

Caregiver Chronicles

July 2019



Caring for Caregivers

AREA AGENCY ON AGING OF DANE COUNTY
2865 N SHERMAN AVE, MADISON, WI 53704
608-261-9930
[HTTPS://AAA.DCDHS.COM/](https://aaa.dcdhs.com/)



Some people's weakness is that they care too much;
it is also their strength.

—Bridgette Nicole

Celebrate Independence

On July 4, we celebrate Independence Day. It is also one of holidays that remind us what our veterans have done to secure our independence. If you are caring for a veteran, VA Caregiver Support offers handouts, educational presentations, and a support line. (See pages 4 & 5 for detailed information.)

This month's feature story (page 3) focuses on older adult spousal caregivers. They are among the most vulnerable of caregivers, and a shocking number of them are doing their best to go it alone without help from family or even hired help. Because spouses in this age group often face health and mobility challenges of their own, they may be less resilient than they were at an earlier stage of life. Planning for more support is critical. If you need support caring for a loved one with a chronic illness or disability, there is a free, drop-in support group at PalliaHealth (page 7). If you need support caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's, you can call their helpline for information and support (page 8). If you are in need of education on a variety of topics you can access easily by phone, Caregiver Teleconnection offers sessions in July on topics ranging from navigating the healthcare system to tools for self-care (page 9).

Often times, prepping meals can be a daunting chore—particularly for people who want tasty and healthy food done simply. Coming this Fall, the popular "Creating Simple and Delicious Meals for One or Two People" will be presented by the Area Agency on Aging of Dane County especially for caregivers of older adults. Taught by UW Health chefs in the state-of-the-art Learning Kitchen at The American Center, participants will experience prepping delicious and healthy meals. There is no cost for the class. Be sure to register early! (Information on page 10). Care partners who are able to participate are also welcome to attend class.

Next, mark you calendars for another special event, uniquely designed to provide a fun, relaxing, and rejuvenating day for caregivers. "Make Time for Joy!: A Celebration of Caregivers" will include engaging activities indoors and out at the beautiful Lussier Family Heritage Center in Madison. There is no cost for caregivers to attend, and complimentary respite care, lunch, and activities will also be provided for care partners on site. You won't want to miss it. (Information on page 11). Look for more details in upcoming issues.

Here's hoping you have the opportunity to enjoy the long days of sunshine as they appear. Be sure to take time to do something you enjoy each day whenever possible. The Dane County Caregiver Program is always here for you when you need it. Just call or email to connect.



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Caring for Caregivers

Planning: An Important Resource for Spousal Caregivers

Given the significant number of adult child caregivers of older parents, it is easy to assume that most older adults are receiving help from family. However, a study published in the June issue of [Health Affairs](#) shows married partners frequently serve as the only caregiver for their spouse in the last years of life. According to the study, a third of spouses receive little or no help from adult children. Only 11% of spouse caregivers receive support from other family or friends, and just 40% of spouse caregivers seek paid help. In fact, the majority of spouses who provided care at home during the last years of their spouse's life did not receive any support—paid or unpaid—for self-care or household tasks.

Solo caregiving for a spouse does have some positives. Doing so can be a meaningful and valued personal experience that connects the caregiver to their loved one. It also allows the caregiver more control by avoiding any arguments among multiple caregivers on how to proceed. At the same time, spouses as caregivers experience more burden and depression than other family members do. They may struggle to ask for help or feel they lack choice about providing care. They also often provide complex and physically-demanding care when a spouse is seriously ill.

Families must take into account that older adults caring for a spouse are very often coping with illness and disability themselves. In some cases, couples have functioned like two parts of a whole—dependent on one another to get by. It is not uncommon for one person in the couple to handle certain tasks of daily living while the other manages to take on the rest. Caregivers in this situation are particularly vulnerable when they don't have help, and the surviving spouse may well lose their ability to live in their home once they are on their own. In these situations, it can sometimes be difficult to distinguish the caregiver from the care recipient.

As our reliance on family caregivers to assist seriously ill older adults at home increases, the need to provide assistance to couples caring for one another pulls focus. Programs like the National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP) play a prominent role in helping caregiving spouses access paid help. Unfortunately, need is quickly outpacing resources available for grants alone. When considering how to best support caregiving couples and to help them avoid the most serious pitfalls, planning is a critical component.

If you are an older adult providing care to your spouse, the Dane County Caregiver Program can help you take a look at available resources and find support. Early on, respite and self-care are important priorities, as is understanding what you are capable of providing as time goes on. Important considerations include what happens when your home no longer works for your changing needs? What are your options given your health status and financial situation? How do you stay connected in the community so you don't become isolated? What are your wishes for end-of-life care? It can be painful to plan how you will manage when a long marriage or partnership changes dramatically. It doesn't come naturally to us to plan for the inevitable losses life brings, but doing so can bring relief and even peace of mind in as much as that is humanly possible.

If you are an adult child with one parent who is caring for the other, important considerations also include what kind of help they are willing to accept, and what kind of help the caregiver is realistically capable of providing. The Dane County Caregiver Program can help with education about options and resources. Delaying until an inevitable crisis occurs multiplies caregiver stress and limits choice for everyone involved.

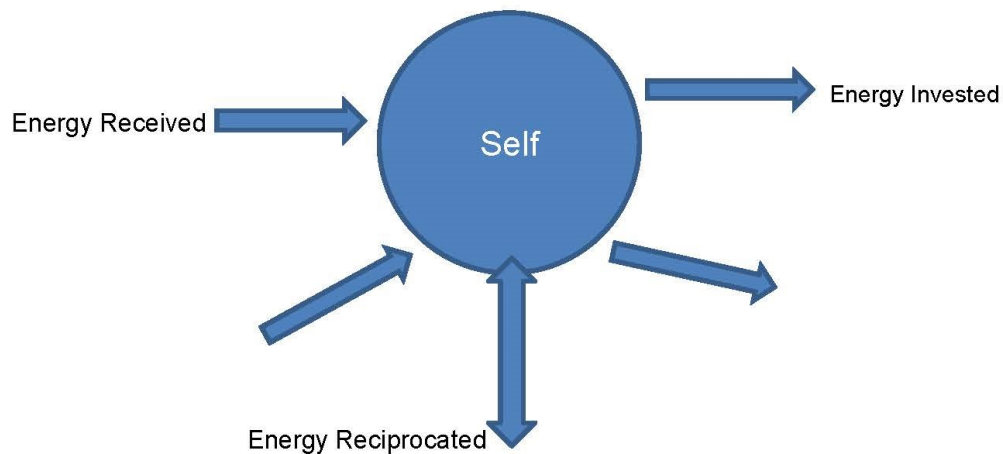
—Jane De Broux, Dane County Caregiver Program Coordinator



Burnt Out: Ok Now What? Handout

Identify where your energy is being expended and where your energy is restored.

Get a piece of paper and draw a circle in the center to represent you. Draw arrows out naming each arrow that represents each activity or relationship in which you invest your time, energy and attention. Draw arrows going towards the center and name each activity or relationship that restores you. Note and name activities or relationships that are reciprocal that you both invest energy in and that also contribute energy back to you.



- ❖ Identify all the responsibilities and obligations that you have in which you are expending your energy. For example, caring for a loved one, your home, family, or job.
- ❖ Identify the activities that bring you a daily moment of restoration, comfort, and care. For example, taking a hot shower, making a nice meal, taking a walk, or daydreaming.
- ❖ Identify the people that you invest in.
- ❖ Identify the people that provide an investment in you.

Is the energy going out and energy coming in out of balance?

VA Caregiver Support Line 1-855-260-3274

Have you visited VA's Caregiver web page at www.caregiver.va.gov where you can find handouts for many of our groups? Simply click [here](#) and you will be taken to the handouts page. These tools may be a helpful reminder of the ideas and strategies that are discussed



What may help you manage the burnout?

- ❖ Recognize daily investments of energy and effort you make in completing the tasks and activities to maintain all your responsibilities.
- ❖ Complete the above exercise to provide validation and awareness of energy expended and energy restored. Consider if you are out of balance.
- ❖ Ask yourself if there is another way to organize or accomplish your responsibilities that is more efficient.
- ❖ Consider how you may delegate your responsibilities or brainstorm how you may get more help with the responsibilities that you have.
- ❖ Can you alter your expectations of yourself, so you aren't holding to an ideal of perfection or believing you must carry the burden alone?
- ❖ If you feel trapped by your obligations remember you are deciding what you commit to. Examine your decisions and recognize your choices.
- ❖ Treat yourself with some kindness, compassion and care.
- ❖ Slow down, take a breath and pay attention to what you are doing in the moment.
- ❖ Accept where you are right now in this moment rather than dwelling on the past or longing for or worrying about the future.
- ❖ Pay attention to the life-giving moments of comfort, pleasure, satisfaction and fulfillment that are occurring each day.
- ❖ Pay attention to what you are already doing for "self-care." It isn't always about doing more. It is about paying attention, appreciating and relishing those moments that do happen so that you extract all you can from them.
- ❖ Look to the people in your life for connection, appreciate and grow your sources of social connection.
- ❖ Check your attitude. Stop short and cut off negative internal dialogue as it is dragging you down.
- ❖ Identify each day what you are grateful for. Contribute a moment of kindness and compassion, towards yourself, others and the world around you.

VA Caregiver Support Line 1-855-260-3274

Did you know there are several pre-recorded CSL Telephone Presentations available for you on VA's Caregiver web page? You can listen to these presentations when it's convenient for you, any time! Click [here](#) to see what presentations are availa-



Happy Independence Day!



*Connecting People with the
Assistance They Need*

Open 7:45 am—4:30 pm
Monday through Friday

Call (608) 240-7400

Visit the ADRC office:

2865 N. Sherman Ave., Madison

Website: www.daneadrc.org

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Are you caring for a loved one with a chronic illness or disability?

Join a free support group of your peers to:

- Share your feelings, needs and concerns
- Discuss your caregiving challenges and brainstorm solutions
- Talk about issues that cause you stress
- Develop new coping skills
- Learn about resources to help now, and plan for the future

2019 meeting dates (Wednesdays):

**May 22, June 26, July 24, Aug. 28,
Sept. 25, Oct. 23, Nov. 20, Dec. 18**
1:30 p.m. – 3 p.m.

Agrace Grief Support Center
2906 Marketplace Drive, Fitchburg

Drop in—no pre-registration is needed and there's no cost to attend.

Who should attend?

Family, friends and other caregivers of people with *any* chronic illness or disability. All are welcome!

Group leaders:

- Deanna Truedson-McKillips, MSW, CAPSW
- Laura Gleisner, MS, ACC

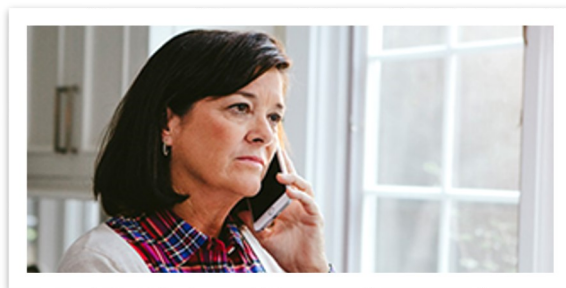


Questions? Call (608) 669-7352

Care & Support Through the Stages of Serious Illness

Interested in learning more about PalliaHealth?

Call: (800) 930-2770
Visit: palliahealth.org



Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline 800.272.3900

The Alzheimer's Association is here all day, every day, for people facing Alzheimer's disease through our free 24/7 Helpline: 800.272.3900.

Our Helpline provides reliable information and support to all those who need assistance, such as individuals living with memory loss, Alzheimer's, or another dementia, caregivers, health care professionals, and the public.

Our highly trained and knowledgeable staff can help you with:

- Understanding memory loss, dementia, and Alzheimer's
- Medications and other treatment options
- General information about aging and brain health
- Skills to provide quality care and to find the best care from professionals
- Legal, financial, and living-arrangement decisions

Our Helpline also features:

Confidential care consultation provided by master's-level clinicians who can help with decision-making support, crisis assistance, and education on issues families face every day

Help in a caller's preferred language using our translation service that features more than 200 languages and dialects

Referrals to local community programs, services and ongoing support

Note: Our Helpline staff does not perform diagnosis. If you or someone you care for is having memory problems, please see your doctor.





CAREGIVER TELECONNECTION



www.caregiverteleconnection.org



Date Time Topic A LEADING VOICE FOR CAREGIVERS

Monday, July 8th 1:00 pm Eastern
12:00 pm Central
11:00 am Mountain
10:00 am Pacific

Effectively Navigating Through the Healthcare System as a Caregiver with Christine Casbeer, LMSW *From a social worker's perspective, specifically trained in senior health care concerns, improving communication between the physicians, clinics, hospitals and other entities involved with senior health care. **Sponsored by the North Central Texas Caregiver Teleconnection***

Tuesday, July 9th 11:00 am Eastern
10:00 am Central
9:00 am Mountain
8:00 am Pacific

Una guía para las personas que cuidan de otra sobre cómo organizar las actividades cotidianas de un ser querido que padece algún tipo de demencia con el Néstor H. Praderio *El Dr. Néstor H. Praderio presentará un método básico para ayudarlo a afrontar los retos diarios de la nutrición, la higiene personal y otros comportamientos difíciles relacionados con diferentes tipos de demencia.*

Thursday, July 11th 11:00 am Eastern
10:00 am Central
9:00 am Mountain
8:00 am Pacific

Dear Lucy with Lucy Barylak, MSW *This month she will discuss how caregivers could and should advocate for their loved ones as well as for themselves within the healthcare system. This is an interactive session where Dear Lucy will answer questions and have a conversation with caregivers regarding the issues they face in their caregiving journey.*

Tuesday, July 16th 12:00 pm Eastern
11:00 am Central
10:00 am Mountain
9:00 am Pacific

Signs That it's Time for Assisted Living or a Skilled Nursing Facility with Jill Piazza, MA, CMC *Deciding to move a loved one from home into a care community is never an easy task nor are the reasons for placement the same for every individual. We will discuss the physical, psychological, social and financial reasons one should consider when evaluating whether the move of a loved one is in their best interest. Various types of senior living options and how to assess these settings will also be presented.*

Tuesday, July 23th 12:00 pm Eastern
11:00 am Central
10:00 am Mountain
9:00 am Pacific

Caregiving for the Visually Impaired with Shirlee Crandall *During our "Caregiving for the Visually Impaired" presentation we will cover blindness sensitivity and some basic caregiving information. This will include common types of vision loss, meeting a blind person, orientation and mobility, and sighted guide techniques. We will also address how to recognize vision loss and questions to ask the doctor.*

Wednesday, July 31st 12:00 pm Eastern
11:00 am Central
10:00 am Mountain
9:00 am Pacific

Take Your Oxygen First! with Dr. Jaime Huysman, PsyD, LCSW, CAP, CFT *Dr. Jamie Huysman, LCSW, CAP has been a fierce advocate for family caregivers, their rights, and wellbeing for over 15 years. Since 2009, "Take Your Oxygen First" has been an ever-evolving call to action for caregivers to engage in taking care of themselves their own sakes, as well as that of their loved ones. This motivational and informative session will give you necessary tools for you apply to your caregiving journey right now.*



A program of the WellMed Charitable Foundation

Register online at www.caregiverteleconnection.org or call 866.390.6491 Toll Free

Cooking for Caregivers

Creating Simple and Delicious Meals for One or Two People



- Are you caring for an older adult age 60+ or someone with Alzheimer's or dementia of any age who lives in Dane County?
- Are you responsible for preparing meals for them and/or yourself?

If so, this *FREE*, fun, and engaging class series is for you!

Care for yourself and your care partner by learning to make simple, delicious meals for one or two in the company of other caregivers.

(Care partners who are able to participate are welcome to join the class.)

Come learn from the chefs of UW Health in the state-of-the-art Learning Kitchen at The American Center. Learn 2—3 new recipes per class while getting a hands-on learning experience. In each class you will work with our chefs to prepare the recipes they have designed and learn easy cooking techniques in the process.

Class will be held each Tuesday from September 10—October 1, 2019

11:00 AM to 1 PM at The Learning Kitchen at UW Health at The American Center

4602 Eastpark Blvd., Madison, WI

Registration is required. To sign up for the class contact:

Howard Thomas, Dane County Area Agency on Aging, 608-261-9930

thomas.howard@countyofdane.com



Make Time for Joy!

A Celebration of Caregivers

for People with Alzheimer's & Dementia and Older Adults

SAVE THE DATE: Wednesday, October 16, 2019

Lussier Family Heritage Center, 3101 Lake Farm Rd in Madison

9:00 AM—3:00 PM, Respite Care Provided on site



Enjoy!

Activities indoors and out

Time for centering, relaxing, and pampering

Spread Joy!

Connect with other caregivers, resources, and professionals

Respite care and activities for care partners on site

If you would like to receive registration information contact:
Joy Schmidt at 608-240-7472 or Schmidt.joy@countyofdane.com



Caring for the Caregiver Program

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Caring for Caregivers

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Save paper and reduce postage costs

Please let us know if:

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

Contact:

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debroux.jane@countyofdane.com