

January

National **Self-Love** Month

2023

## EMBRACING THE NEW YEAR

*"Sometimes it takes more courage to ask for help than to act alone." - Ken Petti*

### Be a Healthy Caregiver

- See The Doctor
- Get Moving
- Eat Well
- 5 Quick Tips To Help You Cope
- Caregiver Conference Coming-Up
- Resources to Empower You

 **You are not alone.**  
\* DON'T SILENTLY STRUGGLE \*

# Dementia Caregiver Support Group

**Basehor Community Library:**

Meets in person and by Zoom on the first Thursday of every month at 6:30 pm

Join us in this safe supportive environment for caregivers.

**Dr. Maritza Buenaver, Geriatric Psychiatrist specializing in dementia education,** will guide us as we share our experiences. Anyone is welcome to join us.

# January is National Self-Love Month

## Be a Healthy Caregiver

**Here's an idea that you Can apply right away** ... when you notice that you have a few minutes or more that you can use for Self-Care, do it! Try to keep your options open and become more pliable. Since it's impossible to control everything, try going with the flow more often.

It can be fun to treat it as a game ... I wonder when today's "opportune" moment will show itself? Embrace that moment of precious time and treat yourself to something you enjoy.

**1.) See The Doctor:** Be sure to visit your physician regularly (at least annually), and listen to what your body is telling you. Any exhaustion, stress, sleeplessness, or changes in appetite or behavior should be taken seriously. Ignoring these symptoms can cause your physical and mental health to decline.

**2.) Get Moving:** No doubt you know that exercise is an important part of staying healthy — it can help relieve stress, prevent disease and make you feel good. But, finding the time to exercise is another story.

**Take friends and family members up on their offers to help.**

Sneak-in some exercise, even 10 minutes a day can help. Fit in what you can, and work toward a goal.

When your loved one naps, pull out a yoga mat and stretch, set up a stationary bike, try exercise videos, CDs, or tapes. If space and time are limited, **deep breathing works wonders!**

**3.) Eat Well:** Heart-healthy eating patterns, such as the Mediterranean diet, are good for overall health and may help protect the brain. A Mediterranean diet includes relatively little red meat and emphasizes whole grains, fruits, vegetables, fish, nuts, olive oil and other healthy fats. Try new recipes and involve the person with dementia.

*"Talk to yourself like you would to someone you love."*

*~ Brene Brown*





## 5 Quick Tips To Help You Cope

- **Manage your level of stress.**

Stress can cause physical problems (blurred vision, stomach irritation, high blood pressure) and changes in behavior (irritability, lack of concentration, change in appetite). Note your symptoms and discuss with a doctor, as needed. Try relaxation techniques that work for you.

- **Try to be realistic.**

The care you give does make a difference, but many behaviors can't be controlled. Grieve the losses, focus on positive times as they arise, and enjoy good memories.



*“Caregivers deserve love and comforting too!”*

- **Know you're doing your best.**

Remember that the care you provide makes a difference and that you are doing the best you can. You may feel guilty because you can't do more, but individual care needs change as Alzheimer's progresses.

You can't promise how care will be delivered, but you can make sure that the person with the disease is well cared for and safe.

*Refer to Page 4 of this newsletter for valuable resources.*

*“Worry never robs tomorrow of its sorrow, it only robs today of its joy.”*

*— Leo Buscaglia*

- **Take a break.**

It's normal to need a break from caregiving duties. No one can do it all by themselves. Look into respite care to allow time to take care of yourself.

- **Accept changes as they occur.**

People with Alzheimer's disease change over time and so do their needs.

They may require care beyond what you can provide on your own.

Becoming aware of community resources and care options — from home care services to residential care — can make the transition easier.

So will the support and assistance of those around you.





# KEEP THE DOOR OPEN CARING FOR THE CAREGIVER

# 2023

## DEMENTIA CAREGIVER EDUCATION CONFERENCE

LOCATION: BASEHOR COMMUNITY LIBRARY, 1400 158TH ST, BASEHOR, KS 66007

**APRIL 1**

**9AM - 3PM**

FEATURING: ● DISTINGUISHED DOCTORS AND GUEST SPEAKERS ON DEMENTIA - CAREGIVER EDUCATION - DISCUSSIONS - INSIGHTS

● VIRTUAL REALITY EXPERIENCE: A JOURNEY THROUGH ALZHEIMER'S

● FREE REGISTRATION IS EASY:

YOU CAN REGISTER ONLINE BY EMAILING US AT [VACAREGIVEREDUCATION@GMAIL.COM](mailto:VACAREGIVEREDUCATION@GMAIL.COM) TO RECEIVE THE ONLINE REGISTRATION LINK - OR BY CALLING THE BASEHOR COMMUNITY LIBRARY (913) 724-2828.

THIS CONFERENCE IS OFFERED BY DR. M. BUENAVER AND IS FUNDED BY THE IOWA-GWEP (IOWA GERIATRIC WORKFORCE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM) U1QHP28731 THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA HOSPITAL AND CLINICS

## Resources

- [www.Facebook.com](http://www.Facebook.com)—Basehor Library—Dementia Caregiver Support Group
- [www.LeavenworthCounty.gov](http://www.LeavenworthCounty.gov)—Council on Aging
- [www.ALZ.org](http://www.ALZ.org)—Alzheimer's Association
- [www.AARP.org/KScaregiverresources](http://www.AARP.org/KScaregiverresources) (877-333-5885)
- [www.TeepaSnow.com](http://www.TeepaSnow.com)—A Dementia-Care Education Specialist
- [www.YouTube.com/Teepa Snow's Positive Approach to Care](http://www.YouTube.com/Teepa%20Snow's%20Positive%20Approach%20to%20Care)
- [www.ArchRespite.org](http://www.ArchRespite.org)—Great for Caregivers
- [www.mountosb.org/ministries/keeler-womens-center/](http://www.mountosb.org/ministries/keeler-womens-center/) (913-906-8990) Free Services in Kansas City, KS
- [www.Caregiver.org](http://www.Caregiver.org)—Family Caregiver Alliance
- [www.NHPCO.org](http://www.NHPCO.org)—National Hospice and Palliative Care Org.
- [www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/decisionaid/](http://www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/decisionaid/)
- **CRISIS LINE: 800-273-8255—Free and Confidential**
- [www.ptsd.va.gov/gethelp/help\\_for\\_veterans.asp](http://www.ptsd.va.gov/gethelp/help_for_veterans.asp)

*This material is funded by the Iowa Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program (Iowa-GWEP) HRSA U1QHP28731, the University of Iowa Hospital and Clinics. Compiled by and Graphic Design by Diane Greenlaw.*



February 2023

**"Treat" Yourself - No Guilt**

National  
**Senior  
Independence  
Month**

- Senior Independence
- Opening The Door
- What To Do
- Embrace Self-Care
- What Not To Do
- Reach Out And Ask
- **Caregiver Conference  
Schedule And Details**



*"Keep your face always toward the sunshine,  
and shadows will fall behind you."*

♥ You are not alone.  
XOM SLG UOI SIUOG

*- Walt Whitman*

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# February is National Senior Independence Month

## “Treat” Yourself ... ... No Guilt

### *Independence is very important for the Senior Caregiver*

Many caregivers are older adults or seniors caring for elderly family members.

Before they know it, their entire day ends-up filled with caregiving responsibilities.

To prevent exhaustion, it is imperative that caregivers *incorporate* some positive self-care and nurture their lives *outside* of caregiving. They need to exercise their own independence and maintain their sense of self by stepping away a few times per week.

### *Opening the door to your independence*

Set-up your loved ones with the most practical and safe surroundings, easier daily care plans, practical activity plans, simpler food preparation and storage, and arrange some home delivered meals as well. Look-over your daily caregiving plan and reinvent it to free-up time for your independence activities.

### *What to do*

**Do something for yourself!** Even though you're busy, always have some back-up ideas for easier and or less time-intensive self-care, make time for yourself.

**Never overlook yourself. Your physical, mental, and emotional health are VERY important.**

Maintaining physical activity is a great way to build strength and balance. Adding “yourself” into the daily care “schedule” nurtures your self-worth and helps you feel more in control.

Set an alarm on your mobile phone to remind about an up-coming independence activity and ensure you are ready to step away when the time comes.

Use the quick Voice Recorder feature on your mobile phone to record notes, reminders, and/or create a voice journal of your feelings, ideas, challenges, and triumphs, it is cleansing for the spirit.

*“Life is like riding a bicycle.  
To keep your balance,  
you must keep moving.”*

*- Albert Einstein*





## ***Embrace Self-Care***

No need to worry about feeling guilt from treating yourself or enjoying activities, because clearly you cannot be an effective caregiver unless you take good care of yourself first. Self-care and independence is not selfishness.

You, too, have the right to go out for a coffee, enjoy a movie, or just hang out with friends. Ideally, 7 - 8 hours of sleep every night, eating a balanced diet with minimal processed or fast foods. Instead, focus on whole food options.

A walk around the neighborhood, the parking lot at work, or stepping in place for 5 or 10 minutes helps. Gardening or some limited time in the sun is invigorating and healthy. Make a habit of carrying water with you and drinking it.



*“You must find the place  
inside yourself where  
nothing is impossible.”*

— Deepak Chopra

## ***What not to do***

You do not “have” to do “everything.” Open your options by considering making a meal plan for your loved one and ordering most of the groceries online and have them delivered (reduce your trips to the grocery store). Do not isolate, meet-up with friends or family, participate in social activities, go the park or to the beach.

## ***Reach out and ask someone***

It’s okay and healthy for you to step away now and then. You can start with asking a friend or family member to assist with the caregiving process in a small way. They can help with a few simple tasks like running an errand, picking-up groceries, cooking and clean-up, vacuuming, or staying with your loved one for a couple of hours while you treat yourself to something that brings you joy and nurtures your independence and sense of self. Incorporate this into your weekly schedule.

If no one you know can assist, consult with your local caregiver resources for assistance options, free services, and additional services at a low cost.



# KEEP THE DOOR OPEN

## CARING FOR THE CAREGIVER

**APRIL 1**

9 AM - 2 PM

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CAREGIVERS AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS, INCLUDING THEIR LOVED ONES WITH DEMENTIA, ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THIS FREE CONFERENCE. THIS EXCITING EVENT FEATURES DISTINGUISHED DOCTORS AND GUEST SPEAKERS PRESENTING EXCITING APPROACHES, AND VALUABLE CAREGIVING INSIGHTS, TECHNIQUES, AND RESOURCES. ENJOY RICH DISCUSSIONS AND Q & A'S.

9:00 - 9:15 a.m. - **Sign in and Snacks: Coffee, Fruit Platters, Cookies, Donuts**

9:15 - 10:15 a.m. - **Dr. Courtney Huhn, CMD, Geriatrician**

- Community Living Center Medical Director, Eastern Kansas VA Medical Center, Topeka
- "Put On Your Own Mask First" The Impact of Caregiver Burden

10:15 - 10:25 a.m. - **Break**

10:25 - 11:10 a.m. - **Leavenworth Council On Aging**

- "Valuable information about dementia programs in Leavenworth county and Wyandotte county"

11:10 - 11:30 a.m. - **Brunch Break - Lunch platters, Finger sandwiches, cheese platters, vegetable platters, chips, tea, water, coffee, health bars**

11:30 - 12:30 p.m. - **Brenda Gregg, MSG**

- Dementia Care Specialist, Alzheimer's Association, Heart of America Chapter
- "An Attitude of Gratitude: Incorporating Gratitude Into Your Caregiving Journey"

12:30 - 12:40 p.m. - **Break**

12:40 TO 1:50 p.m. - **Diane Greenlaw, Virtual Reality Coordinator**

- A compassionate, eye-opening, and immersive experience from the perspective of someone who has dementia.
- "Virtual Reality Experience: A Journey Through Alzheimer's"

1:50 TO 2:00 p.m. - **Dr. Maritza Buenaver, Geriatric Psychiatrist**

- "Q and A Session, Discussion, Closing Remarks"

**REGISTRATION: Online by emailing us at [vacaregivereducation@gmail.com](mailto:vacaregivereducation@gmail.com) to receive the online registration link - or by calling the Basehor Community Library (913) 724-2828.**

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March 2023

National

# Brain Injury Awareness

Month

LOST

DISORIENTED

PERPLEXED

CONFUSED

- The 4Ms  
Age-Friendly  
Health Systems
- How Brain Injury Can  
Lead To Dementia
- A Note From  
Dr. Buenaver
- **April 1, 2023**  
**Caregiver Conference**

*"Be a rainbow in someone else's cloud."*

♥ You are not alone.  
ΧΟΝ ΣΙΓΗ ΠΟΤ ΣΤΟΥΓ

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# The 4Ms For Healthy Aging

## What Matters

*“Share with your provider what matters most to you”*

Sharing your goals, wishes, concerns, and needs builds trust and open communication.

This will help your providers align your care with what matters to you.



## Medication

*“The medications you are taking”*

Know what medications you are taking and take them as prescribed.

Keep a list of all your medications with you.

Staying on top of what you take is important to your well-being.

## Mind

*“Your mood and memory”*

You may notice changes in your mood and memory as you age.

Let your provider know if you feel confused at times or have trouble remembering things.

## Mobility

*“How you move each day”*

Staying active helps you maintain your health and independence.

Make sure you are able to move safely. Let your provider know if you have concerns about your balance or any falls.

Reduce clutter and remove obstacles from your home. Use assistive devices as prescribed.

*If you are injured after a fall, call your doctor or 911.*





## ***Dementia after a head injury is a significant public health problem***

- In the United States, roughly 2 per 1,000 people each year have some kind of head injury. Many do not seek medical care.
- Between 400,000 and 500,000 people are hospitalized in the U.S. every year for head injury.

Younger people are more likely to have a head injury than older people. Head injury is the third most common cause of dementia, after infection and alcoholism, in people younger than 50 years.

- Older people with head injuries are more likely to have complications such as dementia. Children are likely to have more severe complications.
- Men, especially younger men, are more likely than women to have a head injury.

The nature of dementia in head-injured persons varies greatly by the type and location of head injury and the person's characteristics before the head injury.

The dementia that follows a head injury differs from other types of dementia.

Many types of dementia, such as Alzheimer's disease, get steadily worse over time.

Dementia from head injury usually does not get worse over time. It may even improve somewhat over time. The improvement usually is slow and gradual and takes months or years.



### ***A note from Dr. Maritza Buenaver regarding the upcoming April 1, 2023 Dementia Caregiver Education Conference***

We are very proud to be able to bring this free conference to you, caregivers.

Caregiver burnout is prevalent in caregivers of loved ones with dementia.

You will learn about how to care for yourself from our Veterans Administration Geriatrician Dr. Courtney Huhn, the local Center on Aging, VA Caregiver Support Program and the Alzheimer's Association. You will also be able to experience Virtual Reality "A Journey Through Alzheimer's." A compassionate and immersive experience of what it may be like to have Alzheimer's.

I will be spending time with your loved one with dementia (if you are not able to leave him or her alone). Looking forward to seeing everyone there.

- M. Buenaver, MD



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- "Put On Your Own Mask First" The Impact of Caregiver Burden

**10:15 - 10:25 a.m. - Break**

**10:25 - 10:45 a.m. - Jessica Pontbriant, Social Services Coordinator**

- BS in Gerontology and Aging Services, Leavenworth Council on Aging
- "Leavenworth County Council on Aging Programs and Services"

**10:45 - 10:50 a.m. - Break**

**10:50 - 11:10 a.m. - Jennifer Molleker, Caregiver Support Program Manager**

- VA Caregiver Support Program Education & Support Services
- "VA Eastern Kansas Health Care System"

**11:10 - 11:30 a.m. - Brunch Break - Lunch platters, Finger sandwiches, cheese platters, vegetable platters, chips, tea, water, coffee, health bars**

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APRIL 2023

NATIONAL  
**STRESS  
AWARENESS**  
MONTH

- **The 4Ms - Delirium  
Mind/Mentation**
- **What is Delirium**
- **Types of Delirium**
- **Delirium Diagnosis**
- **Caregiver Stress**
- **Know Your  
Community Resources**
- **Relaxation Techniques**
- **Virtual Reality**
- **Resources**

 **You are not alone.**  
ΛΟΗ ΣΙΓΗ ΠΟΤ ΣΤΟΥΓ\*

*"We Rise By Lifting Others"*  
-Robert Ingersoll

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This will help your providers align your care with what matters to you.



## Medication

*“The medications you are taking”*

Know what medications you are taking and take them as prescribed.

Keep a list of all your medications with you.

Staying on top of what you take is important to your well-being.

## Mind

*“Your mood and memory”*

You may notice changes in your mood and memory as you age.

Let your provider know if you feel confused at times or have trouble remembering things.

## Mobility

*“How you move each day”*

Staying active helps you maintain your health and independence.

Make sure you are able to move safely. Let your provider know if you have concerns about your balance or any falls.

Reduce clutter and remove obstacles from your home. Use assistive devices as prescribed.

*If you are injured after a fall, call your doctor or 911.*





## ***The 4Ms - Age-Friendly Health Systems - Mind/Mentation - Delirium***

Delirium results in a sudden change in a person's mental function, which can disrupt their ability to concentrate, think, remember, and sleep. It can also cause fluctuations in their level of consciousness and can occur as a result of underlying medical conditions, alcohol withdrawal, and certain medications.

### ***All types of delirium can include the following symptoms:***

- confusion or disorientation
- memory loss
- slurred speech or difficulty speaking coherently
- difficulty concentrating
- hallucinations
- changes in sleep patterns
- changes in mood or personality

### ***Delirium Diagnosis***

Healthcare professionals can use a combination of cognitive health assessments, physical exams, and laboratory tests to help them diagnose delirium and identify the underlying cause.

People should contact a doctor if they or a loved one experiences any of the symptoms of delirium.

Infections, chemical imbalances, and certain medications can cause delirium. Early diagnosis and prompt treatment may decrease the risk of future complications such as dementia.

*Delirium Source: medicalnewstoday.com*

### ***Caregiver Stress***

Alzheimer's caregivers frequently report experiencing high levels of stress.

It can be overwhelming to take care of a loved one with Alzheimer's or other dementia, but too much stress can be harmful to both of you.

### ***Know what community resources are available***

Adult day programs, in-home assistance, visiting nurses and meal delivery.

If you experience signs of stress on a regular basis, consult your doctor.

Ignoring symptoms can cause your physical and mental health to decline.

### ***Relaxation techniques to relieve stress***

#### ***Find which works best for you***

- Visualization (mentally picturing a place or situation that is peaceful and calm)
- Meditation (which can be as simple as dedicating 15 minutes a day to letting go of all stressful thoughts)
- Breathing exercises (slowing your breathing and focusing on taking deep breaths)
- Progressive muscle relaxation (tightening and then relaxing each muscle group, starting at one end of your body and working your way to the other end)

*Caregiver Stress: alz.org*



# Resources



## A JOURNEY THROUGH ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE "VIRTUAL REALITY EXPERIENCE"

*Find out what everyone is raving about!*

**"Enlightening" "Eye-Opening" "Empowering" "Informative"**

**Free Distance Learning Experience Through Zoom..**

**(Alzheimer's/Dementia/Lewy Body/Parkinson's)**

**Experience a journey through their eyes.**

*(A must for caregivers, families, doctors/fellows/residents/staff.)*

Free Virtual Reality Distance Learning is made possible  
by Dr. Maritza Buenaver's Iowa-GWEP/HRSA Grant.



**It's easy to schedule a  
Virtual Reality Session.**

**Just email your preferred  
VR Session date and time!**

**[VAcaregivereducation@gmail.com](mailto:VAcaregivereducation@gmail.com)**

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- **[www.VA.gov/eastern-kansas-health-care/health-services/caregiver-support/](http://www.VA.gov/eastern-kansas-health-care/health-services/caregiver-support/)**
- **[www.ALZ.org](http://www.ALZ.org)—Alzheimer's Association**
- **[www.TeepaSnow.com](http://www.TeepaSnow.com)—A Dementia-Care Education Specialist**
- **[www.mountosb.org/ministries/keeler-womens-center/](http://www.mountosb.org/ministries/keeler-womens-center/)  
(913-906-8990) Free Services in Kansas City, KS**
- **[www.ptsd.va.gov/gethelp/help\\_for\\_veterans.asp](http://www.ptsd.va.gov/gethelp/help_for_veterans.asp)**
- **CRISIS LINE: 800-273-8255—Free and Confidential**



NATIONAL  
**MOBILITY  
AWARENESS**  
MONTH

MAY 2023



- The 4Ms - Mobility
- Mobility for the **caregiver**
- Mobility for **dementia**
- Mobility **with** your loved one with dementia
- Music benefits for dementia and caregivers
- Selecting music for your loved one with dementia
- Virtual Reality
- Resources

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ΛΟΗ ΣΤΕ ΠΟΙ ΣΤΟΥΓ\*

*"Caregiver: A Work of Heart"*

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Reduce clutter and remove obstacles from your home. Use assistive devices as prescribed.

*If you are injured after a fall, call your doctor or 911.*





## ***Mobility for the caregiver—Tips for finding time to exercise***

- **Take friends and family members up on their offers to help.**  
You can get a good workout in a short amount of time — 30 minutes is ideal.
- **Start small.** While it is recommended that you get 30 minutes of physical activity at least five days a week, ***even 10 minutes a day can help.***
- **Exercise at home.** When the person with dementia naps, pull out a yoga mat and stretch, set up a stationary bike, or try exercise videos.
- **Find something you love.**  
Enjoy the activity and it will be easier to achieve.

## ***Mobility for dementia—Exercise tips***

**Early/Mid stages:** Gardening, dancing, indoor carpet bowls or skittles, walking, swimming. Seated exercises: marching, turning upper body side to side, raising heels and toes, raising arms toward ceiling, raising opposite arm and leg, bending legs, clapping under legs, bicycling the legs, circles with arms, practicing moving sitting to standing.

**Later stages:** People in the later stages of dementia should be encouraged to move about regularly and change chairs, for example when having a drink or a meal. Standing up and moving about regularly helps to keep leg muscles strong and maintain good balance. With supervision, sitting unsupported for a few minutes each day strengthens the stomach and back muscles for better posture.

## ***Mobility with your loved one with dementia—Exercise tips***

- Take a walk together outside to enjoy the fresh air
- Go to the mall and take a stroll indoors
- Do seated exercises at home with your loved one
- Dance together to their favorite music
- Garden or do other routine activities that you both enjoy

## ***Music benefits for you and your loved one with dementia***

**Music can be powerful** even in the late-stages. Music provides a way to connect, even after verbal communication has become difficult. A study by author and neurologist Dr. Borna Bondkarpour, an associate professor of neurology at Northwestern Medicine in Chicago, noted *“Our preliminary data show that music can help [with] improving social engagement between a person with dementia and their loved ones. It can also decrease stress levels in care partners.”*

**Caregivers reported decreased levels of stress and increased help in connecting with their loved ones.**

## ***Selecting music for your loved one with dementia***

- Let them choose music that's familiar and enjoyable.
- Choose a source of music that isn't interrupted by commercials.
- Tranquil music to create a calm environment or an upbeat song from childhood to boost the spirit and evoke happy memories.
- Encourage movement (clapping, dancing) to add to the enjoyment.



# Resources



## A JOURNEY THROUGH ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE "VIRTUAL REALITY EXPERIENCE"

*Find out what everyone is raving about!*

*"Enlightening" "Eye-Opening" "Empowering" "Informative"*

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**Experience a journey through their eyes.**

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NATIONAL

# Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness

MONTH

June 2023

- 
- **Early-Stage Caregiving**
    - Safety
    - Stress
    - Provide support
    - Work together
  - **Middle-Stage Caregiving**
    - Daily care
    - Activities
    - Driving
    - Supervision
  - **Late-Stage Caregiving**
    - Nutrition
    - Toileting
    - Bathing
    - Pain
    - Hospice
  - **Virtual Reality**
  - **Resources**

 You are not alone.  
ΛΟΝ ΣΤΛΓ ΗΟΓ ΣΤΟΠΓ

*"From caring comes courage."*

- Lao Tzu

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## ***Early-Stage Caregiving***

**Safety first:** Is there an immediate safety risk for your loved one to perform a particular task alone? If there is no immediate risk of injury or harm, provide encouragement and continue to provide supervision as necessary.

**Avoid stress:** Prioritize tasks or actions that do not cause unnecessary stress for the person with dementia.

**Make a positive assumption:** Assume that the person with dementia is capable of completing the task. Focus on his or her current needs, rather than dwelling on the future.

**Talk it over:** The best way to determine how and when to provide support is to ask directly. Ask the person with dementia what they need or the frustrations they may be experiencing. Talk about it, then make a plan.

**Work better together:** Find activities to do together and keep the conversation going about expectations for how you will provide support. Check in regularly by asking the person with dementia if you are providing a level of assistance that is comfortable or adequate.

## ***Middle-Stage Caregiving***

**Daily care needs:** Eating, dressing and grooming will become more challenging as dementia progresses. This loss of independence and privacy can be a very difficult transition for the person with dementia; your patience and sensitivity will go a long way in helping him or her through it. Encourage the person to do as much as possible, but be ready to help when needed.

**Activities that provide meaning:** In addition to enhancing quality of life, activities can reduce behaviors like wandering and agitation. You don't need to invent new things to do. Think of activities as things we do as part of our daily living. Activities can be making dinner together, gardening, listening to music or going for a walk.

**Driving:** During the middle stages of the disease, a person with Alzheimer's will need to stop driving. When it is clear that driving is no longer safe, try to involve the person with dementia in the decision to stop. Explain your concerns by giving specific examples. Assure the person you will do everything possible to make rides available.

**Other safety concerns:** Early in the middle stages, it will become too difficult or dangerous for a person with Alzheimer's to be left alone. Preventing wandering becomes a crucial part of care, and safety precautions will need to be taken throughout the person's living environment. At this point, if the person is living alone, he or she may need to move in with relatives or to a residential care setting.



## **Late-Stage Caregiving**

**Care needs are extensive** during the late stage and may exceed what you can provide at home. This may mean moving your loved one into a facility in order to get the care needed. Deciding on late-stage care can be one of the most difficult decisions families face. Families who have been through the process say that it is best to gather information and move forward, rather than second-guessing decisions after the fact.

**As a person becomes less active**, he or she will require less food. But, a person in this stage of the disease also may forget to eat or lose his or her appetite. Encourage self-feeding, assist them with feeding, if needed. Encourage fluids as your loved one may not always realize that they are thirsty and monitor weight. The doctor may even suggest supplements between meals to add calories if weight loss is a problem.

**Difficulty with toileting** is very common at this stage. Track their natural routine, and consider a bedside commode. Limit liquids at least two hours before bedtime. Use absorbent and protective products, adult disposable briefs, and bed pads. Monitor bowel movements. If there are 3 consecutive days without a bowel movement, add a natural laxative such as prunes or fiber-rich foods (bran or whole-grain bread). Consult with a doctor if the constipation continues.



**Learn how to properly lift and turn your loved one** without causing injury. Keep skin clean and dry. Wash with mild soap and blot dry, use gentle motions, and avoid friction when cleaning. Use pillows or pads to protect elbows, heels, hips, and other bony areas. To prevent “freezing” of joints (limb contractures), consult with the doctor about range-of-motion exercises such as: carefully moving arms and legs two to three times a day while skin and muscles are warm, like right after bathing.

**Recognize pain and illness** by looking for signs such as pale skin tone, flushed skin tone, dry/pale gums, mouth sores, vomiting, feverish skin, or swelling of any part of the body. Pay attention to nonverbal signs such as gestures, spoken sounds, and facial expressions such as wincing. Be alert to changes in behavior such as anxiety, agitation, trembling, shouting, and sleeping problems. All of these can be signs of pain.

**Hospice is an option.** The underlying philosophy of hospice focuses on quality and dignity by providing comfort, care and support services for people with terminal illnesses and their families. ***Ideally, discussions about end-of-life care wishes should take place while your loved one still has the capacity to make decisions and share their wishes about life-sustaining treatment.***



# Resources



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# July 4, 2023 Independence Day

June 24, 2023 - July 24, 2023  
National Self-Care Month

## Caregiver Inspiration:

- Set Important Boundaries
- The Perfect 10 Minutes
- Update Your Surroundings

## Caregiver Quick Tips:

- Technology to Your Benefit
- Avoid the Hero Trap
- Tend to Save The Day?
- Self-Care is a Necessity
- Creative "Me" Time
- Virtual Reality Experience
- Resources



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\*NOT FOR SALE\*

*"If your compassion does not include yourself,  
it is incomplete." - Jack Kornfield*

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# Celebrate your independence this month with Self-Care.

## Caregiver Inspiration

**Set important boundaries** with the people in your life by adding yourself to your list of priorities.

*(When you have the tools to take care of yourself and can live a life that feels good and uplifting, you will have more energy and patience to devote to your loved one.)*

**Take your time crafting** the perfect 10 minute morning, afternoon, or evening relaxing beverage and mindfully watch it take form, from presentation to the perfect sip.

*(Perhaps, try a new flavor of hot tea, exotic coffee, or an adventurous fruit smoothie and decide whether you will enjoy it while reading some inspirational stories, enjoying the sounds of nature, or calling an old friend for a short chat.)*

**Small updates to your surroundings:** You can make a new meditation spot, make your pillows and blankets more fluffy and inviting (get a new pillow), play nature sounds at bed time, update your room or desk layout, play music you love throughout the day, or add a calming scent such as lavender to your home or respite area.

*(Getting a fresh perspective can make all the difference.)*

## Caregiver Quick Tips

**Use technology** in a way that benefits you for Self-Care, it's in the palm of your hand or at your fingertips via laptop, iPad, or home computer. Set reminders on your phone calendar or daily alarms that remind you to take a break, take your vitamins, drink some water, relax for a few minutes of peaceful deep breathing, enjoy a soothing cup of freshly brewed healthy tea, coffee, or enjoy a happy memory. Perhaps, splurge and treat yourself to something cool that makes life easier for you, a book you've been wanting to read, or subscribe to a show you can look forward to daily or weekly.

**Caregivers can easily fall into the Hero trap.** Yes, you are a Hero, but you do need to give yourself some grace and be a Hero for You. You can strive for perfection and have goals, but you also need to understand that you are one person and that you can only do so much. ***Be fair and kind to yourself too.***

*Source: Article written and composed by Diane Greenlaw*

## Self-Care:


***“Anything we deliberately do  
(or refrain from doing)  
with our own well-being in mind.”***





## Caregiver Quick Tips (cont'd)

**Self-Care is a necessity**, not a luxury. Caregivers do want to take care of themselves. They constantly think about it and, in fact, make promises to themselves with the best of intentions...they look forward to it and the thought of that little self-present motivates them to get through a rough day. Yet, the day always seems to run long leaving no time for those little things they had planned for themselves. Their plans end-up waiting until later...all to often later never comes and the caregiver is once again deprived of respite and a well-deserved break. Caregivers must make Self-Care a priority.



**“Self-Care gives the world the Best of you, instead of what’s left of you.”**

- Katie Reed

Caregivers tend to **“Save The Day”** and are used to being in that constant cycle. Caregivers help others and see what others need. It is difficult for them to “slow down” and make their own needs a priority.


If someone offers help even by giving a few hours of a break, caregivers should take a deep breath and accept.

At first, it can be difficult to entrust a loved-one’s care to someone else. It becomes easier when everything goes well and the caregiver realizes that their loved one is safe and in good hands.

Caregivers could also try combining their packed schedules with some **creative “me” time**. *Easier said than done!* Becoming aware of the time being spent on certain things can help caregivers discover that they have 5, 10, 15, or 30 minutes here and there that they can devote to their Self-Care.

Take extra-long walks to check the mail, go to the store to get something quick, or simply step away and say you’ll be right back and take a few extra minutes to recharge in another room, etc. These types of ideas can sneak-in a few minutes of much needed and deserved recharging “me” time.

The more creative that caregivers can get, the more inspired they will become.



**“Seek out those golden nuggets of precious “me” time.**

**Chances are, you will find them.”**

- Diane Greenlaw



# Resources



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August  
2023

NATIONAL

Wellness

MONTH

- Breathing Exercises
- Eating Well
- Exercise
- Coping Tips
- Virtual Reality Experience
- Resources

*"We rise by lifting others."*

- Robert Ingersoll

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# August is “National Wellness Month”

## Celebrate Your Awesomeness!

*“Thank you for being such a dedicated Caregiver.”*



### ***Breathing Exercises***

While you do deep breathing, use a picture in your mind and a word or phrase to help you feel more relaxed.

- Close your eyes if they're open.
- Take a few big, deep breaths.
- Breathe in.

As you do that, imagine that the air is filled with a sense of peace and calm.

Try to feel it throughout your body. Breathe out. While you're doing it, imagine that the air leaves with your stress and tension.

- Now use a word or phrase with your breath. As you breathe in, say in your mind, *“I breathe in peace and calm.”*
- As you breathe out, say in your mind, *“I breathe out stress and tension.”*
- Continue for 10 to 20 minutes.

### ***Quick Tips:***

#### ***Take short breaks as often as possible***

Give back to yourself. While it may not be feasible to leave the place where you are providing care, taking short breaks to focus on something else can help you gain a sense of control. You may even want to use your phone to set a timer as a reminder to pause.

#### ***Eat Well***

Heart-healthy eating patterns, such as the Mediterranean diet, are good for overall health and may help protect the brain. A Mediterranean diet includes relatively little red meat and emphasizes whole grains, fruits, vegetables, fish, nuts, olive oil and other healthy fats. Try new recipes and involve the person with dementia.





## **Exercise**

**No doubt you know that exercise is an important part of staying healthy** — it can help relieve stress, prevent disease and make you feel good. But finding the time to exercise is another story.

**Take friends and family members up on their offers to help.** You can get in a good workout in a short amount of time — even a 30 minute break. Help coordinate a schedule where you have breaks to exercise and take care of your health.

- **Start small.** While it is recommended that you get 30 minutes of physical activity at least five days a week, even 10 minutes a day can help. Fit in what you can, and work toward a goal.
- **Exercise at home.** When the person with dementia naps, pull out a yoga mat and stretch, set up a stationary bike, or try exercise tapes.
- **Find something you love.** If you enjoy the activity, it will be easier to make it a habit.

There also are many ways you can be active with the person with dementia. Here are a few ideas:

- Take a walk together outside to enjoy the fresh air
- Go to the mall and take a stroll indoors
- Do seated exercises at home
- Dance together to favorite music
- Garden or do other activities that you both enjoy

## **Coping Tips**

**Manage your level of stress.** Stress can cause physical problems. Note your symptoms and discuss with a doctor. Care for yourself.

**Be realistic.** The care you give does make a difference, but many behaviors can't be controlled. Grieve the losses, focus on positive times as they arise, and enjoy good memories.

**Know you're doing your best.** Remember that the care you provide makes a difference and that you are doing the best you can. You may feel guilty because you can't do more. But, you can always make sure that the person with the disease is well cared for and safe.

**Take a break.** It's normal to need a break from caregiving duties. No one can do it all by themselves. Try new ways to sneak-in some rest and calmness, even if you need to leave the room for a few minutes and hear a song or breath deep. Monitor how you feel and give yourself a break here and there to recharge.



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September  
2023

WORLD



# Alzheimer's MONTH

education nurture activity  
circulation RESPONSIBILITY  
brain health quit smoking  
awareness NUTRITION  
exercise  
PREVENTION cardiovascular  
healthy fats STRENGTH lifestyle  
STRESS dancing laughter writing  
FUN gardening SLEEP reading  
puzzles singing companionship LOVE

- Early Detection and Memory Loss
- 5 Early Signs and Symptoms of Alzheimer's and Dementia
- 5 Steps to Approach Memory Concerns in Others
- Finding a Doctor
- Virtual Reality Experience
- Resources

*"You never know how strong you are ...  
until being strong is the only choice you have."*

- Cayla Mills

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# September is “World Alzheimer’s Month”

*In this edition: Early Detection, Memory Loss, Signs and Symptoms, Steps to Approach Memory Concerns in Others, Finding a Doctor*

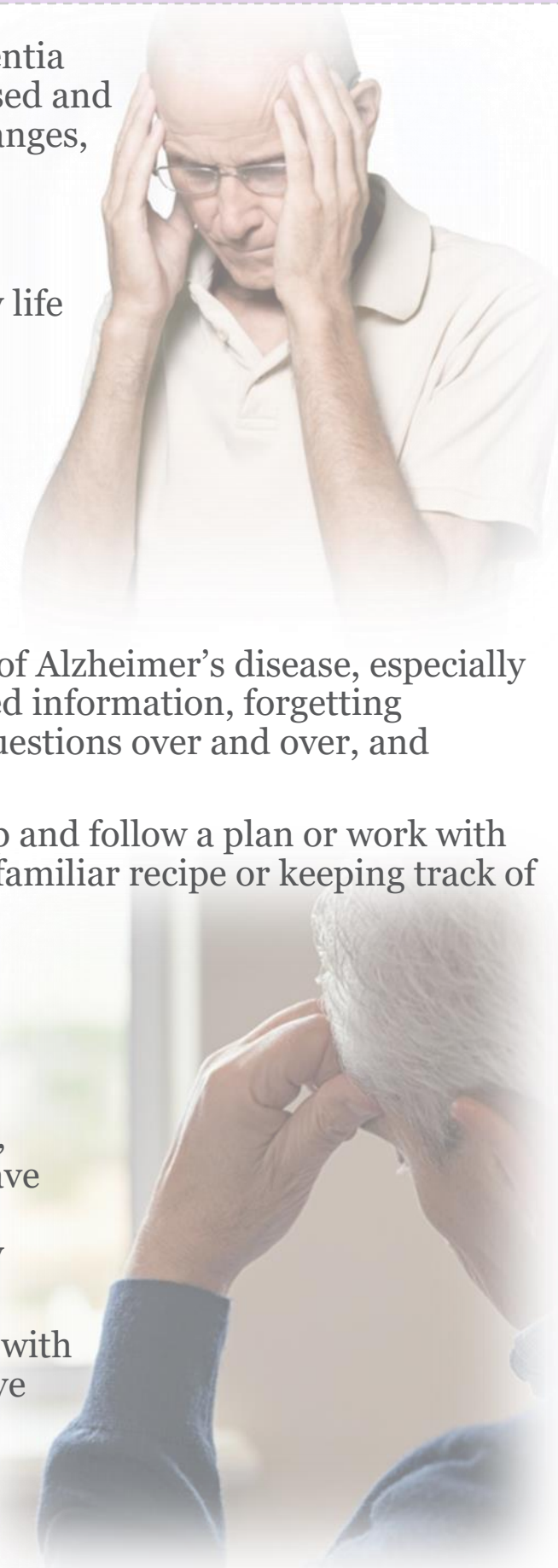
**Early Detection** of Alzheimer's or other dementia offers significant benefits for the person diagnosed and their loved ones. If you or your family notice changes, it could be Alzheimer's or MCI (mild cognitive impairment). Trust yourself, talk to a loved one and see a doctor together.

**Memory Loss** Memory loss that disrupts daily life may be a symptom of Alzheimer's or other dementia. Alzheimer's is a brain disease that causes a slow decline in memory, thinking and reasoning skills.

## 5 Early Signs and Symptoms

### Memory loss that disrupts daily life

- **Forgetting:** One of the most common signs of Alzheimer’s disease, especially in the early stage, is forgetting recently learned information, forgetting important dates or events, asking the same questions over and over, and increasingly needing to rely on memory aids.
- **Planning:** Changes in their ability to develop and follow a plan or work with numbers. They may have trouble following a familiar recipe or keeping track of monthly bills.
- **Completing daily tasks:** They may have trouble driving to a familiar location, organizing a grocery list or remembering the rules of a favorite game.
- **Keeping track:** They can lose track of dates, seasons and the passage of time. They may have trouble understanding something if it is not happening immediately. Sometimes they may forget where they are or how they got there.
- **Vision changes:** This may lead to difficulty with balance or trouble reading. They may also have problems judging distance and determining color or contrast, causing issues with driving.





## 5 Steps to Approach Memory Concerns in Others

- **Assess the situation:** What changes in memory, thinking or behavior do you see? What's the person doing — or not doing — that's out of the ordinary and causing concern?
- **What else might be going on?:** Various conditions can cause changes in memory, thinking and behavior. What are some health or lifestyle issues that could be a factor? Examples include family stress or health issues like urinary tract infections, diabetes or depression.
- **Has anyone else noticed the change(s)?:** Find out if friends and family have seen changes. What are they?
- **Having conversations:** Who should have the conversation to discuss concerns? It could be you, a trusted family member or friend, or a combination. It's usually best to speak one-on-one so the person doesn't feel threatened by a group, but use your best judgment about what will make the person most comfortable.
- **Best time and place for conversations:** Have the conversation as soon as possible. In addition to choosing a date and time, consider where the person will feel most comfortable.

## Finding a Doctor

**Experts estimate** a skilled physician can diagnose Alzheimer's disease with more than 90% accuracy. The first step in following up on symptoms is finding a doctor you feel comfortable with.

**The specialists listed below** can evaluate memory and thinking issues and diagnose dementia. Some people with unclear symptoms, including those under age 65, may require evaluation by two or more specialists who combine their findings to reach a diagnosis.

- **Neurologist**, who specializes in diseases of the brain and nervous system.
- **Psychiatrist**, who are trained in general psychiatry with additional training in mental health and aging.
- **Psychologist**, who has special training in testing to assess thinking abilities, including memory, attention, language, reading and problem-solving skills.
- **Geriatrician**, who specializes in the care of older adults and dementia.

*Accept changes as they occur. People with Alzheimer's disease change over time and so do their needs. They may require care beyond what you can provide on your own. Home care services and/or residential care can make the transition easier. So will the support and assistance of those around you.*



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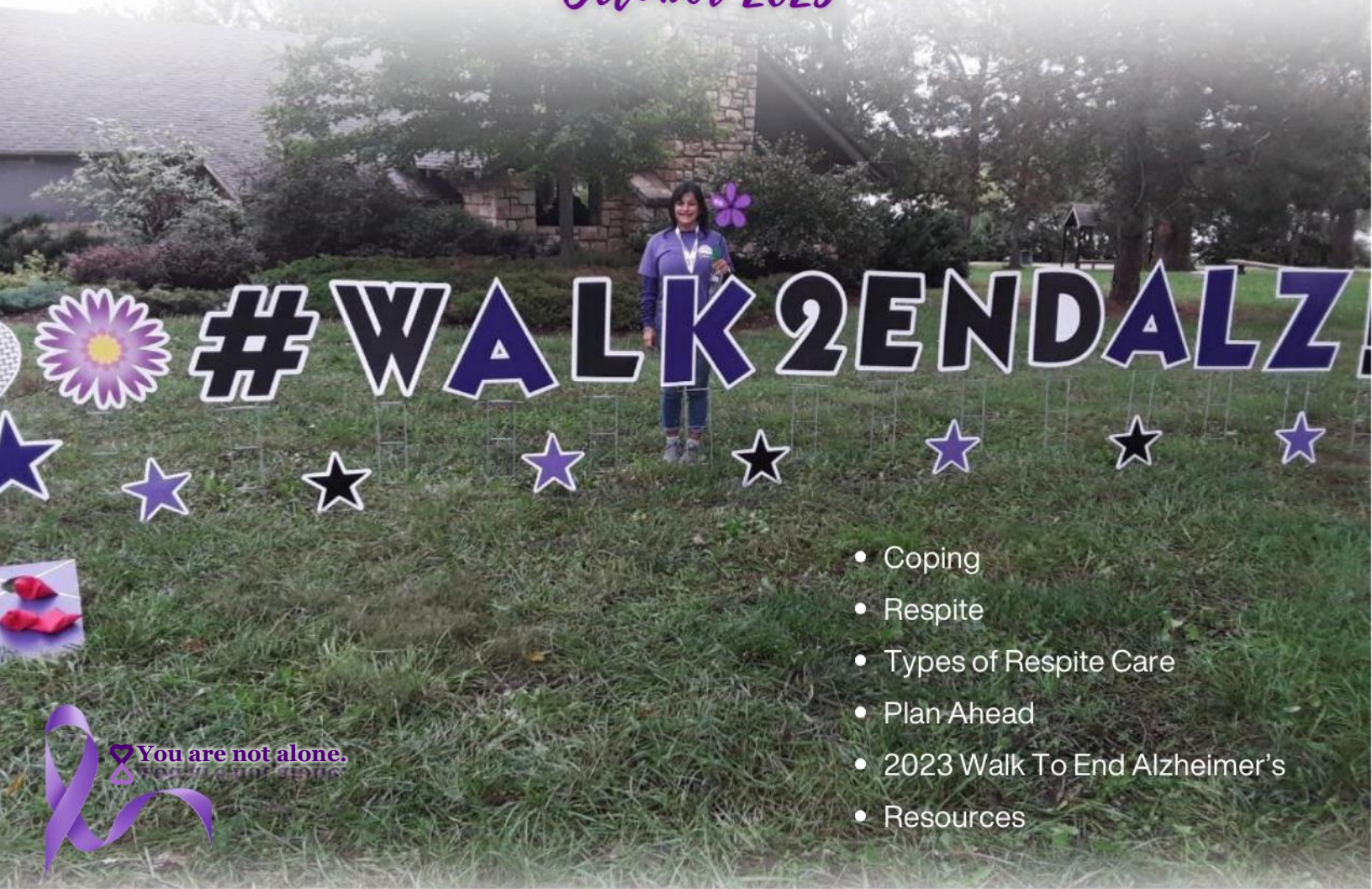
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NATIONAL **Emotional Wellness** MONTH  
*October 2023*



- Coping
- Respite
- Types of Respite Care
- Plan Ahead
- 2023 Walk To End Alzheimer's
- Resources



*"Self-compassion is simply giving the same kindness to ourselves that we would give to others."*

- Christopher Germer

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# October is “National Emotional Wellness Month”

*In this edition: Coping, Respite, Types of Respite, Plan Ahead, 2023 Walk to End Alzheimer’s, Resources*

## **Coping**

**Let family and friends help you.** Take others up on offers to help and ask for help when you need it.

### **Seek out caregiver support.**

Consider respite services, a local caregiver support group or our online community. Building a support network can keep you from feeling isolated.

**Try journaling.** Expressing your emotions in a journal may boost your mood.

### **Learn ways to relax and manage stress.**

Try meditation or yoga to help reduce caregiver stress.

### **Take time for yourself.**

Participate in activities that you enjoy reasoning skills.



## **Respite**

**Respite care can help you as a caregiver** by providing a new environment or time to relax. It's a good way for you to take time for yourself and help provide:

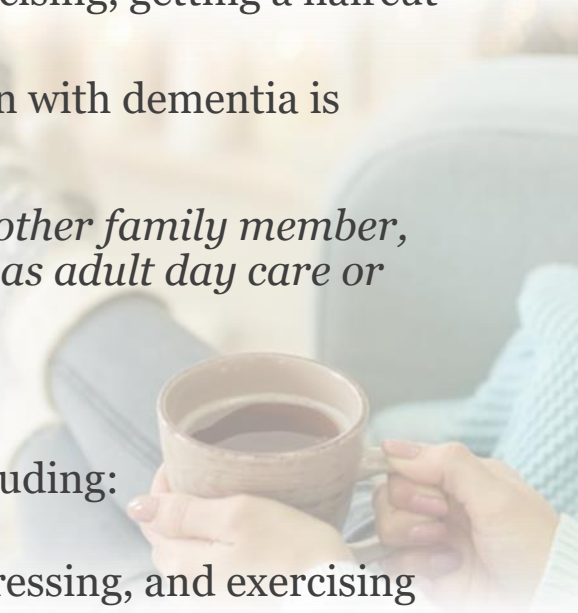
- A chance to spend time with other friends and family, or to just relax
- Time to take care of errands such as shopping, exercising, getting a haircut or going to the doctor
- Comfort and peace of mind knowing that the person with dementia is spending time with another caring individual

*Respite care can be provided at home — by a friend, other family member, volunteer or paid service — or in a care setting, such as adult day care or long-term care community.*

## **Types of Respite Care**

**In-home care services** offer a range of options including:

- Companion services and supervised activities
- Personal care to provide assistance with bathing, dressing, and exercising
- Homemaker or maid services to help with the essentials
- Skilled care services to help with medication and other medical services





## ***Plan Ahead: Respite Care for Unexpected Situations***

Emergencies, unplanned situations or unexpected trips can create a need for immediate care by an alternative caregiver.

Try providers out in a non-emergency situation, so you're ready if the need arises. Also, talk with people you trust — including family, friends and neighbors — about helping out in an emergency. It's a good idea to have contact information for the person with dementia's medical team as well as a list of all current medications (with dosage and frequency taken) easily accessible at all times.



At the Alzheimer's Association Walk to End Alzheimer's®, we're fighting for a different future. For families facing the disease today. For more time. For treatments. We're closer than ever to stopping Alzheimer's. But to get there, we need you. Join us for the world's largest fundraiser to fight the disease.







# 2023

# Walk to End Alzheimer's®

## Alzheimer's Association—Heart of America Chapter Lawrence, KS - October 21, 2023

*Dr. Buenaver's team for the walk is **Heroes with Dementia**.*

*Join us and/or if you wish to make a donation, you can donate on behalf of Maritza Buenaver through her page on the Alz.org website.*

**Go to: [www.Alz.org/WALK](http://www.Alz.org/WALK)**

**Click on "Find a Team"**

**Then, type-in the team name: "Heroes with Dementia"**

**Then, click on "Maritza Buenaver"**



### Schedule of Events:

Venue Opens at 9 a.m. | Ceremony at 10 a.m. | Walk at 10:15 a.m.

### Location:

South Park | 1141 Massachusetts St Lawrence, KS 66044

### Contact:

Margaret Haden | 785-447-0434 | [mhaden@alz.org](mailto:mhaden@alz.org)

## Resources

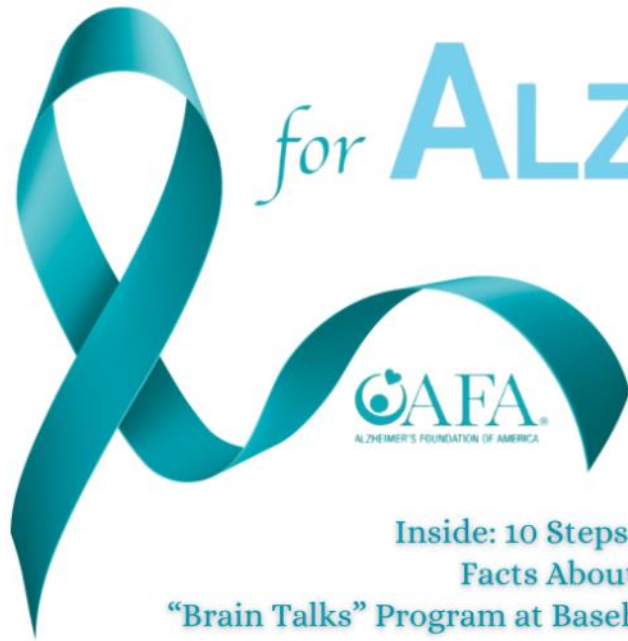


- [www.Facebook.com](https://www.Facebook.com)—Basehor Library—Dementia Caregiver Support Group
- [www.LeavenworthCounty.gov](https://www.LeavenworthCounty.gov)—Council on Aging
- [www.VA.gov/eastern-kansas-health-care/health-services/caregiver-support/](https://www.VA.gov/eastern-kansas-health-care/health-services/caregiver-support/)
- [www.ALZ.org](https://www.ALZ.org)—Alzheimer's Association
- [www.TeepaSnow.com](https://www.TeepaSnow.com)—A Dementia-Care Education Specialist
- [www.mountsb.org/ministries/keeler-womens-center/](https://www.mountsb.org/ministries/keeler-womens-center/) (913-906-8990) Free Services in Kansas City, KS
- [www.ptsd.va.gov/gethelp/help\\_for\\_veterans.asp](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/gethelp/help_for_veterans.asp)
- **CRISIS LINE: 800-273-8255—Free and Confidential**



Alzheimer's Awareness Month  
*November 2023*

I'M GOING **TEAL**  
for **ALZHEIMER'S**  
**AWARENESS.**



#WhyIGoTeal

Inside: 10 Steps to Healthy Aging  
Facts About Alzheimer's  
"Brain Talks" Program at Basehor Community Library, 11/14/23

 You are not alone.  
FOR 916 406 3100

*Light the World in Teal*  
*November 2, 2023*

*More than 1,000 structures around the world will "go teal" this year to raise awareness and show support for the millions of people affected by Alzheimer's.*  
- Alzheimer's Foundation of America

# Dementia Caregiver Support Group

**Basehor Community Library:**

Meets in person and by Zoom on the first Thursday of every month at 6:30 pm

Join us in this safe supportive environment for caregivers.

Dr. Maritza Buenaver, Geriatric Psychiatrist specializing in dementia education, will guide us as we share our experiences. Anyone is welcome to join us.



# November is “Alzheimer’s Awareness Month”

*In this edition: 10 Steps to Healthy Aging, Facts about Alzheimer’s, Dr. Maritza Buenaver’s Talk on 11/14 at the Basehor Library*

**Living a healthy lifestyle** becomes even more important for better aging. The things we do to keep body and heart healthy—nutritious diet, physical activity, and social connections—also can help promote brain health and wellness.

## *10 Steps to Healthy Aging*

**1. Eat Well.** Adopt a low-fat diet high on fruits and veggies, like strawberries, blueberries and broccoli. Take daily vitamins. Limit intake of red meats, fried and processed foods, salt and sugar. In general, foods that are “heart healthy” are also “brain healthy.”

**2. Stay Active.** Physical activity increases blood flow to the brain and can also help improve mood and overall wellbeing.

Brisk walking benefits brain health, while aerobics can boost your heart rate, and weight training builds strength and flexibility.

**3. Learn New Things.** Challenge your brain by starting a new hobby like playing tennis, learning to speak a foreign language, trying a cooking class, or something you haven’t done before. Even something as simple as brushing your teeth with your non-dominant hand stimulates the brain by forcing it to think outside of its normal routine.

**4. Get Enough Sleep.** Getting a consistent sleep every night is key; at least seven to nine hours is ideal. Having a good sleep environment is also helpful. Insomnia or sleep apnea can have serious physical effects and negatively affect memory and thinking.

**5. Mind Your Meds.** Medication can affect everyone differently, especially as you age. When getting a new medication or something you haven’t taken in a while (whether over the counter or prescription), talk to your doctor or local pharmacist.





FACTS ABOUT  
**ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE**

Alzheimer's is a progressive brain disorder, **NOT** a normal part of aging


**MORE THAN 6 MILLION AMERICANS** are living with Alzheimer's

The number of Americans with Alzheimer's is projected to surpass **14 MILLION** by 2060

**MORE THAN 16 MILLION** American caregivers provide **OVER 17 BILLION** hours of unpaid care

**Connect with information and support.**  
Contact AFA's Helpline  
Phone: 866-232-8484 • Text: 646-586-5283 • Web: alzfdn.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
National Institutes of Health (NIH)

 **AFA**  
ALZHEIMER'S FOUNDATION OF AMERICA

**6. Stop Smoking and Limit Alcohol.** Smoking can increase the risk of other serious illnesses, while too much alcohol can impair judgment and cause accidents, including falls, broken bones, and car crashes.

**7. Stay Connected.** Social interaction and maintaining an active social life are very important for brain health, cognitive stimulation and mood. Invite friends and family over for a meal, board games, or just to hang out.

Engaging in your community and participating in group activities is also beneficial.

**8. Know Your Blood Pressure.** Blood pressure can impact your cognitive functioning. Visit your physician regularly to check your blood pressure and make sure it is in normal range.

**9. See Your Doctor.** Maintain checkups. Health screenings are key to managing chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and obesity, all of which can impact brain health. Speak with your physician about any concerns or questions you have about your health.

**10. Get a Memory Screening.** Our brains need regular checkups, just as other parts of our bodies do. A memory screening is a quick, easy, non-invasive exam for our brains.

## Why Teal?

*Teal is the Alzheimer's Awareness color of the Alzheimer's Foundation of America (AFA).*

*AFA uses teal because it has been shown in color psychology studies to be a calming color.*

*This is helpful when designing and decorating spaces and events to be welcoming and comforting to those living with Alzheimer's.*

*So, next time you see someone dressed in teal, remember the more than 6 million people living with Alzheimer's and the help they need.*





# “Brain Talks” The Aging Brain

Date:

**Tuesday, November 14, 2023**

Time:

**6:30–7:30 p.m.**

Location:

**Basehor Community Library  
1400 158th St, Basehor, KS 66007**

*You can't find your glasses  
for the second time today.*

*Or, maybe you can't remember why you  
came into a room?*

*Join us for this final program of our Brain Talks series.*

*Dr. Maritza Buenaver, Geriatric Psychiatrist,  
will present and explain how the brain changes with age:*

- *Exactly what does change*
- *What's normal and what isn't*
- *What are the signs of normal changes  
vs things to be concerned about*
  - *What to do if you need help*
- *How to keep your mind in tip-top shape*

*And, while we can't help you find your glasses, at least we can help you rest easy  
knowing that maybe your moments of forgetfulness are OK.*

## Resources

- [www.Facebook.com—Basehor Library—Dementia Caregiver Support Group](https://www.Facebook.com—Basehor Library—Dementia Caregiver Support Group)
- [www.LeavenworthCounty.gov—Council on Aging](https://www.LeavenworthCounty.gov—Council on Aging)
- [www.VA.gov/eastern-kansas-health-care/health-services/caregiver-support/](https://www.VA.gov/eastern-kansas-health-care/health-services/caregiver-support/)
- [www.ALZ.org—Alzheimer's Association](https://www.ALZ.org—Alzheimer's Association)
- [www.TeepaSnow.com—A Dementia-Care Education Specialist](https://www.TeepaSnow.com—A Dementia-Care Education Specialist)
- [www.mountosb.org/ministries/keeler-womens-center/](https://www.mountosb.org/ministries/keeler-womens-center/)  
(913-906-8990) Free Services in Kansas City, KS
- [www.ptsd.va.gov/gethelp/help\\_for\\_veterans.asp](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/gethelp/help_for_veterans.asp)
- **CRISIS LINE: 800-273-8255—Free and Confidential**



# The Holidays and Alzheimer's

## Older Driver Safety Awareness Month

December 2023



- The Holidays and Alzheimer's
- Adjust Expectations
- Involve The Person Living with Dementia
- Connect Through Technology
- Adapt Gift Giving
- Familiarize Others with The Situation
- Protecting Health
- How Dementia Affects Driving a Motor Vehicle
- Resources

*"You have two hands.  
One to help yourself, and one to help others."*

— Audrey Hepburn

## Dementia Caregiver Support Group

Basehor Community Library:

Meets in person and by Zoom on the first Thursday of every month at 6:30 pm

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Dr. Maritza Buenaver, Geriatric Psychiatrist specializing in dementia education, will guide us as we share our experiences. Anyone is welcome to join us.





## December is “Older Driver Safety Awareness Month”

*In this edition: Holidays and Alzheimer’s, Expectations, Involving Your Loved One, Technology, Gift Giving, Protect Health, Driving, Resources*

### ***The Holidays and Alzheimer’s***

The festive season is typically filled with the joy of sharing, laughter, and the creation of lasting memories. However, for individuals coping with Alzheimer's, the holidays might amplify a unique sense of loss due to the transformations they've undergone. Caregivers often find themselves striving to uphold traditions amidst their caregiving duties.

*The following suggestions offer guidance and creative ideas for safely relishing moments with loved ones during the holiday season.*

### ***Adjust Expectations***

Juggling caregiving responsibilities and holiday traditions can be overwhelming, impacting your physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

Coordinate a pre-holiday discussion with family and friends via phone, video call, or messaging app to ensure everyone comprehends your caregiving situation and safety measures.

Manage expectations realistically, acknowledging the possibility of relinquishing certain roles to create space for new traditions.

Grant yourself permission to undertake only what you can handle safely; this may entail smaller, more relaxed gatherings or none at all.

### ***Involve the Person Living with Dementia***

Ask them to help you prepare food, wrap packages, help decorate or set the table.

Maintain their normal routine as much as possible, so that holiday preparations don't become disruptive or confusing.

Focus on the things that bring happiness and let go of activities that seem overwhelming, stressful or too risky. Taking on too many tasks can wear on both of you.

Build on traditions and memories and experiment with new traditions that might be less stressful or a better fit with your caregiving responsibilities, such as watching seasonal movies that they would like.







## Connect Through Technology

Staying connected during the holidays is still possible, even if you can't be there in person. Utilize video call platforms like Zoom, Facebook Messenger Video Call, or Skype for virtual gatherings. Even a simple phone call can still foster a sense of togetherness during the holidays.

For larger groups, introduce structured activities such as trivia games, singing seasonal songs, or sharing memories through pictures.

## Adapt Gift Giving

Opening gifts over a video call like Zoom, Facebook Messenger Video Call, or Skype or even over a phone call can still feel very personal. Involve your loved one in the gift giving when possible. You may want to buy gifts for them to wrap and, perhaps, they can even give some of those gifts.

If friends or family members ask you what you would like for a gift, you may want to suggest a gift certificate or something that will help make things easier.



## Familiarize Others with The Situation

It's crucial that loved ones recognize these changes are **a result of the disease, not the individual.**

Supporting effective communication involves patience, avoiding interruptions or corrections, and allowing the person sufficient time to express themselves. Responding to their tone can be helpful as well. You can share updates in advance with family and friends through text messages, letters, or emails.

## Protecting Health

Unplanned situations or unexpected trips can create a need for immediate care by an alternative caregiver. Try alternates out in a non-emergency situation, so you're ready if the need arises. Also, talk with people you trust — including family, friends and neighbors — about helping out in an emergency or spontaneous situation. It's also good to have a list of all current medications and dosages.





## ***How Dementia Affects Driving a Motor Vehicle***

The potential hazards of driving for older individuals increase with age-related factors such as diminished vision, impaired hearing, and slower motor reflexes. Aging also impacts essential attributes like strength, coordination, and flexibility, all of which are crucial for maintaining safe driving skills.

Addressing the issue of driving impairment in individuals with dementia, particularly when someone with Alzheimer's insists on driving, requires a collaborative approach. Team up with family, friends, and professionals, employing a unified and straightforward explanation for the loss of driving privileges, such as:

- "You have a memory problem, and it is no longer safe to drive."
- "You cannot drive because you are on medication."
- "The doctor has prescribed that you no longer drive."
- *Ask the doctor to write on a prescription pad,*

***Do Not Drive.***

### ***9 Ways Family Can Help***

1. Offer rides or arrange transportation with friends or family.
2. Embrace walking as an enjoyable activity.
3. Explore public or community-provided transportation options, checking for senior discounts.
4. Temporarily, park the car at a friend's place.
5. Safeguard car keys to limit access.
6. Substitute car keys with non-functional duplicates, sometimes they find comfort in carrying keys.
7. Have a mechanic make an adjustment that will prevent the car from starting.
8. Explore selling the car and allocating the savings to other expenses.
9. Avoid leaving a person with Alzheimer's alone in a parked car.

## **Resources**



- [www.Facebook.com—Basehor Library—Dementia Caregiver Support Group](https://www.Facebook.com—Basehor Library—Dementia Caregiver Support Group)
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