



In Support of Caregivers

A Publication of the Caregivers' Resource Center and Alzheimer's Support Unit at the Tompkins County Office for the Aging

Summer 2017

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Scams Targeting Older Adults

Asr90 you know, scams targeting older adults are rampant these days, including phone and email/internet scams and contractors showing up uninvited at the home offering a bargain price for work that may never be completed. It may be helpful to have a conversation with older adults in our lives about the types of scams that are common these days. You can use the "Scam Pyramid" below and the article on page 5 of this newsletter to help get the conversation started, learn what to do to avoid being scammed, as well as what to do if someone has already been scammed. For another useful resource that describes many scams that are common today, visit the NY Dept. of State website: dos.ny.gov/consumerprotection/scams/older_adults.html.

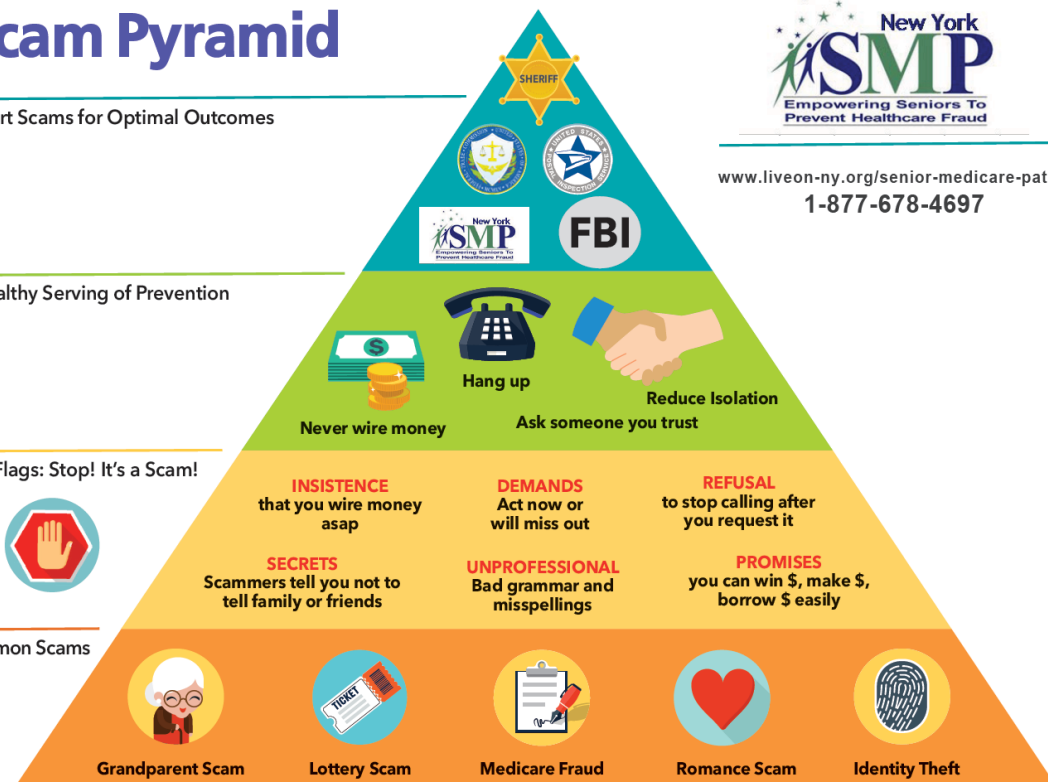
Scam Pyramid

Report Scams for Optimal Outcomes

A Healthy Serving of Prevention

Red Flags: Stop! It's a Scam!

Common Scams



Local Caregiver Support Services

Caregivers' Resource Center & Project CARE Services

Tompkins County Office for the Aging

David Stoyell (274-5492)

Katrina Schickel (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 Katrina 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.

Conversation Approaches

If you plan to have conversations with your relative about future planning, prepare yourself to be open, honest and not argumentative. Be ready to listen and hear what is being said to you. Do some homework, if needed, so you have some knowledge about the topic you are talking about.

How you should approach the conversation may depend on the personality of your loved one.



Direct: If the care recipient is a “no-nonsense, get-to-the-point” personality, openly express your concerns and ask questions for information you need to address specific situations that may arise.

Educational: For the relative who might need a delicate push, you might begin by sharing an experience of another caregiver you know about their personal situation, and explain how it made you realize the importance of discussing issues now that will help you be of better assistance to them in the future.

Expert: For the relative who refuses to talk about personal issues or tends to accuse their children of trying to take control of their life, seek to make them the expert by asking for their advice about a particular issue—for example, “what type of long term care should I look into?” or “can you recommend someone to help me prepare my will?” This strategy is non-threatening and could lead to them sharing personal details, or at least letting you know where they stand on the subject.

Conversation Checklists

Financial Organization: Questions to ask

- ☐ What type of retirement income do you receive?
- ☐ Are there financial benefits for older adults for which you might be eligible?
- ☐ Who can access your important financial information in an emergency?

- ☐ Where do you keep your important financial documents?

Legal Preparation: Questions you might ask

- ☐ Do you have a will and a health care proxy?
- ☐ Have you executed a durable power of attorney or considered who you might want to handle your finances in the event you are unable to manage them?
- ☐ Are important legal documents up-to-date?
- ☐ Are there other legal matters you are concerned about?

Health Insurance: Questions you might ask

- ☐ As your health status changes, are you prepared to meet your long term health care needs?
- ☐ Do you have proper health insurance coverage (not too much or too little)?
- ☐ Are you comfortably able to pay for prescriptions and other out-of-pocket health care costs?
- ☐ Who are your doctors and other health care providers and how can they be contacted?
- ☐ Where do you keep your insurance cards, Medicare information, and other important health care documents?

Community Services: Questions you might ask

- ☐ Are there house repairs or modifications needed that will help you, such as installing tub grab bars, an emergency response system, or other assistive devices?
- ☐ What housekeeping, transportation, shopping, meals and personal care services are available in your community?
- ☐ Do you need any of these community services now?
- ☐ Do you anticipate needing other living arrangements in the future?

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

Important Notice about Scams Targeting Older Adults

If You've Already Been Scammed,

1. **Report scams to the New York State Attorney General** by calling 1-800-771-7755.
2. **Also, consider filing a scam report online with the Better Business Bureau** at www.bbb.org/upstate-new-york. Click on "Get Consumer Help" and then select "BBB Scam Tracker" to report a scam.

(Note: You can file a complaint about an established business at the Attorney General's website: www.ag.ny.gov/complaint-forms or by calling the regional office in Binghamton, 607-251-2764. You can also write a consumer review or file a complaint about an established business on the BBB website.)



To Avoid Being Scammed,

Before you hire an unfamiliar contractor to work at your home,

1. Check the Better Business Bureau for reviews/ratings of the business. Visit www.bbb.org/upstate-new-york.
2. Be very wary of offers that require an immediate decision on your part or a low-price offer for a repair because they've "just done a job nearby and have materials left over."

Various phone scams offer money, free devices, or pretend to be law enforcement officers, IRS officials, or relatives in distress.

1. If you receive an unsolicited call, hang up without pressing a key.
2. If you do answer the caller, do not give out personal information when asked. This includes your name (even if they seem to know it), date of birth, Social Security or Medicare #, and credit card or other financial information.
3. Remember, often it is best for you to find businesses and services you need, rather than letting unsolicited callers find you. Although you may be on a "do-not-call" list, disreputable businesses may be willing to break the law.
4. Technology today enables callers from other countries to phone you and have it appear that they've called from a phone number in a nearby town. It is often best to let calls from unfamiliar phone numbers go into your voice mail so you can screen the call first and decide whether you want to call back.
5. Any time you are asked to make a payment to receive a government grant, it is a scam. Anyone requesting payment by wire transfer or prepaid debit card should be regarded with suspicion. The IRS initiates first contact about unpaid taxes by mail, not by phone or email.

Email can be from scammers and others who may hijack your computer for their purposes

1. Do not open attachments from strangers or even from relatives or friends that may be suspicious. Your relative's computer may have been infected and sent you the email. If in doubt, send a separate email or message to the relative asking if it really was from them.
2. Do not click on links or files in unfamiliar emails or electronic messages to avoid downloading malware that gives scammers access to your computer.

News and Notes

Mobility Videos

The first in a series of family caregiver instructional videos can now be viewed on the AARP website. They are being produced by the Veteran's Administration, AARP and other public and private and non-profit partners. The following videos can be viewed in English and in Spanish at <http://www.aarp.org/ppi/info-2017/home-alone-alliance.html>



Family Caregiving Video Series: Mobility

[Preparing Your Home for Safe Mobility](#)

[Getting from a Car to a Wheelchair](#)

[What to Do When Someone Falls](#)

[Using a Walker or Cane and Navigating Stairs](#)

[Moving from a Walker to Shower or Bed](#)

Medicare Savings

The Medicare Savings Program is a state program that helps pay for Medicare premiums. A single person with income below \$1,357 and couples below \$1,827 may be eligible for assistance. Certain medical insurance premiums may be used as a deduction to lower your income in determining eligibility. The NY State EPIC program helps adults 65 and older with their prescription drug co-pays and sometimes with their Medicare drug premiums. Individuals with income below \$75,000 (couples \$100,000) may enroll. Individuals with incomes above \$20,000 (couples \$29,000) must first meet a deductible before receiving co-pay assistance.



Home Safety Checklist

See pp. 22-25 of the Falls Prevention Resource Guide on the Office for the Aging website for a checklist to help you go through your loved one's home to check for fall hazards: www.tompkinscountyny.gov/cofa/local/resources.



Bereavement Groups

Hospicare and Palliative Care Services has bereavement support groups in Tompkins and Cortland counties that are open to all those grieving the loss of loved ones, not just families of those who were hospice patients. To learn more about when these groups are held, call Hospicare at 272-0212 or visit the Hospicare website at www.hospicare.org/



Using myBenefits

myBenefits is an online tool for NY State residents who want to check possible eligibility for multiple human services benefit programs (e.g., heating assistance, tax credits, EPIC, Medicaid, Medicare Assistance programs, food assistance, etc.). Those who receive benefits electronically from DSS can also get updated information on their balances by setting up an online account at this website. Visit: www.mybenefits.ny.gov.



Love Living at Home

Love Living at Home

(LLH) is a new membership organization in



Tompkins County that fosters relationships among its members with the ultimate goal of supporting people to be able to remain in their homes as long as they wish and are able to do so. In addition to providing transportation, handyman and personal support, its members get together for coffee, drinks and dinner, go to a movie, enjoy a concert or lecture or get a behind the scenes look at a local resource. For information on LLH, call 319-0162 or visit www.lovelivingathome.org.

Seeking Respite

When services for caregivers are discussed, taking time for respite is usually included as one of the key elements of successful caregiving. Caregivers need to have some time apart from the person for whom they are caring. Nancy Carson, of the National Family Caregivers Association puts it this way: “Just as we advise parents not to spend every hour of the day and night with their children, because it is not healthy for the family, so two people living under stress need the refreshment of occasional separation and change to keep the relationship loving and healthy.”



Often, however, when presented with the opportunity for taking a break from caregiving or having respite time, caregivers often are reluctant to take time for themselves. There are several barriers to caregivers seeking respite. One barrier is the caregiver’s concern that the person who provides respite care will not provide as good care as the caregiver does. One way to overcome this concern is to seek respite care early in the caregiving experience so that you can have a trusting relationship with a respite provider as caregiving needs increase.

Another barrier to seeking respite care is the worry that, if you have free time available, what will you do with it? For caregivers who have become so immersed in caregiving that they feel a loss of purpose without caregiving, having time for respite can be unwelcome. To help with overcoming this barrier, caregivers need to refocus on themselves, affirming the importance of putting themselves first. Without interests of your own apart from caregiving, you are at greater risk of being stressed and so less effective as a caregiver.

A final worry is that of not meeting our obligation or our commitment to our care receiver if we take time away for ourselves. Caregivers can be so

deeply involved in caregiving that they ignore their health needs.

Caregivers can choose from an assortment of respite options-- home health aide care, respite volunteers, adult day programs, 24 hour respite care as well as assistance from friends and other family members. Each caregiver has his or her own unique needs for respite. As much as caregiving for an older person is a labor of love, it is also work. We recognize the importance of having a vacation from the demands of our jobs. We need also to recognize the value of respite or a vacation from caregiving—to refresh, to recharge, and to have something enjoyable to look forward to. Contact the Office for the Aging (274-5482) to learn more about local respite opportunities.

Try the Relaxation Response

Respite does not always mean getting away. Minds and our bodies need respite every day. Try to set aside a few minutes today to try the following exercise adapted from “*Elicitation of the Relaxation Response*,” published by the Mind Body Medical Institute.

1. Pick a focus word, sound, or short phrase, such as “one” or “peace.”
2. Sit quietly in a comfortable position and close your eyes.
3. Relax your muscles, progressing from your feet up to your neck and face.
4. Breathe slowly through your nose, silently saying your focus word, sound, or phrase to yourself as you exhale.
5. When other thoughts come to mind, gently return your attention to your focus word, sound, or phrase.
6. Continue for 10-20 minutes.
7. Sit quietly for a minute or so, eyes closed. Then open your eyes.

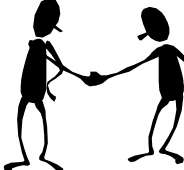




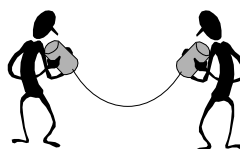
Practice once or twice daily.

Action Plan for Family Caregivers

by Dorothy Orr, R.S.W.

(From an article originally published in *Horizon*,
Huntington Society of Canada, Fall 1995.)

1. Get help early--counseling, assistance with caregiving, etc. 
2. Involve your family from the beginning by sharing concerns with them.
3. Access all the information you can about the disease and educate yourself as much as possible about its progression.
4. Have an awareness of the losses to come, such as incontinence, inability to dress, etc., so they are not totally unexpected.
5. Recognize the hidden grief component of your anger, anxiety, guilt and depression. Expect adaptation, but not resolution, of your grief. 
6. Appreciate your grief and seek out someone who understands it.
7. Recognize the signs of denial: for example, you insist, "I don't need any help." "Nothing's wrong. Everything's okay." "The doctor has made a mistake: she doesn't have [that disease]." "He's fine today, so he's getting better." "No, we don't need power of attorney." "Placement in a nursing home is not an option; I'm keeping her at home."
8. Acknowledge your right to feel emotionally off-balance.
9. Learn to "let go" from the start. Share your caregiving burden with others. Your loved one **can** survive a few hours without you.
10. Forgive yourself for not being perfect.

11. Stop trying to be perfect: caring for someone with a chronic illness means your world has been turned upside down and you will probably have to compromise some of your personal standards of housekeeping, etc.
12. Join a support group early.
13. Take care of yourself physically and emotionally. Have regular check-ups. Get as much rest and respite as possible. Eat well-balanced meals.
14. Give yourself time to cry. Don't be afraid to acknowledge your feelings of anger, anxiety, helplessness, guilt and despair. 
15. Hang on to your sense of self. Keep up your regular activities as much as possible to help preserve your identity.
16. Take one day at a time, but don't neglect to plan for the future. Good planning can include getting a power of attorney, accessing community care early and filling out placement papers.
17. Be kind to yourself. Remember you are experiencing normal reactions to abnormal circumstances.
18. Learn how to communicate differently with your loved one if cognitive and language abilities decline. Good communication strategies help to avoid frustration. 
19. Make sure your family doctor is someone who is willing to listen and understand.
20. Accept yourself for being human; even if you "lose it" sometimes, give yourself a pat on the back for doing the best you can.

Alzheimer's Notes

The 6 R's of Behavior Management

In their classic book on dementing illness, *The 36-Hour Day*, Nancy Mace and Peter Rabins conceive of behavior management in terms of "The 6 R's: *Restrict, reassess, reconsider, re-channel, reassure, and review.*"

1. **Restrict:** First, try to get the person to stop the problematic behavior. Coax, persuade, insist. The more hazardous the behavior, the more forceful you must be. Restriction often works, but may make someone more agitated.
2. **Reassess:** Ask yourself: Is there a reason for this behavior? Could it be a drug reaction? Frustration about an inability to do something? Irritability over your efforts to perform some task? People with dementia may engage in irrational outbursts, but often real complaints underlie the misbehavior.
3. **Reconsider:** Try to see the situation from the point of view of the person with dementia. The world is increasingly inexplicable. Everyone is a stranger. Abilities present a month ago may no longer be there. No wonder they get anxious and irritable. They're frightened and profoundly confused.
4. **Rechannel:** Try to redirect the problematic behavior in a safer, more socially acceptable way. If the affected individual habitually throws your newspaper away, hide today's and leave yesterday's out for throwing away.
5. **Reassure:** Living in a world they don't understand, among people they may not even recognize, who do all sorts of odd things to them, people with dementia are in constant need of reassurance. Be generous with soothing words and loving touch - a hug, a pat on the back, a hand on an arm.
6. **Review:** Afterward, think about what you learned from your experience? What led up to the behavior? How did you respond to it? What did you do right? What might you try next time?

Tips for Penetrating Confusion

People with mild to moderate dementia are often confused about where they are and what is going on around them. Here are just a few tips on how to help you both deal with that confusion offered by Elaine McKee, an occupational therapist with The Anne Johnston Health Station and Sunnybrook Geriatric Outreach Program, Toronto.

- Cut down on distractions
- Limit the number of choices offered
- Ask questions in such a way that a yes or no answer is required
- Positive statements are easier to follow than negative statements
- Getting the person's attention before touching them is helpful - say their name and/or establish eye contact
- Provide only as much guidance as needed as soon as the person is on the right track
- Keep instructions simple and precise
- Be patient and respectful- allow your love to shine through
- Give reassurance as often as needed but avoid distracting
- One step at a time- treat each step as if it were a complete task
- Visual cues help support verbal instructions
- Provide as little manual guidance as necessary
- Let your hand rest on the person for a second before directing a movement
- Do not persist in moving a reluctant limb
- Touch is not just for providing direction- hugs are wonderful
- Allow sufficient time for the task
- If performance falls off, do not insist on completion
- Focus on what has been accomplished and give praise for it
- Thank the person for helping you



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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