



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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Training Needs of Family Caregivers

The Finger Lakes Geriatric Education Center (part of the Ithaca College Gerontology Institute) recently surveyed both professionals as well as family caregivers to get a better picture of their training needs. When family caregivers were asked to choose the topics they wanted to learn more about (from a list of 30 frequently-recognized aging issues), the following top priority topics were the ones most often chosen:

- Understanding long-term care issues (59.6 %)
- Reducing loneliness, boredom, hopelessness (55.3%)
- Community Resources (54.4%)
- Legal Issues (53.5%)
- Caregiver self-care: avoiding burnout (51.8%)
- Financial Issues (51.8%)
- Depression in older adults (51.8%)
- Dementia (managing challenging behaviors) (44.7%)
- End-of-life issues (43%)
- Dementia: understanding the disease process (43%)



The majority of family caregivers expressed a preference for face-to-face workshops/conference although about a third of respondents indicated that webinars and online training modules were most preferred.

In this issue, and in the coming year, we will continue to try to let family caregivers in Tompkins County know about training opportunities available to them. For one-to-one consultations, call the Caregivers' Resource Center at the Tompkins County Office for the Aging (274-5482).

Local Caregiver Support Services

Caregivers' Resource Center & Project CARE Services

Tompkins County Office for the Aging

David Stoyell (274-5492)

Robert Levine (274-5491)

The Caregivers' Resource Center & Alzheimer's Support Unit

offers family caregivers information, consultation services, support groups, workshops, this newsletter, and a lending library of books on family caregiving topics. Stop by or call for an appointment.



Volunteers from **Project CARE** offer caregivers a needed break and help out 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 Robert to discuss your needs.

Caregiver Counseling

Family and Children's Service

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 thru Friday, 9 AM- 3 PM

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: \$50/day includes lunch and snack.



Support Groups



Caregiver Support Group

3rd Tuesday of each month

6:30 PM-8:00 PM

Family and 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.

Alzheimer's Support Group

4th Tuesday of each month

1:00-2:30 PM

Tompkins County Office for the Aging

214 W. Martin Luther King Jr/State St., Ithaca

Facilitated by David Stoyell. Open to anyone caring for a relative or friend with significant memory impairment. Call 274-5492 for more information.

Other Alzheimer's Caregiver Groups

1st Wednesday of each month at 5:30 PM

at Lifelong, 119 W. Court St., Ithaca. For information, call Alzheimer's Assoc: 330-1647

3rd Wednesday of the Month, 12:30-1:30 PM

at Walden Place, Cortlandville. Call 756-8101.

Companion care for your loved one available during the meeting.

Cancer Caregiver Group

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

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

Parkinson's Spouses Group

Meets monthly at the Office for the Aging. Call David Stoyell, 274-5492 for further information.

Fall Workshops of Interest to Family Caregivers

The Basics: Memory Loss, Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease

Monday, October 30, Noon-1:15 PM

at the Office for the Aging, 214 W. Martin Luther King Jr./State St.

Presented by: Staff from Alzheimer Association of Central New York

This class will cover risk factors, types of dementia, diagnosis, stages of Alzheimer's, treatments, and community resources that can help. Free. Register by calling the Office for the Aging, 274-5492, or email dstoyell@tompkins-co.org. Bring a brown bag lunch if you wish.

**Alzheimer's vs
dementia:**

What's the difference?



Legal and Financial Concerns for Caregivers

Wednesday, December 6, Noon-1:30 PM

at the Office for the Aging, 214 W. Martin Luther King Jr./State St.

Presented by: Joy Blumkin, Esq.

Ms. Blumkin, a local elder law attorney, will address common legal and financial concerns of the elderly and their caregivers such as planning for the expense of long-term care and planning for incapacity (advance directives, guardianship). Call ahead, 274-5492, or email dstoyell@tompkins-co.org to register. Free. Bring your brown bag lunch if you wish.



*The following workshops sponsored by the **Ithaca College Gerontology Institute** will also held at the Tompkins Office for the Aging, 214 W. Martin Luther King, Jr./State St. Workshops are free, but prior registration is required. To register, visit: www.ithaca.edu/agingworkshops/registration*

End of Life Planning and Care – Tuesday, September 19, 2:00-3:30 PM

Emilee K. Lawson Hatch, an area attorney, will lead a discussion to provide information about how to make sure your wishes are known, and how to honor the wishes of your loved one. This workshop is free and sponsored by the Ithaca College Gerontology Institute.

Muscle's Role in Cancer, Diabetes, Osteoporosis and Dementia: What Can Be Done?

Thursday, November 9, 2:00-3:30 PM

Sarcopenia, a disease of skeletal muscle has been strongly correlated with all these diseases. Learning to apply resistance exercise as part of structured exercise routine can treat elevated glucose, blood pressure, and chronic systemic inflammation. William Shang, MD will discuss the "how" and "why" of exercise and share training tips for getting our bodies back on track.

Frailty Syndrome—Thursday, December 7, 2:00-3:30 PM

Frailty is a common clinical syndrome that carries an increased risk of poor health outcomes, including falls, disability, hospitalization and mortality. Anne Reilly, DPT, will include information on signs and symptoms of frailty syndrome, and common treatment approaches. The role of physical therapy and wellness treatment will be emphasized with a demonstration of a few exercises to combat against frailty syndrome.

Feeling Stretched?

Let's Face It...

Caring for someone with a chronic illness such as dementia, heart disease, Parkinson's Disease, stroke, or chronic cancer can be stressful physically, emotionally and financially.



Balance Your Life

Powerful
Tools
for **Caregivers**

Fall 2017

Powerful Tools for Caregivers Classes

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is a six-week educational program designed to provide you with tools you need to take care of *yourself*.

You will learn to:

- Reduce stress
- Improve self-confidence
- Better communicate your feelings
- Balance your life
- Increase your ability to make tough decisions
- Locate helpful resources

The program consists of 90-minute class sessions offered weekly for six consecutive weeks.

These classes are offered free of charge to those caring for spouses, parents or other adult relatives/friends. (It is not intended for professional caregivers.)

Tuesdays, September 19 - October 24
5:30 pm - 7:00 pm
at Longview
1 Bella Vista Dr. (off Rt. 96B)
Ithaca, NY

Register as early as possible as class size is limited.
To register or inquire about the program, call the Tompkins County Office for the Aging:
607-274-5482

New Paid Family Leave Program

A new law in New York State sets up a “Paid Family Leave Program” which starts January 1, 2018. This program provides wage replacement to employees to help them bond with a child, care for a close relative with a serious health condition or help relieve family pressures when someone is called to active military service.

So, for example, those caring for a relative with a serious health condition can receive a benefit for several weeks while they are on leave from work and also are guaranteed to be able to return to their job and continue their health insurance. If they contribute to the cost of the health insurance, they must continue to pay their portion of the premium cost while on Paid Family Leave.

Paid Family Leave is being phased in over four years. Starting on January 1, 2018, the program will pay for a maximum of 8 weeks of paid family leave with a maximum benefit of 50% of the employee’s average weekly wage (capped at 50% of the State average weekly wage). In 2019 and 2020, it will pay a maximum of 10 weeks. In 2021 and subsequent years, it will pay a maximum of 12 weeks. The maximum to be reimbursed will rise to 55% of the average weekly wage in 2019, 60% in 2020 and 67% in 2021 (capped at the same percent of the State average weekly wage).

Eligibility -- virtually every full-time or part-time private employee in NY State will be eligible for Paid Family Leave. (Public employees are not eligible unless their employer opts into the program.) An employee must be employed full-time for 26 weeks or part-time for 175 days to be eligible for a Paid Family Leave Benefit.

“Caring for a Close Relative” includes caring for a spouse, domestic partner, child, parent, parent

in-law, grandparent or grandchild. “With a serious health condition” includes a condition that involves inpatient care in a health facility or continuing treatment or continuing supervision by a health care provider. Examples include your spouse needing care while undergoing chemotherapy, your dad having surgery followed by extensive recuperation, or a child undergoing psychotherapy and is unable to attend school for a period of time. You can take Paid Family Leave in these types of instances.



Paid Family Leave coverage will typically be included as a rider to an employer’s existing disability insurance policy, and will be fully funded by employees through payroll deductions. Currently, the maximum contribution is 0.126% of an employee’s wage (capped at 0.126% of the NY State average weekly wage). The program is mandatory for nearly all private employers.

For more information - Visit the Paid Family Leave website at www.ny.gov/paidfamilyleave. The public can also call the Paid Family Leave helpline at 844-337-6303 with any questions.

Aging, Driving & Family Conversations

Tuesday, October 17: 5:30 – 7:00 PM

at Lifelong, 119 W. Court St., Ithaca

Come learn how to drive safer longer, driver assessments, transportation alternatives, tips for effective family conversations; what to do when safety concerns persist. \$10. Fee.

Call Lifelong to preregister, 273-1511.

Older Driver Safety



More Groups that May Offer Support

In addition to the support groups for caregivers listed on page two of this newsletter, there are many other groups in Tompkins County that may interest some family caregivers or the loved ones for whom they care:

Multiple Sclerosis Support group

Meets at Lifelong, 119 W. Court St., on the Second Monday of the Month, 6:30-7:30 PM. Call 273-1511 for information.

Parkinson's Support Group

Meets at 10:30 AM on the Second Monday of the month at Kendal at Ithaca on Triphammer Rd. Email dalentini@yahoo.com for information.

Grief/Bereavement Support Group

Hospicare sponsors a variety of support groups for those grieving the loss of a loved one including a general support group on the first and third Wednesdays of each month from 5:30 to 7:00 PM at the Hospicare Center, 172 E. King Rd., Ithaca. It is open to anyone, 18 or older, grieving a loss regardless of when the death occurred. Contact Donna George at dgeorge@hospicare.org or 272-0212 prior to attending or the first time.



Center for Life Skills (Stroke Rehabilitation Program)

offers 10 hours of programming a week at Longview (1 Bella Vista Drive, Ithaca) over a semester to those who have experienced a stroke. For information contact Catherine Gooch, 607-375-6312

Cancer Support Groups

The Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes sponsors a number of different groups that help those with cancer find support and a sense of community. Each group has a different

personality. Call the CRC at 277-0960 to learn more about the groups.

Harmonicas for Health (Asthma or COPD)

This is a new free program coming to Longview in September. Call the Tompkins County Health Dept. (274-5400) to inquire about this 6-week course to learn the play the harmonica for exercising breathing muscles and learning to breathe easier.



The Exercise Classes/Programs

at Lifelong and a variety of other locations provide significant psychosocial as well as physical benefits. While improving strength and balance and reducing the risk of falls, they may be effective vehicles for reducing loneliness in older adults. Some programs are specifically geared to those with physical limitations (e.g., Chair Yoga, Parkinson's Exercise Programs, etc.). Contact Lifelong at 273-1511. View a list of strength/balance exercise programs in Tompkins County in the *Fall Prevention Resource Guide* found online at www.tompkinscountyny.gov/cofa/local/resources.



Telephone-Based Support Groups

Do an internet search of national non-profit organizations offering support to people with specific diseases. Many of them sponsor weekly or monthly telephone support group meetings. For example, the Alzheimer's Foundation of America has a weekly general Caregiver Support Group on Mondays, from 7-8 PM. For information or to register, call 866-232-8484.

Online Learning Modules

Free online learning modules (classes) can allow you to build on your skills to improve



Gerontology Institute

care to older adults. They are provided by the Finger Lakes Geriatric Education Center at the Ithaca College Gerontology Institute. Most of the 11 learning modules are 30 minutes or one hour in duration. Here is a partial list of topics you can choose from:

Elder Abuse Prevention (types of abuse, recognizing signs of abuse and what to do, how to prevent it).

The 3 D's: Depression, Dementia and Delirium (the effects of aging with depression, dementia or delirium as well as how to prevent, diagnose and treat these disabilities.)

Pain Self-Management (five techniques that can be helpful in taking edge off of pain to improve life quality)

Suicide in Older Adults (risk and protective factors, some approaches to prevention)

Mindfulness (educating caregivers about the benefits of incorporating mindfulness into the activities of elderly care patients.)

Intro. to Aging with Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities (Effects, prevention techniques and possible interactions of the pre-existing disability with other aging factors.)

Chiropractic Care for Older Adults (discussion of the evidence for the use of spinal manipulative therapy, acupuncture, nutritional counseling and fall prevention strategies as delivered by doctors of chiropractic)

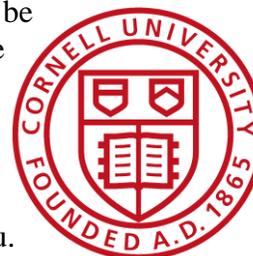
The courses can be used for CEUs by professionals, but anyone can take them. Visit www.ithaca.edu/gerontology/flgec/onlinelearning/

Cornell Research Study on Mature Blended Families

“We are looking for step-parents who are 60 years and older to participate in a study of relationships of blended families, including both married and unmarried step-families.

As part of the study, participants complete an open-ended survey about their relationships with other family members. We want to know about your family history, and the amount and kind of support that you exchange with your children, and about your roles and responsibilities, feelings and expectations as a step-parent. You might consider some of the questions sensitive, but you do not need to answer them all!

Each participant will be compensated \$30 for the interview. The interview will last about 1.5 hours and can take place at a time and location that is convenient for you.



Everything you tell us is confidential, so what you say will never be linked to you name. In order to participate in this study, you need to live in New York and able to speak in English. If you think you qualify and would like more information, please call Mariana at 541-908-1658, or email her at: ma937@cornell.edu. Thanks.”

“Medicare Basics” Workshop Monday, October 23, 5:45-8:00 PM or Tuesday, November 7, 1:45-4:00 pm)

For those just starting to learn about Medicare. Topics will include: Medicare Part A (hospital), B (medical), and D (Medicare prescription drugs). Also, Medigap plans and Medicare Advantage plans, EPIC, and Medicare Savings Program subsidies available to income-eligible individuals/couples. How retiree plans and VA coverage work with Medicare. Free. Call Lifelong to register, 273-1511.

Overmedication: Recognize It...Prevent It!

Overmedication and adverse interaction of drugs are common problems for older adults. Changes in the aging body sometimes result in an “overmedication” problem even when taking the same dosage of a drug that has been taken for many years. Also, many drugs have noticeable adverse interactions with food or other drugs in older people that would not occur in younger persons. Moreover, prescription drugs can interact with over-the-counter medications to create serious health problems.



Problems with medication can occur when the patient lacks adequate information for making informed choices about such things as their schedule for taking drugs, diet, or over-the-counter medications. Physicians do not always provide adequate information to patients about drug interactions and patients often do not ask enough questions about side effects or interactions that can occur. Overmedication can occur when several physicians prescribe drugs for a patient and are unaware of other medications the patient is taking.

Problems can also arise when people don't have a system in place to ensure that they are taking their medications as prescribed. In later life, drug interactions or incorrect doses result in many hospital admissions and can make simple health problems complex.

If you notice confusion, personality changes or changes in the overall well-being of your parents, you may want to suggest that they schedule an appointment with their doctor. To prepare this appointment, your parents should take with them a list of all drugs—both prescribed ones and over-the-counter

medications and nutritional supplements they are currently taking.

The pharmacist is also an excellent source of information about drugs and should be consulted as well as the physician. A pharmacist can discuss, not only possible interactions and problems with medications, but also suggest strategies for managing medications. The pharmacist can advise you and your parent if a visit to the physician and review of medications is needed.

Additional Things You Can Do

1. Help your parents make a list of prescriptions and over-the-counter medications they are currently taking. Ask, if it seems advisable, permission to go through their medicine cabinet and kitchen shelves and dispose properly of all outdated prescriptions and medications.
2. Make sure they are getting their prescriptions filled at only one pharmacy when possible. Or if they are using a mail order service for some maintenance medications, that anyone filling their prescriptions has a complete list of medication in their file.

Remind your care receivers to discuss any new prescriptions with their pharmacist to make sure they understand the possible side effects, and that the pharmacist has added them to their file.



(Reprinted from The CAPsule, April/May 2000.)

Planning Ahead for Less Stressful Holidays

Thanksgiving and the holiday season that follows may still seem far off. However, if you are fearful that it will be a stressful time, some advance planning may help you recognize whether adjustments are needed if you have experienced dramatic changes in roles that can come with family caregiving.

Don't require yourself to maintain all holiday traditions, or to take on all the responsibilities for planning and hosting gatherings that you may have in the past. You may want to suggest letting someone else host the gathering.

Don't set expectations too high. Do the things that are very special or important to you, undertaking only those things that you and other family members can comfortably handle.

Cooperation from friends and relatives can dramatically reduce the burden placed on caregivers during the holiday season. They can provide tremendous relief by assisting with holiday chores such as gift shopping, food preparation, cleaning and decorating. Assigning caregiving responsibilities on some rotating or shared basis over the holidays can help relieve the burden of the primary caregiver who may feel overwhelmed.

Caregiving often involves a delicate balancing act. You need to stay connected to family and friends and not feel isolated especially if it is getting more difficult for you and your care receiver to get out as much as you used to do. However, you need to give yourself permission to withdraw if you may be overextending yourself to the point of exhaustion.

Caregiving may have transformed relationships. The process of grieving for a loved one's lost health and functional abilities should allow your rituals, your traditions, your feelings, and your activities to express that transformation. But recognize that some of the adjustments that you may need to make

may be psychological. If you dread the holidays, that negative view can further depress your mood, attitudes and actions. It is important to be in touch with both pleasant and painful feelings, and allow mixed feelings if you have them even if they somehow "seem" incompatible, such as feelings of both sadness and gladness around the holidays.



Your presence during holiday celebrations means a lot to those around you and it can, in fact, be very healthy for you to have a good time and enjoy laughter.

If your loved one has dementia, some advance planning should include how to make daily routines for him/her as consistent as possible throughout this hectic time. Changes in routine, as well as environment, can confuse and frustrate someone with dementia. Sometimes you may need to plan for smaller gatherings, or for shorter periods of time, to prevent your loved one from being overstimulated and overwhelmed.

Of course, if people are asking for gift ideas, focus on goods and services that can make the job of caregiving easier. Be specific, such as providing or paying for respite care so you can enjoy a meal or movie with them or a friend.

(Excerpted from articles in the December 2003 issue of Aging Arkansas.)

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.
(Open weekdays, 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM)

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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.*

**Click on "Newsletters" to view electronic editions of this newsletter for the past year.*

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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