

Maintaining Friendships

Being a caregiver is a fulltime job and it might seem hard to maintain friendships when you are so busy caring for a loved one. Here are some tips from *liftcaregiving.com* on how to stay friends with people even when your time is limited.

- **Keep in touch:** Put effort into trying to stay in touch with your friends even though you might not have as much time to spend with them as you used to. Communication will show your friends that while you might not be there in person you are still thinking about them.
- **Try to make routine plans:** If you set aside one day in a week/month that is reserved for your friends and it always falls on the same day, it is much easier to work out a plan for someone to care for your loved one while you are gone. Planning ahead can help you make time for your friends.
- **Don't vent too much:** It is great to vent to friends about life, but try to limit this to a certain amount of time. As much as your friends care about you and want to hear about your life, it is good to talk about other things as well.
- **Not all your friendships will last:** There is such a thing as a fair weather friend. Some of your friends might not want to adapt to your role as a caregiver. This is not your fault, but preparing yourself for the fact that some people might look at caregiving as intimidating can help you get over lost friendships.
- **Make new friends:** Attending caregiver support groups, memory cafes, or special events in the community will help you connect with others who are on a similar journey and will provide opportunities to build new friendships.

Lunch Bunch Memory Café

The **Lunch Bunch Memory Café** is a place to meet with others diagnosed with Alzheimer's or dementia and their care partner in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Once a month, this group offers a chance for everyone to have some fun and share a positive experience in a supportive environment. It's a place to talk with others who may be on a very similar journey and to learn, "You are not alone".



When: This group meets the last Tuesday of every month

Time: 11:30am—1:00pm

Location: Black River Beach Neighborhood Center
1433 Rose Street
La Crosse, WI 54603

Lunch & beverage provided at a suggested donation of \$4 per person

Topics: Art, music, humor, health and wellness topics will be featured at each café. Details will be announced on monthly invites.

If you would like more information, or to be added to our mailing list, please contact:
Amy Brezinka with the La Crosse County Aging Unit
at **608.785.3460** or email at: abrezinka@lacrossecounty.org

Caregiver Support Groups

Support Group for Persons with Dementia and Care Partners

When: 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of the Month from 3pm to 4pm

Where: Village on Cass, 225 South 24th Street, La Crosse

Contacts: Chris Brown, Terry Fleming and Art Peek at 608-392-9505

NEW Family Support Group—Alzheimer's/Dementia

When: 2nd Wednesday of the month from 6pm-7pm

Where: Bluffview Memory Care, 2101 Bluffview Court, Holmen

Contact: Bluffview Memory Care Management Team at 608-526-5864

Caregiver Support Group

When: 4th Wednesday of the month at 1:15pm

Where: Hillview Health Care Center—Sunshine Room

3501 Park Lane Drive, La Crosse

Contact: Nikki Weisenberger at 608-789-4867

Caregiver Support Group

When: 2nd Thursday of the month at 1pm

Where: Lakeview Health Center, 902 E Garland Street, West Salem

Contact: Luann Rose at 608-786-1400 ext. 40155

Caregiver Support Group— *A group for Women caring for someone with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder*

When: Every Monday from 8:30am—Noon

Where: Perkin's in Onalaska—9428 Wisconsin 16, Onalaska, WI

Contact: Mitch Mader at 608-519-0753

Parkinson's Support Group

When: 4th Tuesday of each month from 2pm-4pm

Where: Gundersen Health System

Contact: Julie Halzwarth at 608-775-2789

Great Rivers 2-1-1 ~ For more information about area support groups dial 2-1-1



Stress levels 'too high' in Americans

"Stress: It's surprising implications for health" | www.medicalnewstoday.com | February 25, 2015

Earlier this month, the APA released their annual "Stress in America" Survey, which assesses the attitudes and perceptions of stress and identifies its primary causes among the general public.

The survey, completed by 3,068 adults in the US during August 2014, revealed that the primary cause of stress among Americans is money, with 72% of respondents reporting feeling stressed about finances at some point over the past month. Of these, 22% said they had felt "extreme stress" in the past month as a result of money worries.

The second most common cause of stress among Americans was found to be work, followed by the economy, family responsibilities and personal health concerns.

On a positive note, average stress levels among Americans have decreased since 2007. On a 10-point scale, respondents rated their stress levels as 4.9 last year, compared with 6.2 in 2007. However, the APA say such levels remain significantly higher than the 3.7 stress rating we consider to be healthy.

"This year's survey continues to reinforce the idea that we are living with a level of stress that we consider too high," says Norman B. Anderson, CEO and executive vice president of the APA, adding: "All Americans, and particularly those groups that are most affected by stress - which include women, younger adults and those with lower incomes - need to address this issue sooner than later in order to better their health and well-being."

2-Minute Stress Solutions

Research uncovers the fastest ways to reduce tension—and actually change your brain for the better

Two minutes to calm

When we were five, we might have sucked our thumbs for stress relief. As adults, many of us self-soothe with junk food, a glass (or two) of wine, maybe some mindless TV. But those are fixes that don't actually fix anything. Luckily, recent studies reveal some easy ways to lift your spirits and lower your stress that actually create positive shifts in your brain and body.

"Stress triggers the release of the hormone cortisol, which can damage our brains and weaken our cardiovascular and immune systems over time," says neuropsychologist Rick Hanson, PhD, the author of *Buddha's Brain*. We asked experts for their best instant mood boosters, backed by the latest research in nutrition, psychology, and neuroscience. Follow these tips and you'll be saying "aah" in no time.



Put on a Happy Face - Smiling soothes you, even if you're just going through the motions. A University of Wisconsin study found that people who'd had Botox injections were less prone to anger because they couldn't express it. What's the lesson? Just fake it 'til you make it.

Dig in the Dirt - According to a 2011 Dutch study published in the *Journal of Health Psychology*, 30 minutes of gardening reduces stress levels more effectively than 30 minutes of reading quietly in a room. The researchers say it's the result of physical activity. But perhaps the secret lies in the dirt itself. A few studies have shown a link between a common bacterium (*M. vaccae*) found in garden soil and increased serotonin levels, meaning less anxiety and better concentration. Gardeners may inhale this bacterium while digging in the soil.



Nibble on Chocolate - "A Johns Hopkins University study found that the taste of sweetness on your tongue causes a surge of feel-good endorphins," Somer says. Also, dark chocolate contains compounds called flavonoids that also affect mood: According to a 2010 study published in the *Journal of Psychopharmacology*, cocoa flavonoids improved both mental acuity and attitude.

Additionally, in a 2009 study by the American Chemical Society, eating a mere 1.4 ounces of dark chocolate daily lowered stress hormone levels. The key is to limit yourself to just a few bites, since the sugar in chocolate can cause a crash later. "Plus, when you binge on anything, your blood is diverted to your gut away from your brain and muscles, which leaves you feeling tired," Somer says.

Give Yourself a Hug - When you think negatively about yourself, the brain's amygdala sends signals that increase blood pressure and raise adrenaline and cortisol levels. Researcher Kristin Neff, PhD, at the University of Texas, recommends the "surreptitious self-hug"—wrapping your arms around yourself and squeezing. Even your own touch releases oxytocin and other biochemicals that promote well-being.



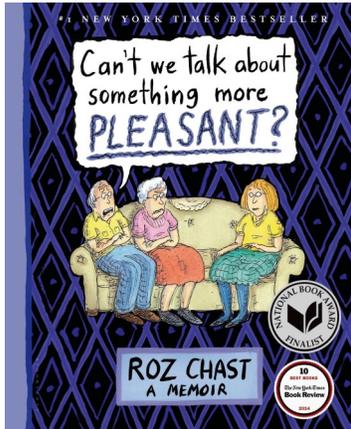
Just Move It A Little - John Ratey, MD, a Harvard Medical School professor and the author of *Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain*, says just two minutes of exercise is enough to change your mood, as long as you raise your heart rate. "Anything from squats to jumping jacks supplies a surge of neurotransmitters, such as norepinephrine, dopamine, and serotonin—the same targets as antidepressants," he says.

By, Jessica Baumgardner @ www.prevention.com

Books & Movies

Spotlight Book on Caregiving

Can't We Talk about Something More Pleasant?: A Memoir
By: Roz Chast



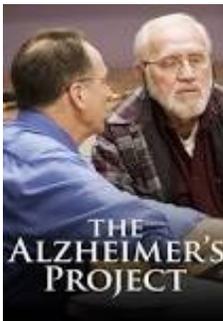
In this book the author recounts her experiences caring for her elderly parents. The author shows the difficulties of switching roles with ones parents and caring for them. She does this through retelling family stories, illustrating issues through comics and putting a funny spin on some very serious issues.

This book is available through several branches of the Winding Rivers Library System including La Crosse Main.

Helpful Websites:

- **www.liftcaregiving.com** - This website contains many interesting pieces under their “Articles” tab. Some of the topics of the articles include “How to ask a sibling for help,” “How to for new family caregivers,” and “Changing roles when caring for a loved one.”

Spotlight Movie on Caregiving



The Alzheimer's Project is a documentary comprised of five different stories about families dealing with Alzheimer's. The film shows the difficult choices that caregivers have to make regarding their loved ones. It also shows how caregivers deal with the pressure of being responsible for a loved one 24/7.

This movie is available through the Winding Rivers Library System at the West Salem and Westby branches.



Still Alice: Dr. Alice Howland (Julianne Moore) is a renowned linguistics professor at Columbia University. When words begin to escape her and she starts becoming lost on her daily jogs, Alice must come face-to-face with a devastating diagnosis: early-onset Alzheimer's disease. As the once-vibrant woman struggles to hang on to her sense of self for as long as possible, Alice's three grown children must watch helplessly as their mother disappears more and more with each passing day.

This movie is currently showing at Marcus Theatres in La Crosse.

For more information go to: <http://www.hbo.com/alzheimers/caregivers.html>

Tips for Care Partners

Basic Tips for Care Partners

Several tips on how to behave as caregivers of loved ones with dementia will help ease your loved ones' anxiety and help you have satisfying relationships, even as your roles change with respect to each other. The goal is to allow them to keep their dignity and autonomy as much as possible while providing them with the help they need. Following certain tips that often work with any form of dementia will help you reach this goal.

Approaching a Person with Dementia: Use a Positive Approach

For many caregiving tasks, using the following approach will help your loved ones better understand what is going on and reduce anxiety, especially in middle to late stages of dementia.

- **Approach from the front:** This will help loved ones with dementia be aware that you are coming. Approaching from the back can produce anxiety.
- **Walk slowly:** Allow time for loved ones with dementia to take in that you are approaching
- **Stand to their sides:** This is a supportive stance, whereas standing right in front of them may feel confrontational
- **Call them by name:** Use their names just to get their attention. As dementia progresses they may respond best to their first names, because they often remember them the best
- **Crouch low:** Crouching down if they are seated or lying down helps him/her feel less threatened.
- **Offer your hand:** Their responses to this gesture will give you an idea of whether they would welcome further touch such as hugs.

Getting the Cooperation of Persons with Dementia

- Use the positive approach described above
- Keep instructions short, simple, and concrete. Also use visual and tactile (touch) cues
- Offer simple choices rather than asking yes or no questions
- Ask for their help
- Ask them to try
- Break it down in simple steps
- If it does not go well, back off, review your approach compared to these guidelines, and try again

Source: <http://www.dementiacarecentral.com/caregiverinfo/tips>



Medicare Simplified for You & Your Loved One

Are you a caregiver and caring for an elderly or disabled family member on Medicare? Help your loved one by understanding Medicare and changes to Medicare in 2015.

Date: Thursday, March 26th, 2015

Location: St. Paul's Lutheran Church
(420 West Ave., La Crosse)
Entrance—use side doors
Parking—next to the church
and across the street from
Division St.

Time: 10:00 to 11:30 am

Fee: Free!

Speaker: Tina Johnson
Elder Benefit Specialist, Aging
& Disability Resource Center of
Western Wisconsin

Program Sponsored by:
La Crosse County Aging Unit &
Aging and Disability Resource Center
of Western Wisconsin

MEDICARE		HEALTH INSURANCE	
1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)			
NAME OF BENEFICIARY JOHN DOE			
MEDICARE CLAIM NUMBER 000-00-0000-A		SEX MALE	
IS ENTITLED TO HOSPITAL (PART A)		EFFECTIVE DATE 01-01-2007	
MEDICAL (PART B)		01-01-2007	
SIGN HERE			

Bring your questions.



For more information, please call
The La Crosse County Aging Unit at 785-6438.

Tax Information



It's that time of year again. Do you need help with your taxes? AARP provides a tax aide to help seniors with their taxes. If you would like help with taxes or have more questions about this program contact the La Crosse Public Library at 608-789-7100.

"No matter how long the winter, spring is sure to follow." ~Proverb

Community Events

Free Library Events in La Crosse

Here are a list of some fun events happening in La Crosse in March and April. If you can take, a few hours to yourself to enjoy these events or even make arrangements to take your loved one with you.

- **March 18th:** Film Freaks program at the La Crosse Main Library. At 6:30pm the library will be showing the film *The Hustler* from 1961.
- **April 1st:** Film Freaks program at the La Crosse Main Library. At 6:30pm the library will be showing the film *Breaking Away* from 1979.
- **April 2nd:** Adult card making crafting class at the Southside La Crosse Library. This is a free program that will run from 1-3pm. Registration is required prior to the event. Please call 608-789-7103 to register.
- **April 28th:** The La Crosse County Genealogical Society will be hosting a class where you can come and learn the best ways to research your family history. This class will be held from 6:00-7:45pm in the La Crosse Main Library Auditorium.

Cultural Integration Event

The Hmong Senior Nutrition Site in partnership with the Hmong Education Project will be offering a Cultural Integration Program at the Hmong Senior Site.

- **When:** Wednesday, March 18, 2015 from 11:10am to 12:00pm
- **Where:** Hmong Cultural and Community Center, 1815 Ward Avenue, La Crosse

A buffet of various Hmong food will be served. Staff and volunteers from the Hmong Education Project will be available to explain what you see and answer your questions. All who are age 60 and better are encouraged to join the Hmong elders for delicious Hmong food and exchange stories and culture.

Please *RSVP* to Va Thao at the La Crosse County Aging Unit at 608.785.6438 by March 16, 2015.

Still Seeking Participants for an Online Survey

Caring for Aging Populations: Examining Compassion Fatigue & Satisfaction

Your participation could help the researcher examine the experience of caregivers for aging populations.

Qualifications for Participation:

- Currently (for 6 months or longer) providing care to an individual who is 65 years of age or older.
- You must choose one of the following three categories which best describes you:
 - Formal Caregiver (Employed in a Caregiver Role)
 - Adult Child (Caring for Aging Parent)
 - Spouse/Partner (Caring for Significant Other)
- You must be eighteen years of age or older
- Must have access to the internet for the online survey
- Can read and comprehend eighth grade English

Next Steps:

- Contact the researcher: sjthorsonolesen@viterbo.edu
- Review an Informed Consent Form for more information about the study.
- Follow a link to the online survey (estimated time for participation is approximately 15 minutes)

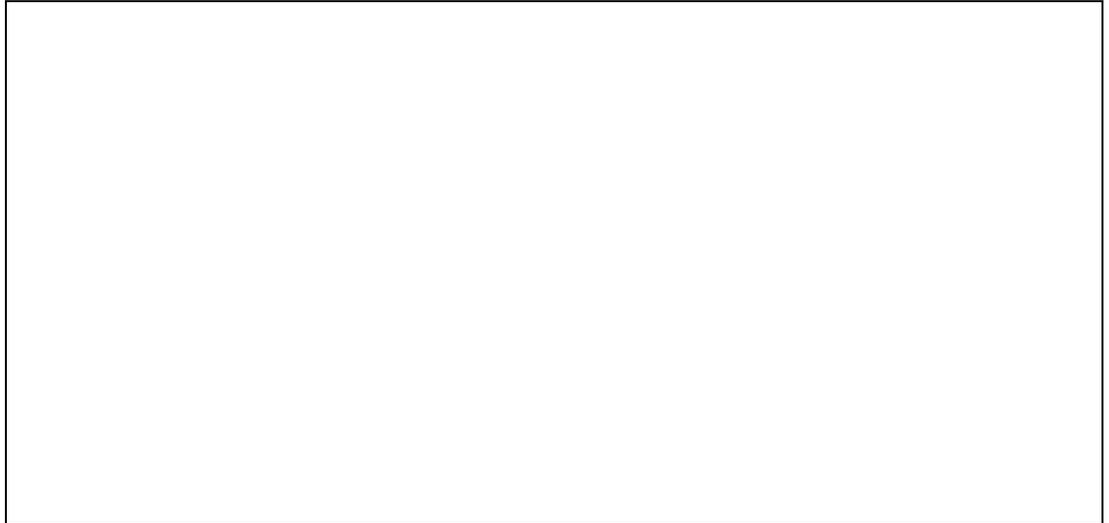
For more information, please contact: Dr. Stephanie Thorson-Olesen at 608-796-3718.

Participation is voluntary and involvement will be kept confidential. Your willingness to participate in this survey is greatly appreciated, as the researcher strives to better understand and ultimately enhance the experience of caregivers. Thank you for your time and consideration!



La Crosse County Aging Unit
County of La Crosse, Wisconsin
Administrative Center • Room 2260
400 4th Street North • La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601-3200
(608) 785-9710 • FAX: (608) 785-6135
web site: www.co.la-crosse.wi.us

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Family Caregivers Newsletter

March/April 2015

La Crosse County Aging Unit
400 4th Street North, Room 2260
La Crosse, WI 54601-3200
608-785-9710
www.co.la-crosse.wi.us/aging/

Newsletter Editor:

Amy Brezinka, Program Coordinator
Caregiver Coach Program
608.785.3460
abrezinka@lacrossecounty.org

The **La Crosse County Aging Unit** provides information and services that promote independence, and support the dignity of Seniors by allowing choices for living in and giving to their community.

Programs & Services include:

- Home-delivered Meals
- Meal Sites
- Elder Benefit Specialist
- Transportation
- Caregiver Coach Program
- Caregiver Support & Education
- Gifted Hands
- Senior Farmers' Market
- Nutritional Supplements
- Wellness & Prevention
- Senior Life Newsletter

