

Caregiver E-Visit

November 2018

November's Hero

November is National Family Caregiver Month, started by the National Family Caregiver Association in 1994. Family members, friends, and neighbors devote countless hours to providing care to their relatives or loved ones. In November, we recognize and thank the humble heroes who do so much to keep our families and communities strong. And heroes you are! When people lose the ability to take care of themselves, someone needs to help with daily hygiene tasks, prepare the meals, run the errands, go along to medical appointments, keep the house, see that financial affairs are in order, and provide supervision to ensure safety, and so on. This is called non-medical long-term care.

It's usually not covered by Medicare or most insurance, and studies show that at least 80% of the long-term care in America is provided by unpaid family caregivers like you. Research studies have placed an estimated monetary value on what family caregivers provide. If you would like to see the statistics go to this article by the Family Caregiver Alliance at: <https://www.caregiver.org/caregiver-statistics-demographics> Consider the number of hours you are providing

long term care each week (sometimes virtually every waking hour), and you will have some idea why you deserve to be honored during National Family Caregivers Month and always.



Jane Mahoney, a consultant and guide to those of us who provide Family Caregiver Support, wrote the following: "In hopes of making the lives of caregivers a little easier, here are some tips to read and follow to help you on your caregiving journey."

Anyone who helps an older adult with something he or she used to do without help is a caregiver."

1. Taking care of yourself is just as important as caring for your loved one. You will be able to provide



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



better care for a longer period of time if you yourself are healthy.

2. Involve the person being cared for in making decisions regarding his or her care. Sometimes this is not possible, but keeping the person's wishes in mind is very important.

3. If someone offers to help, allow them the opportunity to help! It is good for everyone when friends or other family members help. Keep a wish list nearby of things you could use help with. When someone offers to help, let them choose off the list. Planning ahead, even before caregiving is needed, will make this situation easier for everybody. First, have a **Plan B**. What will happen if the primary caregiver becomes unable to give care? Who will do what? How will this be communicated? Include the person needing care in planning if feasible. At any rate, keeping that person's wishes in mind is very important. Medical information, Power of Attorney forms, list of medications, insurance information – the more accessible these are, the less time and energy the search will take in a crisis.

4. Planning ahead with advance directives will make caregiving easier in the future. Talk with the person you are caring for about money, medical care and legal issues – complete the Power of Attorney forms. Keep doctor's

names, medication list, insurance information and social security card where you can find them in case of emergency. Contact the ADRC for materials to help with this process.

5. Learning as much as possible about the person's illness or disease will help you be a better caregiver. Get information from your doctor, books, the internet or contact the ADRC for a copy of the Community Resource Directory that lists some of the many organizations that have programs to help. You can also see this directory online at: https://www.adrc.racinecounty.com/site/453/service_directory.aspx.

6. It is normal to feel overwhelmed at times. If you become overwhelmed a lot or if you feel angry or lose your patience frequently, you should seek help from your doctor or a counselor. Talking things over with a Caregiver Support Specialist or Support Group may help you decide what steps to take.

7. It is critical to develop a support system. Talking about your feelings with family or friends is important. Sharing with others who are going through similar experiences can be especially helpful. Consider attending a support group.

Caregivers who get help are more likely to provide better care for a longer period of time. They also "burn out" less often. Consider hiring someone to assist with household chores, meal prep, personal cares or respite care.

You may feel a little embarrassed to be called a Hero. You may think of the times when you lose your patience or when you feel overwhelmed and wish this caregiving role on someone else (or just want it to be over.) At times like these, you may be tempted to call yourself a wimp or worse, but you must understand that these are all typical feelings for family caregivers. We are all humans with ups and downs and we all have love to share the best we can.

Pause now and **honor** yourself as

you take several deep, relaxing breaths. Accept all the **help** you can get. Find ways to keep **fun** in your life. **Take good care of yourself.**

You Are November's Hero!



Courage doesn't always roar

Sometimes Courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day which says,

"I will try again tomorrow"

Techniques

Stress is a very familiar word to caregivers everywhere. In fact, it may become as automatic as breathing. Family caregivers are very prone to chronic stress, which can lead to serious health problems. Here are five simple do-anywhere antidotes to the havoc of chronic stress. They have been shown to bring on a relaxation response – a chemical transformation, which may last about 20 minutes. Use these, and other techniques you enjoy, to form frequent, soothing habits.

Give yourself 5

Developed by Paula Spencer Scott

1. You could take five (literal) steps back from the situation if your loved one with dementia has become belligerent.
2. Count to five before you answer if you're stuck in a cycle of repeated

questions or comments.

3. Take five whole minutes to yourself (set a timer!) if you're just worn out. While you relax, put on a surefire calming television program or hand the person with dementia a favorite snack and leave the room (if you're sure he or she will be safe).

4. When you can't escape physically, imagine five nice things you'd do for yourself if you could. Sometimes just picturing a spa day or a chocolate cake in vivid detail is a tiny bit like experiencing the real thing.

5. Take five deep breaths: Inhale deeply through the nose, hold it for a count of five, then let it out slowly through the mouth. Repeat five times. Nobody will notice you're stepping back from the edge of a cliff as you breathe.



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

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

Nov 7 Dec 7 Jan 4

Second Saturday
10:30 am- 12:00 Noon

Living Faith Lutheran Church
2915 Wright Ave, Racine

Nov 10 Dec 8 Jan 12

Third Tuesday
1:30-3:00 pm

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

Nov 20 Dec 18 Jan 15

Third Wednesday
1:30-3:00 pm

Cross Lutheran Church
126 Chapel Ter, Burlington

Nov 21 Dec 19 Jan 16

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
building)

Nov 1 Dec 6 Jan 3

Second Thursday
6:00 – 7:30 PM

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

Nov 8 Dec 13 Jan 10

