

# Caregiver Chronicles

January 2019



Caring for Caregivers

AREA AGENCY ON AGING OF DANE COUNTY  
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[HTTPS://AAA.DCDHS.COM/](https://aaa.dcdhs.com/)



**H**eroes are made by the path they choose not the powers they are graced with. —*Iron Man*

### Planning for Stress Reduction and Peace of Mind

Superheroes dominate a large segment of popular culture these days. Certainly beings with superhuman strength, the ability to be in multiple places at one time, and a variety of super powers can be extraordinary helpers. As mere mortals, we are not quite so exceptional. In order to function we need to pay attention to basics like sleep and good nutrition. We cannot be all things to those we care for, and won't manage well in the long term if we don't prioritize our own health and wellbeing. Caregiver stress is a significant threat to health, and finding ways to manage stress is a critical component of self care.

That being said, I can almost hear fellow caregivers let out a collective long sigh. They've been urged to care for themselves over and over again—a refrain reminiscent of “you should save more for retirement.” In truth, both are extremely important. Yet, somehow, they don't feel as immediate or critical as the needs of a care partner, child, employer, spouse, friend or (fill in the blank). Unfortunately, given enough time, stress levels will surely test the fragile system we've managed to maintain thus far. Chronic stress will do damage, and that damage can be far reaching. Ultimately if we, as caregivers, are compromised in our ability to function those we care for are also at risk.

Of course, the factors that lead to stress and crisis are not always under our control. Accidents and illnesses that we never saw coming happen to us and to those we love. Sometimes the situation is even more stressful when we see a crisis coming and can do nothing about it. A particularly difficult situation arises when a loved one or care partner is headed for trouble and resists any change or help despite all our best efforts—that is until their own crisis comes and we're swept along for the ride.

Often times, it is a crisis point that drives a call to the Dane County Caregiver Program. Caregivers who are feeling the stress and strain of too many demands reach out and receive referrals to the caregiver program from case managers at senior centers and coalitions, hospitals, ADRC staff, and other human services organizations. The National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP) provides Older Americans Act funding for small “Caring for Caregivers” Grants to pay for respite and supplementary services like home modifications and assistive devices through the caregiver program. These grants can make all the difference by bridging a gap when crisis hits and can provide ongoing support on a limited basis, but they are not sustainable as long-term solutions for individual caregivers.

Research, discussion among professionals who serve caregivers, and close examination of 2018 caregiver assessments reveal an important area of additional service that may help. Planning for caregiving, much like planning for retirement, is a strategy for alleviating stress and improving the outlook for a sustainable future. The 2019 – 2021 Dane County Aging Plan takes this into account with goals for helping caregivers plan for a time when they may no longer be able to provide care, the situation with the most critical impact on care partners. A caregiver's eventual inability to provide care is not a sure thing, so planning for it is something like purchasing insurance. Because the result can be devastating if it does happen, caregiver succession planning (deciding who will step in if you can no longer provide care) may offer some peace of mind in the way insurance does.

The most extreme potential outcome of caregiver stress isn't the only reason for planning. Working toward a sustainable situation that can help prevent the need for caregiver succession in the first place is an important goal. Caregiver maps and planning tools can help but when providing day-to-day care along with all of life's other obligations, who has the time and energy to work on a plan? The Dane County Caregiver Program goal is to address that reality by developing a process that is easily available to anyone, and is one that we can help caregivers put in place.

The Dane County Caregiver Alliance will address this new area of service as a goal for 2019. The group, which includes both caregivers and professionals who serve them, is coordinated by the Dane County Caregiver Program. The Caregiver Alliance will work to develop tools that help guide caregivers at every stage of the process. Stay tuned for more on this project as it develops.

In the meantime, the caregiver program provides referrals and guidance on resources to support caregivers in addition to the grant program. If you are a caregiver in crisis the program is here for you. If you are in the initial stages and are wondering where to begin the program is here for you, too.

When crisis hits we may attempt to assume the role of super hero, which can stretch us to the breaking point. If we are able to do what we can to ensure we aren't overwhelmed by stress we don't need to attempt pushing ourselves beyond our human limits. Mortals will be able to manage.



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Looking for a sustainable caregiver plan? The Dane County Caregiver Program is here to help connect you to resources, discuss options, and submit grant applications for respite and supplemental services including home modifications and assistive devices.



# CAREGIVER TELECONNECTION

[www.caregiverteleconnection.org](http://www.caregiverteleconnection.org)



Date	Time	Topic	A LEADING VOICE FOR CAREGIVERS
Tuesday, January 8th	11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific	<b>La fatiga de las personas que cuidan de otras y la importancia de cuidarse a sí mismo con el Dr. Néstor H. Praderio</b> <i>El Dr. Néstor H. Praderio hablará sobre la fatiga de las personas que cuidan de otras y la importancia de cuidarse a sí mismo. El doctor también dedicará especial atención a desarrollar habilidades de sobrellevar básicas que le ayuden a aliviar el estrés y mantener una relación positiva con su ser querido.</i>	<i>Nestor H. Praderio, MD will review caregiver fatigue and the importance of "caring for yourself". He will outline basic coping skills to help ease your stress and maintain a positive relationship with your loved one.</i>
Thursday, January 10th	12:00 pm Eastern 11:00 am Central 10:00 am Mountain 9:00 am Pacific	<b>Developing An Attitude of Gratitude - A Self-Awareness Session with Cynthia Hazel, M.A.</b> <i>Did you know that your mindset and attitude have a direct impact on your health and well being? Researchers have found that practicing gratitude can have a positive effect on your brain and overall health, important for family caregivers and others. In this session, you will learn how to start on your path to thankfulness.</i>	
Monday, January 14th	1:00 pm Eastern 12:00 pm Central 11:00 am Mountain 10:00 am Pacific	<b>Financial Planning for Older Adults with Tena Burrell</b> <i>Learn about essential financial decisions older adults must make. What do they need to know to lower risk but have money to help them stay independent. How can family caregivers help loved ones make informed decisions?</i>	<b>**Sponsored by the North Central Texas Caregiver Teleconnection</b>
Tuesday, January 15th	1:00 pm Eastern 12:00 pm Central 11:00 am Mountain 10:00 am Pacific	<b>The Pride of Caring: Issues for LGBT Caregivers with Dr. Elliot Montgomery Sklar and Lucy Barylak, MSW</b> <i>Nationally, greater attention is being paid to the concerns facing caregivers. While many issues are the same for all adults and those who care for someone, some unique considerations arise for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people dealing with their caregiving roles. This session will discuss some of these issues, and will provide an open forum and safe space for asking questions and discussing concerns.</i>	
Tuesday, January 22nd	12:00 pm Eastern 11:00 am Central 10:00 am Mountain 9:00 am Pacific	<b>Share the Care™ with Sheila Warnock</b> <i>Aging. Illness. Disability. Everyone, at some point in life, will be touched by the need to be a family caregiver. Sheila Warnock, Founder and President of Share the Care™ will talk about a unique approach to caregiving to ease the burden on one person by forming groups of caregivers and coordinating delivery of services.</i>	
Wednesday, January 30th	12:00 pm Eastern 11:00 am Central 10:00 am Mountain 9:00 am Pacific	<b>Caregiver Burnout with Dr. James Huysman, PsyD, LCSW</b> <i>A caregiver's self-care is just as important as the care provided to another. When we don't take care of ourselves, we diminish our quality of life. Burnout, depression, and compassion fatigue are the result of ignoring our own needs and wants. In this session, Dr. Jamie will identify the red flags and feelings to watch for, specify action steps for continued self-care, and empower you to create your own plan to Take Your Oxygen First!</i>	



A program of the WellMed Charitable Foundation

Register online at [www.caregiverteleconnection.org](http://www.caregiverteleconnection.org) or call 866.390.6491 Toll Free



*Madison VA  
Hospital  
Room B-2055*

## Caregiver Day Off: Fri Jan 25<sup>th</sup> 2019

Free classes for  
Caregivers of Veterans  
Or  
Vets who are Caregivers

9am-12pm

**Utilizing Technology**

1pm-4pm

**Problem Solving**

**CLASSES** and refreshments provided in partnership with the Memphis VA Caregiver Center. **Please come to this event!**

Take one or both classes. RSVP is necessary to save your space in class.

To RSVP call **608-280-7085**. Please leave a message to include:

- YOUR NAME and your Veteran's name
- PHONE NUMBER you can be called back at
- **LUNCH is included If you attend BOTH CLASSES**

For more information, please contact:  
Meghann Schmitt, CISW or Margaret Flood, LCSW  
Caregiver Support Program at the  
William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital  
2500 Overlook Terrace, Madison, WI  
**#608-256-1901 ext 13059 or ext 11485**



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# MEETING OF MINDS

A memory enhancement program for memory loss, mild cognitive impairment, early Alzheimer's, or other dementias to help maximize cognitive function and sustain quality of life.

## Purpose:

- Maintain memory and cognitive function by harnessing the brain's ability to learn and connect in new ways;
- Encourage movement and stress management practices;
- Help people with memory loss positively impact their lives.

## Activities include:

- Memory enhancement activities and intellectual exercises;
- Tai chi-based exercise for balance, gentle strengthening, breathing and stress reduction;
- Creative expression;
- Mindfulness techniques.



**Tuesdays: January 8 - February 12**  
**Madison Central Library**  
**201 W. Mifflin St., Madison**

**Pre-registration and an informational interview are required prior to attending.**

Space is limited. Contact Noreen Kralapp, Dementia Outreach Specialist, at 608.661.0463 for more information and to register. Start date: January 8, 2019



Offered in partnership with:



## Powerful Tools FOR Caregivers



**I don't think of myself as a caregiver.**  
I'm his daughter. He needs me. And because he needs me, I know I need to take care of myself. Powerful Tools helped me do that.

**There's a Powerful Tools for Caregivers workshop starting soon near you!**

### **NEW: Stoughton Class**

**Thursdays, 1:00-3:30 PM**

**January 24 – March 7**

**(no class Feb. 14)**

**Stoughton Hospital, Bryant Center  
900 Ridge Street, Stoughton, WI 53589**

**Cost: \$25; includes snacks and book**

Onsite (through Trusted Hands) or in-home respite is available.

To register call Hollee Camacho at the Stoughton Area Senior Center, (608) 873-8585; please inquire for assistance with respite or transit.

# Caregiving is rewarding.

## But it can be challenging too.

Caring for someone with an injury or illness — such as dementia, cancer, heart disease, Parkinson's disease, stroke or others — can be physically, emotionally and financially demanding.

### **Taking care of yourself is important.**

Powerful Tools for Caregivers (PTC) can show you the way!

### **What is Powerful Tools for Caregivers? And why should I take it?**

Powerful Tools focuses on **your** well-being. The class meets once a week for six weeks and has been studied and shown to help family caregivers:

- Reduce stress, guilt, anger, and depression and improve emotional well-being
- Manage time, set goals, and solve problems
- Master caregiving transitions and be part of decision-making
- Communicate effectively with the person needing care, family members, doctors, and other helpers
- Find and use community resources



# Caring for the Caregiver Program

AREA AGENCY ON AGING OF DANE COUNTY

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- You are willing to receive the newsletter via email
- You are no longer interested in receiving the newsletter

### Contact:

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