



The Caregiver's Voice

For People Caring for Family, Friends, &

Volume 15, Issue 1
Winter 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@aacounty.org

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Winter Caregiver Educational Workshops

Positive Approach to Care: Teepa's GEMS Seeing More than Loss
Feb. 11, 2021
7:00 pm (via Zoom)

This workshop is an overview of the progressions/stages of dementia using GEM states to highlight characteristics seen during each stage. Participants will discuss the value and importance of seeing people living with dementia as having retained abilities, value, and benefitting from the right support and care to optimize performance and quality of life. Caregivers will also learn strategies and techniques for supporting and caring for their loved one living with dementia as it relates to their GEM state. *(Jennifer Jackson, Department of Aging & Disabilities)*

Navigating Medical Care During a Crisis
March 22, 2021
7:00 pm (via Zoom)

Transitions in care are extremely challenging for ill and aging individuals and their family caregivers. Each time your loved one transitions from one medical setting to another (e.g. from the primary care doctor to the Emergency Room or from the hospital to a nursing home/rehabilitation facility), there are significant opportunities for medical errors and miscommunication. In this workshop, Dr. Rochester will discuss key areas of concern and how to mitigate these risks by being a strong advocate. *(Nicole Rochester, M.D.)*

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

Find a complete schedule of the Winter-Spring 2021 workshops at www.aacounty.org/aging or call 410-222-4375/4339.

Find the schedule for the Virtual Dementia Live® on page 3.



On-Line Caregiver Videos

(www.aacounty.org/aging)

- 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

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Words of Wisdom from Johns Hopkins Wellness & Prevention Center

FORGIVENESS—YOUR HEALTH DEPENDS ON IT



Whether it's a simple spat with your spouse or long-held resentment toward a family member or friend, unresolved conflict can go deeper than you may realize—it may be affecting your physical health. The good news: Studies have found that the act of forgiveness can reap huge rewards for your health, lowering the risk of heart attack; improving cholesterol levels and sleep; and reducing pain, blood pressure, and levels of anxiety, depression and stress. And research points to an increase in the forgiveness-health connection as you age.

“There is an enormous physical burden to being hurt and disappointed,” says Karen Swartz, M.D., director of the Mood Disorders Adult Consultation Clinic at The Johns Hopkins Hospital. Chronic anger puts you into a fight-or-flight mode, which results in numerous changes in heart rate, blood pressure and immune response. Those changes, then, increase the risk of depression, heart disease and diabetes, among other conditions. Forgiveness, however, calms stress levels, leading to improved health.

Can You Learn to Be More Forgiving?

Forgiveness is not just about saying the words. “It is an active

process in which you make a conscious decision to let go of negative feelings whether the person deserves it or not,” Swartz says. As you release the anger, resentment and hostility, you begin to feel empathy, compassion and sometimes even affection for the person who wronged you.

Studies have found that some people are just naturally more forgiving. Consequently, they tend to be more satisfied with their lives and to have less depression, anxiety, stress, anger and hostility. People who hang on to grudges, however, are more likely to experience severe depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, as well as other health conditions. But that doesn't mean that they can't train themselves to act in healthier ways. In fact, 62 percent of American adults say they need more forgiveness in their personal lives, according to a survey by the nonprofit Fetzer Institute.

Making Forgiveness Part of Your Life

Forgiveness is a choice, Swartz says. “You are choosing to offer compassion and empathy to the person who wronged you.” The following steps can help you develop a more forgiving attitude—and benefit from better emotional and physical health.

(continued on page 3)

Maintaining Good Health While Raising Grandchildren

Written by Terry Turner, RetireGuide

<https://www.retireguide.com/guides/self-care-raising-grandchildren/>

Nearly 96 percent of Americans become grandparents by the time they're 65, according to AARP's Grandparents Today National Survey. If you're just signing up for Medicare services, take advantage of the free “Welcome to Medicare” physical exam.

Even if you don't have Medicare, it's a smart idea to get a physical as you take on the new role of raising your grandkids. It will give you an idea of your health challenges and lifestyle changes you may need to make.

In either case, stick with annual wellness visits to your doctor and any preventative screenings he or she recommends. Keeping healthy will help you keep up with the challenges of being thrust back into the role of raising a family. But it will also let you set a good example for your grandchildren to live healthy lives.

How to Maintain a Healthy Lifestyle While Raising Grandchildren

• Exercise

Talk with your doctor before beginning an exercise program, and then stay in shape to keep up with your grandkids. Make their playtime your exercise time by incorporating bike rides and outdoor games such as tag or catch into your routine. Learn more options at MedlinePlus.

• Good Nutrition

Don't fall into the habit of eating what your grandchildren want. Eat and serve balanced meals that are healthy and

nutritious — rich with fruit, vegetables, fiber and lean protein. Check out the National Council on Aging's healthy eating tips for seniors.

• Steady Sleep Schedule

Get into a routine of going to sleep and waking up at the same time every day — even weekends. Get eight hours sleep each night. This routine will also help your grandchildren settle into a daily routine. Check out sleep tips for seniors at the National Institute of Aging.

Health Care for Grandparents

Make sure you make and keep medical appointments for routine checkups. These can alert you to any health conditions before they become serious. Keep open and honest conversations going with your doctor and other health care providers.

But affording health care can be difficult when almost 20 percent of grandparents raising grandchildren live in poverty. If you're 65 or older, you are likely eligible for Medicare. But even if you are not yet 65, you and your grandchildren may qualify for Medicaid if you fall below certain financial income and resource levels.

The U.S. Administration on Aging's Eldercare Locator provides links to government resources on health issues affecting grandparents raising grandchildren. These include information and help for Alzheimer's disease, mental health and general health resources.

Words of Wisdom (continued)

Reflect and remember.

That includes the events themselves, and also how you reacted, how you felt, and how the anger and hurt have affected you since.

Empathize with the other person.

For instance, if your spouse grew up in an alcoholic family, then anger when you have too many glasses of wine might be more understandable, says Swartz.

Forgive deeply.

Simply forgiving someone because you think you have no other alternative or because you think your religion requires it may be enough to bring some healing. But one study found that people whose forgiveness came in part from understanding that no one is perfect were able to resume a normal relationship with the other person, even if that person never apologized. Those who only forgave in an effort to salvage the relationship wound up with a worse relationship.

Let go of expectations.

An apology may not change your

relationship with the other person or elicit an apology from her. If you don't expect either, you won't be disappointed.

Decide to forgive.

Once you make that choice, seal it with an action. If you don't feel you can talk to the person who wronged you, write about your forgiveness in a journal or even talk about it to someone else in your life whom you trust.

Forgive yourself.

The act of forgiving includes forgiving yourself. For instance, if your spouse had an affair, recognize that the affair is not a reflection of your worth, says Swartz.

Forgiving someone relieves stress and lowers blood pressure.



For more information on wellness and prevention topics, visit <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention>.

To learn about The Johns Hopkins Memory and Alzheimer's Treatment Center call 410-550-6337 or visit their website at https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/psychiatry/specialty_areas/memory_center/.

Dementia Live® Program Goes Virtual



We are pleased to share with you a new opportunity to participate in the Dementia Live® experience *virtually!*

"Because it's frightening to care for someone you don't understand"

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.

January 7, 2021 – 2:00 pm

January 14, 2021 – 6:30 pm

February 10, 2021 – 2:00 pm

March 10, 2021 – 6:30 pm

April 14, 2021 – 2:00 pm

May 12, 2021 – 6:30 pm

June 10, 2021 – 2:00 pm



Family Caregiver Support Groups

Jennifer Sapp, MSW, MSG facilitates monthly support groups:

Glen Burnie Virtual Support Group

January 13

February 10

March 10

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

January 19

February 9

March 16

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.



National Family Caregiver Support Program

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- 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@aaacounty.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@aaacounty.org
Back issues of the newsletter are available on the Family Caregivers' website at www.aaacounty.org/aging.

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