

# Caregiver E-Visit

February 2019

## When Help is Not Welcomed

We are all doing the best that we can with the knowledge and experience we have, but sometimes our communication can go very wrong.

*“I don’t need help.” “Don’t try to tell me what to do.” “You’re trying to put me in one of those places.” “You just want my money.” “I never thought you would treat me like this.” “Please don’t do this to me.”*

You know your mother needs assistance, more than you can give right now, so, you go to her house and tell her that. Why is the first word out of her mouth a resounding “NO!?” Why do you leave feeling frustrated, sad, weak, and guilty? Are you reading the situation wrong? Are you being disrespectful of the person who changed your diapers and cared for you when you were sick?

The answer is no. You’re doing your best to have a conversation that is very difficult for both of you, and this is bringing up painful feelings - for both of you.

Here are a few suggestions that may help. They won’t make this road easy all the time, of course. Situations change, especially when dementia is



involved. Just consider the hints below and keep in mind what may be helpful to you.

### **Understand what “No” really means**

It’s often a knee-jerk response. Denial is a defense we all use as a protective cloak at difficult times. We clutch it tightly until we’re ready to acknowledge a loss. This is a process. You can come back to this discussion later. With time and empathy your loved one’s attitude will likely soften. There are times, though, when only a crisis brings change.

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*For more information or if you wish to make comments on this E-Visit, contact Marilyn Joyce 262-833-8764 or email [marilyn.joyce@racinecounty.com](mailto:marilyn.joyce@racinecounty.com)*

### **Listen more than you act or talk.**

Hear your loved one's feelings and concerns. Walk in his or her shoes for a bit. Listen for the person inside the declining body. Listen for a while without an agenda or a need to convince.

### **Keep a list of observations that concern you and report them as though you were a neutral journalist.**

"I noticed that you were breathing with difficulty after shoveling snow. I was concerned about your heart problem. Describe without degrading.

### **Ask open-ended questions.**

How do you think we should handle upkeep on the house since your doctor says you should not go on ladders?"

### **Make a list of options with pros-and-cons Do this together, if possible.**

**Option:** Hire someone to do laundry so Mom doesn't have to go to the basement.

#### **Pro:**

- Mom will be safer
- Daughter won't worry about her falling downstairs.
- Neither will have to do laundry.
- With laundry out of the way, mother and daughter could do something fun.

#### **Con:**

- It will cost money.

- Mom will be giving up a role she has filled for decades.

"I don't want anyone to see my basement...or my underwear!"

### **Focus on Solutions and their advantages.**

"When we get someone to tend to the yard, we could spend some time at the park and see the grandchildren more often."

### **Propose "temporary" solutions**

"Let's just visit once."

"Let's try having someone do the snow removal for a week or so."

"I need you to go to Harmony Club\* today."

### **Create social reasons for helpers' visits.**

One friend asked for knitting lessons. She wanted to see her neighbor regularly and check on her well-being.

On a special occasion, you could give a gift certificate for some housekeeping or cooking or other needed assistance/certificate. \*Meals on Wheels could be presented as a gift. Volunteers bring lunch and a smile and report when something seems amiss.

### **Find the right messenger – a grandchild? An in-law? Medical provider? Clergy?**

You might be surprised who has that special touch of persuasion in your

loved one's world. The most effective communicator often is not the primary caregiver.

Knowing that someone you love is at risk and admitting that you can't fix the problem now can be agonizing. You may have to live with a situation you're not thrilled with wait, while waiting for the proverbial "other shoe to drop."

Please remember that Caregiver Support Specialists are here for you. You can stay in touch by phone or email; by attending Caregiver Support groups, classes, and other events; and hopefully by reading these newsletters and other resources.

***With help and support, you can take good care of yourself and your loved one with empathy and love.***

\*Our Harmony Club – is a social respite program that provides activities and supervision so folks who need care as that Family Caregivers can have time away.

\*Disease/disability organizations e.g. Alzheimer's Association and Parkinson Disease Association have good information and Helplines to call.

\* The Racine County Senior Nutrition program which includes Meals on Wheels and 7 dining sites in the County can be reached at 262-833-8766. Anyone 60 years or older and spouse of any age are welcome.




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## Announcement

Our Tuesday Caregiver Support Group at Yorkville Methodist Church will soon change from the week of the month. The facilitator will be there on both the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> of February. Thereafter it will only be on the First Tuesday.



AGING AND  
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## Support Groups for Family Caregivers

For caregivers who are over 60 or are caring for someone over 60 and caregivers (of any age) for people who have dementia. Contact: Marilyn Joyce, 833-8764, or [marilyn.joyce@racinecounty.com](mailto:marilyn.joyce@racinecounty.com)

Sometimes we are able to make reminder calls to former attendees about an upcoming Support Group. However, this is not always possible. These groups nearly always happen at the scheduled time and place. If you haven't gotten a call, and you have doubts, please call 262-833-8764 or 262-833-8777. See you there!!

### General Caregiver Groups

**First Friday**  
**12 Noon-1:00 pm**

Caregiver Connection

Telephone Group

Call 833-8762 for call-in  
Information

**Feb 1 Mar 1 Apr 2**

**Second Saturday**  
**10:30 am- 12:00 Noon**

Living Faith Lutheran Church  
2915 Wright Ave, Racine

**Feb 9 Mar 9 Apr 13**

**Third Tuesday** (\*change to  
*FIRST Tuesday in March*)

**1:30-3:00 pm**

Yorkville United Methodist  
Church

17645 Old Yorkville Rd  
(Just off of Highway 20, 3 miles  
West of I-94)

**Feb 5+19 \*Mar 5 Apr 2**

**Third Wednesday**

**1:30-3:00 pm**

Cross Lutheran Church  
126 Chapel Ter, Burlington

**Feb 20 Mar 20 Apr 17**

### Alzheimer's Association Support Groups:

*For families dealing with any  
type of dementia*

**First Thursday**  
**10:30 am -12 Noon**

Bethania Lutheran Church  
4120 Wright Ave, Racine

(Park and enter in the back of the

**Feb 7 Mar 7 Apr 4**

**Second Thursday**  
**6:00 – 7:30 PM**

Bethania Lutheran Church  
4120 Wright Ave, Racine  
(Park and enter in the back of  
building)

**Feb 14 Mar 14 Apr 11**

