

# Caregiver Chronicles

March 2018



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/)



**M**arch is a month of expectation.

—*Emily Dickinson*

## Caregiver Chronicles

### Managing Expectations

When I came across this month's cover quote from Emily Dickinson, it made me think of living in Wisconsin. I've always thought March was a tough month with just enough warm weather to lull us into the expectation that Spring has arrived. More often than not, we put away the parka only to get hit with a major storm, or two. I also thought March weather was a good analogy for expectations we have as caregivers. Like the winter storm that dashes dreams of an early Spring, there's one truth that flies in the face of caregiver expectations time and time again:

You cannot make people who are *still competent* decide or do anything before they're ready.

It's almost a given, when I present on caregiving issues and resources, that someone will ask how they can "make" the person in their care act in their own best interests. Worried adult child caregivers, concerned about escalating incidences of falls, ask how they can get their parents to move to a safer place. Stressed out spouses, reporting their husband or wife is unable to allow a stranger (from an agency) into their home, ask how to make their spouse see the need to accept help. Other caregivers ask what to do when a frail older adult who is clearly in a place where a personal emergency response system is needed insists, "It's not time for that yet." Caregivers won't be any more successful forcing these issues than they would be in vanquishing winter before it's done.

What do you do when the solution you sincerely believe is the safe thing, the right thing, meets with such resistance? The only answer I can give is that there is nothing you can do to force a solution on people who still have the ability to make their own decisions. And, if you consider all the losses that aging and illness can bring, it makes sense that those we care for are holding on to as much independence as they can for as long as they possibly can.

This reality doesn't mean caregivers should throw up their hands and wait for a crisis. I encourage caregivers to be creative and flexible. Creative in thinking about alternatives, and flexible enough to ask for help and cast a wider net. No matter what our age, our culture puts great stock in self-sufficiency and pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps. We sometimes struggle to admit we need help and feel self-conscious about asking. We think we should take care of our own and we don't want to bother people. If you think about it, what makes it hard for caregivers to ask for help is often the flip side of the emotion that makes it difficult for their loved ones to accept it.

Consider thinking beyond what you've been proposing if your loved one resists. Does your mom listen to your aunt or pastor? Maybe they can help her explore the idea if she feels more comfortable listening to them than to her children. Involve willing others and get help wherever you can find it.

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane De Broux".

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

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Are there other family members and friends who understand your circumstances? If you're desperate for a break and the person you're caring for is not ready for hired help, ask them. Decide what you need and request specifics. "Could you stay with Jack while I work out on Wednesday afternoons?" gets better results than throwing out a general hint that you could use help sometime. You may be surprised that people are happy to help when they have a specific task to consider. To be fair, others don't know what we need unless we tell them. Let the friend who loves to cook know how much you would appreciate a prepared meal. See if someone would be willing to pick up some things for you when they grocery shop.

Another option might be to tap into familiar communities for the care recipient. If your parents were lifelong members of a church, the congregation may have volunteers who visit older members or volunteers who provide respite. If help hired from an agency feels like someone is babysitting them, they may be more receptive to people they see as part of their community.

If you need help brainstorming options, check in with the Dane County Caregiver Program. I can direct you to support groups, share resources, and am always happy to listen.

Here's hoping that if March comes in like a lion, it goes out like a lamb.



## Hot Caregiver Topics Online

### *Listen to the Podcast*

#### **A Looming Crisis in Home Healthcare for the Elderly**

**On Point, February 27, 2018**

<http://wbur.fm/2HPQCKx>

“Most people want to grow old in the comfort of our own home. But staying at home often requires a home health aide. They’re expensive. Often hard to find. On the flip side, they’re low paid, poorly trained, and get little respect. And soon, there won’t even be enough of them to offer that needed care. So who will take care of us in the most vulnerable time of our lives?” —**Jane Clayson**

#### **Americans Will Struggle to Grow Old at Home**

**by E Tammy Kim, *Bloomberg Businessweek*, February 9, 2018**

<https://bloom.bg/2El6Mt2>

“Some 80 million people will be seniors by 2050. Our national home-care infrastructure isn’t close to ready.”

### *Self Care*

#### **How to Accept Anxious Feelings So you Can Let Them Pass**

**By Benjamin Fishel, *tiny buddha***

<http://bit.ly/2GRmayr>

“Five ways you can begin to accept anxious feelings and live a better life.”

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 am—4:30 pm Monday through Friday

Call (608) 240-7400

Visit the ADRC office, 2865 N. Sherman Ave., Madison

Website: [www.daneadrc.org](http://www.daneadrc.org)

Email: [ADRC@countyofdane.com](mailto:ADRC@countyofdane.com)



TELECONNECTION

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



# Free Telephone Learning Sessions

**Call. Learn. Share.**

Date	Time	Topic
Thursday, March 1st	2:00 pm Eastern 1:00 pm Central 12:00 pm Mountain 11:00 am Pacific	<b>Caregiver Burnout with James Huysman, PsyD, LCSW.</b> 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!
Thursday, March 8th	1:00 pm Eastern 12:00 pm Central 11:00 am Mountain 10:00 am Pacific	<b>Lucy Barylak, MSW as "Dear Lucy"</b> Caregivers will have the opportunity to call in and ask questions, make comments and express yourself regarding the issues you face as a caregiver. <b>You can submit your questions or comments by e-mail or phone.</b>
Monday, March 12th	1:00 pm Eastern 12:00 pm Central 11:00 am Mountain 10:00 am Pacific	<b>Mental Health &amp; Aging: What Caregivers Need to Know with J Dan Bruce</b> Learn about how to ensure that the most appropriate medical professionals are consulted and remain involved to diagnose symptoms as being "Normal aging," dementia, or depression and anxiety. What are common medications used, correctly and incorrectly? Learn from an expert who works with families in their homes who has experience in many settings. <b>***Sponsored by the North Central Texas Caregiver Teleconnection***</b>
Thursday, March 22nd	1:00 pm Eastern 12:00 pm Central 11:00 am Mountain 10:00 am Pacific	<b>Lucy Barylak, MSW as "Dear Lucy"</b> Caregivers will have the opportunity to call in and ask questions, make comments and express yourself regarding the issues you face as a caregiver. <b>You can submit your questions or comments by e-mail or phone.</b>
Tuesday, March 27th	12:00 pm Eastern 11:00 am Central 10:00 am Mountain 9:00 am Pacific	<b>An Introduction to Lewy Body Dementia with Angela Taylor, Director of Programs</b> Lewey Body Dementia affects an estimated 1.4 million individuals and their families here in the U.S. Angela Taylor will be providing an introduction to Lewy body dementia, including its symptoms and how it differs from Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease. She will also share what she views as her 4 pillars of LBD caregiving, based on her personal experience as a caregiver for her father who had LBD.



**WELLMED**  
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

**A program of the WellMed Charitable Foundation**

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

**\*\*\*Registration required at least 24 hours in advance\*\*\***

# “I Like You Just Fine When You’re Not Around”

**Tuesday, March 13, 12—1pm**



Ann Garvin’s wit and sensitivity keep her in full control of the emotional subject matter. Realistic characterizations firmly situate readers in this eccentric, endearing story of a family coming together to face the ravages of Alzheimer’s.

- ◇ Did you ever ponder the unfairness of life?
- ◇ Have you ever felt like you do more than your fair share?

**You will want to meet our author Ann Garvin!**

Meet Tig Monohan, a frazzled therapist who is working very hard to care for her mother with Alzheimer’s, her colicky niece and her difficult patients.



**At the Madison Senior Center  
330 W Mifflin St.  
Parking in the adjacent ramp  
Questions? Call 266-6581**

## Where

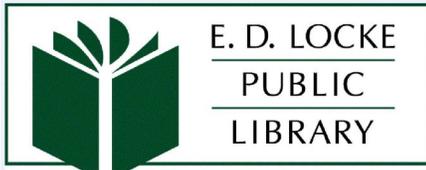
McFarland Public Library  
5920 Milwaukee St.  
McFarland, WI 53558

## When

Saturday, March 17th, 2018  
Registration 9:30 AM  
Program 10 AM - 2 PM  
\*Light lunch included

## Register & More Information

Call **608.203.8500**  
to pre-register by phone  
Questions?  
Email [bnuttkinson@alz.org](mailto:bnuttkinson@alz.org)



## CARE. CONNECT. THRIVE.

Dane County  
Caregiver Boot Camp  
March 17th, 2018  
10 AM - 2 PM

The number of families impacted by Alzheimer's disease and related dementia continues to rise. Knowledge is key in providing support, empowerment, and care for someone with dementia. Caregiver Boot Camp is designed for any family member/care partner that has questions or concerns about supporting individuals in their family with memory loss or simply wants to know more.

The program is available regardless of where the loved one lives and is completely FREE of charge.



# Caring for the Caregiver Program

AREA AGENCY ON AGING OF DANE COUNTY

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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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