about your experiences and receive assistance if you need it.
- ◇ Forgive Yourself in Advance – Understand that you are not always going to be on, you won't always respond how you want to, and you're not always going to get everything done.
- ◇ Acknowledge the Role – This is a huge, most honored role. Although it may feel like society dismisses and cannot hear or see you at times, you are heard, seen, and supported.
- ◇ Don't Neglect Yourself – Take time to replenish and restore yourself with food, exercise, loved ones, pets, and special treats.



Family Caregiver Support Groups

Jennifer Sapp, MSW, MSG facilitates monthly support groups:

Glen Burnie Virtual Support Group

April 14
May 12
June 9

1:00-2:30 pm

Zoom link:

<https://zoom.us/j/91500934491>

Meeting ID: 915 0093 4491

or call

301 715 8592

Meeting ID: 915 0093 4491

Annapolis Virtual Support Group

April 20
May 18
June 15

1:00-2:30 pm

Zoom link:

<https://zoom.us/j/93285848158>

Meeting ID: 932 8584 8158

or call

301 715 8592

Meeting ID: 932 8584 8158

Caregiver Support Facebook Group



Family caregivers, living in or caring for someone in Anne Arundel County,

are invited to join our Facebook Support Group page. We hope this gives you the opportunity to connect with each other, share your concerns and your experiences and, hopefully, laugh in-between meeting times. For those of you unable to attend the day-time meetings due to work schedules or other commitments, this format provides you with the opportunity to connect, share with and support other caregivers. You can find the group on Facebook.com/ArundelSeniors.



On-Line Caregiver Videos

(www.aacounty.org/aging and Arundel Seniors on youtube.com)

- Dementia and COVID-19
- At Home with a Loved One with Dementia
- Dementia: It's Not Just Memory Loss
- Communicating through Behaviors
- Self-Care During COVID-19
- When You're Already a Worrier
- Discover the Programs
- Respite Care: What Is It and How Do I Get It?
- Coping with the Holidays
- "Snowdemic" - Preparing for Winter Weather during a Global Pandemic
- Positive Approach to Care: Teepa's GEMS—Seeing More Than Less
- Navigating Medical Care During a Crisis



National Family Caregiver Support Program

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Glen Burnie, MD 21061

- Information & Assistance (I&A)
- Adult Evaluation & Review Service (AERS)
- Adult Public Guardianship
- Americans with Disabilities Act Office (ADA)
- Assisted Living Facilities Program
- Evidence-Based Health Promotion
- Long-Term Care Ombudsman/Resident Advocate
- National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP)
- Respite Care Referral Program (RCRP)
- Senior Activity Centers
- Senior Care, Senior Center Plus
- Senior Nutrition Program
- Supports Planning
- State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)
- Telephone Reassurance Program
- Volunteer Programs

Anyone needing accommodations to caregiver events must contact Mary Chaput at 410-222-4339 or by e-mail at agchap01@aacounty.org at least seven days in advance of the event. TTY users, please call via Maryland Relay 7-1-1.

To join the NFCSP mail list and receive information regarding up-coming workshops and conferences, or to receive the *Caregivers' Voice* by email, call 410-222-4339 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.

For information on sponsoring an edition of the *Caregivers' Voice*, contact Mary Chaput at 410-222-4339 or email caregiver_support@aacounty.org.