

Caregiver Chronicles

March 2020



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/)

If we had no winter,
The spring would not be so pleasant;
If we did not sometimes taste of adversity
Prosperity would not be so welcome.

—Anne Bradstreet,
*First writer in England's North
American Colonies to be published*



The Best-laid Plans

Spring became a detailed planning time for me when I became a gardener. Actually, my garden planning begins in anticipation of spring, when the seed catalogs arrive in all their colorful glory right after the holidays. Because of our cold winters and relatively short growing season, some seeds must be started indoors. Each year I select the seeds for the flowers and vegetables I hope to grow and set up a calendar and grow lights to get them started. Everything in the plan is based on the anticipated last frost date and weather is very difficult to predict. All I can do is prepare and hope for the best knowing that some things will work out well and some won't, and everything may change in any given year.

Caregiving is another situation that requires planning without a way to know exactly how things are going to unfold as time goes on. If you're at the beginning of your caregiving journey, you may want to check out the "Preparing to Care" series March 18, 25, and April 1 at the Madison Senior Center (page 11). Week one covers preparing the home for aging in place and covers home modifications. Week two offers topics related to brain health, nutrition, and activities. Week three I will be there to discuss caregiver resources and supports in Dane County along with Joy Schmidt, Dementia Crisis Program Specialist for Dane County Human Services, who will discuss the grief process related to caregiving.

No matter how we try to prepare, even the best-laid plans sometimes go awry. We can't possibly anticipate every eventuality but we can be aware of available resources and access them when needed. Schmidt's article, "When Family Caregivers Experience a Crisis" (page 4) tells the story of a caregiver who took action when she experienced a near health crisis of her own. It's quite normal for caregivers to focus on what they can provide in the present and miss considering what happens if they are unable to provide care for any reason. Caregiver crisis and succession plans are vital tools for keeping care recipients safe, particularly when a care partner has Alzheimer's or dementia.

It's also quite normal to expect that caregiving over the course of our lifespans has a general order. We expect to raise our children, and, in turn, our children will raise our grandchildren. We don't typically expect we will be raising our grandchildren but circumstances can arise to change that. The opioid crisis, for example, has resulted in a growing number of adults aged 55 plus raising their grandchildren. Grandparents and other relatives raising children under age 18 can now access resources and supports via the new Wisconsin Kinship Navigator Portal (page 9). Topics addressed include medical care, support payments, and training for relative caregiving.

Beyond individual caregiving situations, planning is critical to our communities. The 2020 United States Census is the ultimate in planning and each of us can take part. The census will determine federal funding to communities each year for the next decade along with how many seats in Congress each state will get. Caregiver supports are among all that is at stake. Invitations to participate in the 2020 Census will begin arriving between March 12 and March 20 in households across the country. Make sure you count!



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



Caring for Caregivers

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The results of the [2020 Census](#) will help determine how hundreds of billions of dollars in federal funding flow into communities every year for the next decade and determine how many seats in Congress each state gets. Look for your invitation to participate to arrive at your home between March 12 and March 20.

Flip the Script

We often think of “giving things up” to help make us a “better” person—whether giving up a pleasure for the Lenten season, dieting to look better in warm-weather clothing, or intermittent fasting for health. Joy Schmidt, group leader for the monthly Coffee Break for Male Caregivers at Warner Park Community Recreation Center in Madison, suggested the group’s members flip that script: “As caregivers and people living with dementia, you have enough challenges on your plate to sacrifice anything that is good and fun in your life, so instead, let’s give up things that don’t serve us well.”

Her suggestions for what to give up include:

1. Judgment towards ourselves and thinking we aren’t doing enough
2. Judgment toward the person living with dementia—they cannot control what is happening to them
3. Guilt that we aren’t doing enough or that we somehow caused this situation
4. Testing the person living with dementia instead helping them succeed
5. Saying NO instead saying “yes, and . . .”
6. Arguing with the person with dementia
7. Taking things personally
8. Needing to be in control
9. Our strict sense of reality so we can accept theirs
10. Waiting until tomorrow to have fun . . . do it TODAY!



If you’d like more information about the Coffee Break for Male Caregivers support group contact Joy Schmidt at 608-240-7400. The group meets the first Monday of the month from 10:00—11:00 am at Warner Park Community Recreation Center, 1625 Northport Drive.

When Family Caregivers Experience a Crisis

When Jan experienced sudden shortness of breath and difficulty speaking one afternoon a few months ago, she panicked like most people would. It was scary. Unlike most people though, her thoughts weren't for herself but for Joe, her husband of 47 years. She is his primary caregiver as he is living with Alzheimer's disease.

What would happen to him? Even if she was able to call for help, what would the paramedics do for him? Would they know they couldn't leave him alone? Would they understand that he needs to be reassured and they will need to repeat things over and over? How would they know who to call to come stay with him? These thoughts flashed through her mind in that moment.

Fortunately for Jan and Joe, Jan's shortness of breath passed and she didn't need to call for help but the episode caused her to recognize that she needed to put some safety nets in place. She needed to communicate with friends and neighbors and even the local first responders that she is a caregiver for a person with dementia.

Around the same time this event occurred, Jan began working with the Dane County Dementia Care Specialist (DCS) through the Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) to learn about services that are available and strategies to cope with her caregiving role. The DCS helped her complete the First Responder Tool (FRT) that she placed on her refrigerator along with the File of Life that provides the information first responders would need that includes whether or not Joe can be left alone, what calms him, what upsets him, and contact information for family members and doctors. Jan was provided with a purple angel sticker that signifies a person in the home has dementia for the *File of Life* packet and to place on her door jamb. She contacted the local EMS and police to share the information and she also shared it with her trusted neighbor as well as her family members.



Caregivers tend to focus on the person they are caring for and forget that they, too, might have a medical emergency. By completing the First Responder Tool and displaying it in the home where medical personnel can locate it, the end results will be greatly improved. This form is on pages 5 and 6. You can obtain the File of Life documents and the purple angel stickers from the ADRC or your local senior center.

—Joy Schmidt, Dementia Crisis Program Specialist
Dane County Human Services

Helpful Information for First Responders
When assisting persons with Dementia

Please remember **TALK Tactics**:
Take it slow
Ask simple questions
Limit reality checks
Keep eye contact



Date Completed: _____ Date of Birth: ____ / ____ / ____

My Name: _____ My Address: _____

Language(s) I speak and understand: _____

Name I prefer to be called: _____ **Weapons in the home?** No Yes: _____
(type)

Name of person completing this form: _____ () _____
Name Phone Number

Emergency Contact Information for me: _____ () _____
Name Address Phone Number

Emergency Contact Information for me: _____ () _____
Name Address Phone Number

Emergency Contact Information for me: _____ () _____
Name Address Phone Number

Medical Conditions: _____

Allergies: _____
Pain Areas: _____ Preferred Hospital: _____
**Please attach medication list*

Are there routines that I follow? _____

Is there a more difficult time of day for me? _____

Do I wander? _____

I can be left alone: (please check the appropriate box)

A short while (1-2 hours) A few minutes **NOT at all** Other _____

Someone I trust who *I rely on to help me make decisions* is: _____
Name Phone #

Things *that upset me*: _____

I *show distress* by: _____

I am *calmed* by: _____
Last updated 3/6/2018

The best way *to communicate with me to help me understand and participate*: _____

Sensory Aides Needed: ___Hearing Aids ___Glasses ___Walker ___Cane ___Other:_____

Comfort items to take with me: _____

Anything else important for others to know about me to best help me during a crisis:

Dane County 24-Hour CRISIS :Line (608) 280-2600

Last updated 3/6/2018

Monthly MIPPA Moment: March is National Nutrition Month

MIPPA (Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act) has a goal of educating older adults on Medicare's cost-saving benefits & preventive services.

FoodShare Wisconsin was created to help stop hunger, improve nutrition and health, and help people with limited money buy the food they need for good health. People who qualify receive anywhere from \$16 to \$194 per month based on their income. You may be eligible to enroll in FoodShare if all of your household income is under certain monthly limits. You can find those limits at: dhs.wisconsin.gov/foodshare/index.htm. Benefits are put into your FoodShare account using an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) system you access with a card that looks similar to any debit card. These can be used at grocery stores, convenience stores, and sometimes farmers markets and senior meal sites – any place that accepts EBT payments. If interested in enrolling, go to access.wi.gov and apply today, or call the local consortium at 1-888-794-5556 to complete an interview for Dane County.

Adapted from dhs.wisconsin.gov/foodshare.

For more MIPPA Program information, call MIPPA Program Specialist Leilani Amundson, at 608-240-7458.



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

Email: ADRC@countyofdane.com



The Winter issue of [Resource Wise](http://www.daneadrc.org) is available online.

Article topics include:
Information on advance directives, filing your taxes, what you need to know about shingles, and beating the winter blues. Click the link (above) or photo (left) to read a copy.



CAREGIVER TELECONNECTION

www.caregiverteleconnection.org



Date	Time	Topic	A LEADING VOICE FOR CAREGIVER
Thursday, March 5th Thursday, March 12th Thursday, March 19th	11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific	Understanding Medication Safety series with Lucy Barylak, MSW <i>Join us for a three part series highlighting how to take important steps to safely manage your medications. Some of the topics that will be discussed are how to recognize potential drug interactions; safe storage of your medications; questions you need to ask while you are in the hospital and the important role your pharmacist has in keeping you safe. A workbook will be provided to go along with this series.</i>	
Tuesday, March 3rd	11:00 pm Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific	Alzheimer's Evaluation and Treatment with Nestor H Praderio, MD <i>Alzheimer's Disease is the most widely recognized type of dementia and currently there is no cure. Nestor H. Praderio, MD will review the evaluation process for diagnosing Alzheimer's Disease and explain symptoms and stages. He will also outline current treatment options including medication management and strategies for addressing the associated behavioral issues of the disease.</i>	
Monday, March 9th	1:00 pm Eastern 12:00 pm Central 11:00 am Mountain 10:00 am Pacific	Medicare and Social Security Scams with Melinda Gardner <i>Learn about how to identify Medicare and Social Security scams and what to do about them. **Sponsored by the North Central Texas Caregiver Teleconnection**</i>	
Tuesday, March 17th	12:00 pm Eastern 11:00 am Central 10:00 am Mountain 9:00 am Pacific	The Dementia Dialogues: Tips and Tricks to Reduce Caregiver Stress with Tam Cummings, PhD <i>Ten Practical Caregiver Stress Exercises. These are easily doable techniques that immediately reduce physical and emotional stress in family and professional caregivers. These tips and tricks take anywhere from 30 seconds to 1 hour to do. **Sponsored by VITAS Healthcare**</i>	
Thursday, March 26th	2:00 pm Eastern 1:00 pm Central 12:00 pm Mountain 11:00 am Pacific	A presentation on Grief with Bill Moyer <i>This presentation will help bring a clearer understanding of Grief and offer suggestions to help those who are grieving.</i>	
Friday, March 27th	11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific	Los efectos del cuidado de personas: Cómo sobrellevar de manera eficaz los muchos desafíos con Liliana Oakes, MD <i>Si bien cuidar de alguien resulta gratificante, ¡puede rebasar nuestra capacidad! Con demasiada frecuencia el cuidador deja de lado sus propias necesidades. Acompañe a la Dra. Oakes en la plática sobre las medidas que puede tomar para cuidar de sí mismo mientras cuida de alguien más.</i>	



A program of the WellMed Charitable Foundation

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



WISCONSIN
**KINSHIP
NAVIGATOR**

THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND
FAMILIES IS EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE
THE LAUNCH OF THE

**WISCONSIN
KINSHIP
NAVIGATOR
PORTAL**

A brand new, online resource for **relative caregivers of children** to access necessary information and resources to support the children in their home.

CHECK IT OUT TODAY AT -

WWW.DCF.WISCONSIN.GOV/KINSHIP/NAVIGATOR

Free and
Open to the
Public



Saturday, March 14, 2020
8:30 am – 2:30 pm

Wyndham Garden Hotel, 2969 Cahill Main, Fitchburg

Solomon Carter Fuller **Brain Health** Brunch *Celebrating 10 years!*

Wellness fair | Free community brunch |
Choir performance | Caregiver strategies panel



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Peggy Dilworth-Anderson, PhD
University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill

**"My Story, Your Story: Sharing the
Dementia Caregiver's Journey"**

Details and registration at

adrc.wisc.edu/scf2020

or

(608) 232-3400



Preparing to Care

Wednesdays, March 18, 25, and April 1
5:30-7:00 PM

Week 1

"Preparing the Home"
Beth Fields and Kayla Olson, both occupational therapists, will cover home modifications, safety, and driving.

No one is ever prepared to become a caregiver for a loved one diagnosed with dementia.

This series is designed to help you prepare and plan for the future.

This program is FREE, but you must register.

Call (608) 266-6581

Week 2

"A Day in the Life..."
Shannon Wuensch, Community Outreach Coordinator at the Alzheimer's Association, will talk about topics including brain health, nutrition, and activities.



Week 3

"Caring for the Caregiver"
Jane De Broux, Dane County Caregiver Program Coordinator will cover resources and supports available for caregivers. Joy Schmidt, Dane County Dementia Care Specialist, will discuss the grief process.

Location:

Madison Senior Center
330 W. Mifflin Street
Madison, WI 53703

If you need respite in order to attend, call Jane De Broux at the ADRC to discuss some options.

(608) 240-7400

Caring for the Caregiver Program

AREA AGENCY ON AGING OF DANE COUNTY

2865 N. Sherman Avenue
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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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