

December 2017

Caregiver Chronicles



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/)



Whatever creates or increases happiness or some part of happiness, we ought to do; whatever destroys or hampers happiness, or gives rise to its opposite, we ought not to do.

—Aristotle, *Rhetoric*

Caregiver Chronicles

Happy Holidays

The holidays loom large in the experience of so many Americans and run the gamut from the best of times to the worst of times. More than ever before, we are separated by geography, the changing family structure, and a political landscape filled with landmines. Yet, these times are also ones that remind us of our most dearly-held values and provide an opportunity to gather with loved ones we may not often get to see. For some of us, the ability to spend time with family members is infrequent, so we are in a position to observe changes that have occurred over time. While it is often clear to us how the younger family members have grown and changed, things may be more subtle with the older adults in the family—or things may have changed dramatically and it may be apparent that there are issues to be addressed. (See Jane Mahoney’s article on p. 2 for signs that an older adult or caregiver is struggling.)

During a time of so much busyness packed into the short holiday season, I was pleased to come across the quote on this month’s cover. It appears to be a simple and clear motto for how to proceed during a season that can prove taxing for those who already have a lot on their plates. The key to its usefulness, however, depends on the willingness to include ourselves when applying the guideline of “doing what increases happiness and avoiding what hampers it.” Your welfare is important and, if you have others who count on you, it’s critical.

While holidays can be a source of some anxiety, they are also a time when we can observe with an open heart if we take a mindful approach and attempt to be present. If you are a caregiver for an older adult in the family, note what you can do to enjoy the holiday time and care for yourself as well as your loved one. If you’re not a primary caregiver, notice how the primary caregiver is doing—whether it’s a parent, sibling, or another in the day-to-day caring role. Is there somewhere you can provide them a break?

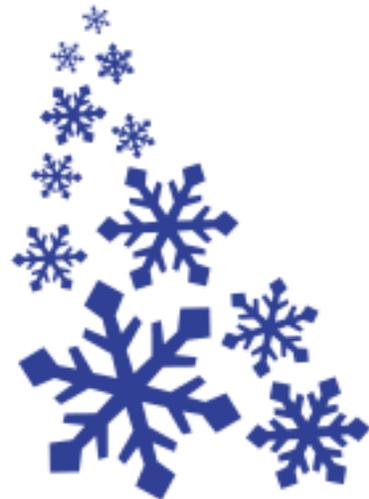
If you need additional support through the holiday season, it’s just a phone call or email away. Feel free to make contact at the phone number and address below.

Happy Holidays and warm wishes for the New Year!



Jane De Broux
Caregiver Program Coordinator
Dane County Area Agency on Aging

608-261-5679
debroux.jane@countyofdane.com



Caregiving During the Holidays: Know the signs of caregiver stress and where to find help

Getting together with family and friends is a tradition around the holidays. But family gatherings can also lead to major worries over the well-being of an older or disabled family member and the person caring for him or her, especially for people who don't live nearby. When arriving home for the holidays, adult children are often startled to see how much mom's health has declined, and may be even more shocked to see dad struggling to take care of her at home. This makes the holidays a prime time for families to recognize the signs of caregiver stress and know where to find help for caregivers.

There are several signs that a family caregiver may be in trouble.

- Changes in demeanor or personality
- Withdrawing from social activities that they used to enjoy doing
- Denial about the health of the person they are caring for or the reality of the situation
- Mood changes or signs of depression, anxiety, anger or irritability
- Short-term memory problems, poor concentration, or unnecessarily repeated actions or chores
- Increase in their own health problems as a result of caregiving
- Difficulty sleeping or feeling exhausted much of the time

Answering "yes" to any of these questions is a strong indicator of caregiver stress. It is also a sign that help is needed.

Sometimes caregivers don't seek help because they don't identify themselves as caregivers and even when they do, they may not be open to accepting help. Conversations with family and friends about the challenges of caring for someone can help a caregiver better relate to the role and be more receptive to assistance. Gaining support and understanding from family members is a great first step in getting a caregiver who is feeling stress to accept assistance.

Recognizing the symptoms of caregiver stress and starting the discussion are only the first part of the equation—finding help is the second and most crucial step in supporting struggling caregivers. The Dane County Caregiver Program can provide comprehensive information and assistance for caregivers on services such as adult day care, home health and personal care, living options, respite care, support groups, financial and legal matters related to caregiving, home delivered meals, transportation and much more.

Holiday gatherings are a great time to offer encouragement, support and assistance to family caregivers. Help isn't always easy to find, but there are options available for caregivers.

—Jane Mahoney
Older Americans Act Consultant, GWAAR



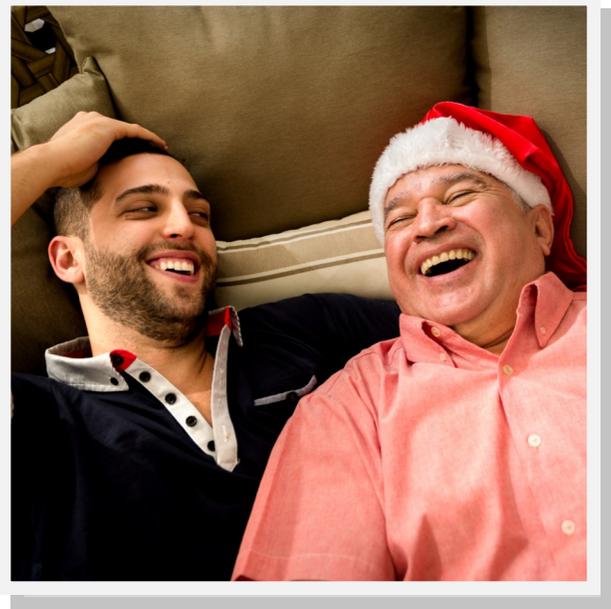
Recommended Podcast

Eldercare: How to Talk About Taking Care of Aging Loved Ones

On Point, NPR

This excellent piece aired on November 21, 2017.

The podcast covers difficult conversations many will have about eldercare when gathering for the holidays. How to do it right and with love. Featured guests include Ann Kaiser Stearns, professor of behavioral science at the Community College of Baltimore County; Tien Tang, formerly a care advisor with Springwell, and currently pursuing a masters degree in social work at Simmons College; and Katie McInnis-Dittrich, chair of the Older Adults and Families Concentration at the Boston College School of Social Work.



Spend time with those you love. One of these days you will say either “I wish I had” or “I’m glad I did.”



Be sure to check out [Resource Wise](#), the newsletter for the ADRC of Dane County.



Connecting People with the Assistance They Need

Open 7:45—4:30 pm Monday through Friday
Call (608) 240-7400
Visit the ADRC office, 2865 N. Sherman Ave., Madison
Website: www.daneadrc.org
Email: ADRC@countyofdane.com

On-line Caregiver Resources

[AARP Family Caregiving Survey: Caregivers' Reflections on Changing Roles](#)

AARP conducted a survey among caregivers and care recipients to examine the emotions they experience as well as how their relationship with their loved one may have changed as a result of caregiving. Click on the PDF file on the left of the page under “Learn More about This Survey” for the full report.

[Caregiving During the Holidays: 6 Tips for Dealing with Difficult Family](#)

DailyCaring

“The holidays can be a tough time for caregivers. Difficult or insensitive family members are especially hard to deal with when you’re already juggling caregiving, work, grief over past losses, and holiday prep.” Click the above link for six articles on the issue.

[Health Officials Offer Online How-To Guide for Family Caregivers](#)

Click on the link above to access *Dementia Capable Wisconsin: A guide for family caregivers*, a new online resource for caregivers of family members with dementia.

“Approximately 110,000 people in Wisconsin are living with dementia. This resource offers guidance for family members, friends, and loved ones so they can offer the best support and stay healthy themselves.

At coming holiday gatherings, families may notice potential dementia symptoms among family members they haven’t seen in a while. The guide offers information about what’s happening to these older family members and can help families determine the next steps needed to keep these relatives safe.”





TELECONNECTION

www.caregiverteleconnection.org



Free Telephone Learning Sessions

Call. Learn. Share.

Date	Time	Topic
<p>Wednesday, November 2nd</p> <p>Thursday, November 16th</p> <p>Thursday, November 30th</p>	<p>1:00 pm Eastern</p> <p>12:00 pm Central</p> <p>11:00 am Mountain</p> <p>10:00 am Pacific</p>	<p>Lucy Barylak, MSW as “Dear Lucy” <i>In honor of National Caregivers month, Caregiver SOS wants to recognize and honor all of the work that family caregivers are doing. Caregivers will have the opportunity to call in and ask questions, make comments and express yourself regarding the issues you face as a caregiver. You can submit your questions or comments by email or phone.</i></p>
<p>Monday, November 13th</p>	<p>1:00 pm Eastern</p> <p>12:00 pm Central</p> <p>11:00 am Mountain</p> <p>10:00 am Pacific</p>	<p>The Holidays and Caregiving with Zanda Hilger, LPC <i>This is an annual session where you will learn practical ways to prioritize the demands of the holidays when you are a caregiver. Tune in to listen and share your experiences, getting help from other caregivers to find ways to enjoy the holidays while taking care of a loved one. ***Sponsored by the North Central Texas Caregiver Teleconnection***</i></p>
<p>Tuesday, December 5th</p>	<p>12:00 pm Eastern</p> <p>11:00 am Central</p> <p>10:00 am Mountain</p> <p>9:00 am Pacific</p>	<p>Coping with Caregiver Stress with Tam Cummings, PhD. <i>Therapists estimate dementia family caregivers suffer the highest levels of anxiety and depression of any group of caregivers. In this practical presentation, Tam covers the signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety, and their physical impact on caregivers. She also teaches and practices with audience members a number of proven, easy techniques to control and relieve stress.</i></p>
<p>Monday, December 11th</p>	<p>1:00 pm Eastern</p> <p>12:00 pm Central</p> <p>11:00 am Mountain</p> <p>10:00 am Pacific</p>	<p>Keeping your Sense of Humor: the Brighter Side of Caregiving with Zanda Hilger, LPC <i>Research shows that laughter and humor helps manage stress and has many health benefits. You may feel pretty “humorless” at times when errands pile up, you spend hours waiting in doctors’ offices and you’re just exhausted. Listen in to hear some of each other’s stories as well as get resources to help lighten up your caregiving. ***Sponsored by the North Central Texas Caregiver Teleconnection***</i></p>

Happy Holidays and a Happy new Year!!!



A program of the WellMed Charitable Foundation

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

Registration required at least 24 hours in advance

IF YOU ARE AN LGBT ADULT WHO FEELS ISOLATED THIS HOLIDAY SEASON, YOU AREN'T ALONE!



THERE ARE MORE THAN 2.7 MILLION
LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER (LGBT) ADULTS AGES 50 OR OLDER LIVING IN COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

LGBT OLDER ADULTS ARE **TWICE AS LIKELY** TO LIVE ALONE AS NON-LGBT ADULTS AND OFTEN FACE SOCIAL ISOLATION AND VULNERABILITY.



MANY LGBT ELDERS RELY ON CHOSEN FAMILY AND THEIR COMMUNITIES FOR SUPPORT. SUPPORT LGBT ELDERS RESILIENCE!

RESOURCES FOR LGBT ELDERS IN YOUR AREA

FOR SUPPORT RANGING FROM FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, TO HOUSING AND IN-HOME SERVICES, TO TRANSPORTATION TO VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES, YOU CAN CONTACT THE RESOURCES BELOW.

IN PERSON

Outreach

South Central Wisconsin's LGBT Community Center

2701 International Lane, Suite 101
Madison, WI 53704
608-255-8582
info@lgbtoutreach.org

ONLINE

Email the SAGE LGBT Elder Hotline for local resource information and peer-to-peer support specifically for LGBT elders at sage@GLBThotline.org.

Visit www.ElderCare.gov for a list of comprehensive resources in your local community.

BY PHONE

The SAGE LGBT Elder Hotline is a safe place to call when you need to talk. 1-888-234-SAGE. They provide peer-to-peer support with no judgment.

National Eldercare Locator, a public service of the U.S. Administration on Aging connecting you to services for older adults and their families. Call 1-800.677.1116.

Caring for the Caregiver Program

AREA AGENCY ON AGING OF DANE COUNTY

2865 N. Sherman Avenue
Madison, WI 53704



Phone: 608-261-5679

Fax: 608-240-7402

Email: debroux.jane@countyofdane.com



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:

Jane De Broux
608-261-5679
debroux.jane@countyofdane.com