

THE GUIDED LIGHT

LA CROSSE COUNTY'S DEMENTIA NEWSLETTER
FOR HOPE, SUPPORT, AND RESOURCES

"Self Care and Caregiving"

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CAREGIVER?

Being a caregiver comes in many different forms but usually has many of the same expectations and activities involved. Caregiving can range from stopping by your loved ones' home once in awhile, checking in on someone from a social group, setting up services for someone from states away, to daily assistance with transfers and meal prep and everything in between. Even if you don't live in the same home but you are "on call" as their main contact; you're a caregiver. It's also important to note that caregiving has no age limit; both young and old provide care.

Everyone will likely be a caregiver at some point in their life. Despite the fact that caregiving affects us all, we don't talk enough about the impacts it has on our daily lives. Especially for people caring for someone with dementia, when symptoms associated with this diagnosis, can be especially difficult. Caregivers are told to practice "good self-care" and "take time for you". While this is important, we have to ask ourselves, What does that actually mean? What does self-care look like for you? We will explore that in this edition.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR CAREGIVING



Caregiving doesn't have to be done alone and reaching out doesn't mean you aren't doing a good job; it's part of doing the job!

There are many resources in La Crosse County and throughout the State designed to support caregivers for individuals with dementia. Here are a few to check out!

1) Aging and Disability Resource Centers - Dementia Care Specialist and Caregiver Support Specialist (608)785-5700
"Information & Assistance", phone consultations, home or office visits, family meetings, caregiver activities, support groups, access to grants and more!

2) Wisconsin Department of Health Services
Wisconsin Family Caregiver Support Program, find out more here:
wisconsin caregiver.org or call 608-785-5700

3) Coulee Region OASIS Caregiver Respite (608)780-0471
Offering a break for caregivers from daily tasks, and ensures your loved one is cared for properly. Located in Onalaska

4) La Crosse Parks and Recreation Programming (608)519-2088
Offering education on dementia as well as caregiver opportunities.

Self-Care is not
about
self-indulgence,
it's about
self-preservation

-Audrey Lorde

SELF-CARE WHILE CARING FOR OTHERS

Caring for a loved one who is chronically ill is never easy. You are often “on call” most of the time. It makes it hard to juggle the other parts of your life leaving little time for yourself. Watching the subtle changes in your loved one may cause stress and be difficult to cope.

It's normal to have a lot of conflicting feelings. It is not normal for these feelings to last for a long time or to disrupt your life. Being a caregiver can be hard. Some doctors think of caregivers as “hidden patients.” Studies show that caregivers are much more likely than non-caregivers to suffer from health problems like depression and anxiety.

Everyone experiences bad days, but as a caregiver, more bad days than good can lead to burn-out and compassion fatigue. Burn out ultimately lowers the quality of care you are able to provide and affects your own health. As important as the role of caregiving is, it is equally as important to take care of yourself. Below are a few suggestions on how to engage in self-care as a caregiver.

1) Join a support group / stay socially connected

There are many support groups in the La Crosse area that you can attend and discuss your situation with people who are able to empathize with you. Knowing that you are not alone and that you have resources is very important to your mental health.

2) Consider a break

Respite care provides short-term relief from caregiving duties and can be done as long as you feel comfortable, whether that be for an afternoon or daily; this break recharges you but also can be a fun activity for your care recipient.

3) Maintain good eating and hygiene habits

Check out Gundersen Health Systems health and wellness blog for information on healthy lifestyles, including eating, exercise, and more! <https://www.gundersenhealth.org/health-wellness/eat>

4) Play! Remember to have fun and savor the little moments

As dementia progresses, short-term memory is lost relatively early while long term sticks around for a while. Engaging in playful activities can promote a positive attitude and reduce stress. Some suggestions for play activities could be: Dancing and singing, people or bird watching, find and seek scavenger hunts. Be patient and supportive, encourage yourself and your care recipient to explore, have fun and laugh!

One Minute Relax

These one-minute stress strategies are simple, and they can make a real difference in how you handle stress. We encourage you to try them!

Tension release:

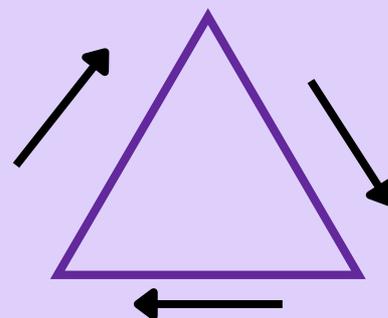
Set a timer, take a deep breath and hold it as you curl your toes for about 5 seconds, then let your breath all go.

Next clench your calves, thighs, buttocks, arms, shoulders, jaws and finally squeeze your eyelids.

Feel the tension leave your body —
aaah!

4-4-4 Triangle Breathing:

Slow it down to soothe mind and body



1. Inhale with sound through your nose to the count of four, 'traveling' up the left side of the triangle
 2. Hold your breath to the count of four 'traveling' down the right side of the triangle
 3. Exhale quietly through your mouth to the count of four, across the bottom of the triangle
- Repeat for four breath cycles, and ideally whenever you need a 'break'

SELF-CARE IS MORE THAN RELAXING...

Let's make this clear: Self-Care is *individual* and it's about taking care of ALL dimensions of self! This includes your mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, and social health. In order to care for your well-being -or engage in good self-care- it is important to find a balance that allows you to address each of these areas in some capacity. How much you need from each area is individual. Sometimes you might need more self-care in one area, in order to restore balance or find relief in your life, than others, but it is important to have a mix of them all. To get you thinking about what you may need or what you could try to incorporate into your life; consider the following:

Mental Self-Care



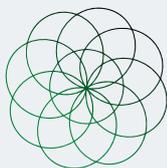
This is about doing things that keep your mind sharp, like puzzles or learning something new. You might find reading books or watching movies on topics of interest fuel your mind. Then there is also the way we think that impacts our mental well-being. Practicing self-compassion, acceptance and positive reframe can help you maintain a healthier inner dialogue. Are you making enough time for activities that mentally stimulate you? Do you see things as "glass half full or glass half empty?"

Physical Self-Care



How are you fueling your body? This can be with the foods you eat, how much and the quality of sleep you get, how physically active you are, and how well you're caring for your physical needs. Also important for good physical care are things like attending healthcare appointments and taking medication as prescribed.

Emotional & Spiritual Self-Care



Healthy coping skills are important to deal with uncomfortable emotions. Do you have activities that help you acknowledge, process and express your feelings regularly and safely, as well as activities that recharge you? Similarly, we must nurture our spirit. This could be anything that helps you develop a deeper sense of meaning, understanding, or connection outside oneself. Whether you enjoy meditation, attending religious services, praying or being in nature, these activities provide a deep sense of fulfillment.

Social Self-Care



Close connections are important to your well-being. There isn't a certain number of hours recommended. The key is to figure out your optimal social needs and build time in your schedule. To assess, consider: Are you getting enough face-to-face time with your friends? What are you doing to nurture your relationships with friends and family? Are relationships from others filling your cup?

How did your self-care check out?

Need support?

Call the dementia care specialist! 608-386-0767



UPCOMING ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

October
November
December



The Remember Project Live Events **SAVE THE DATES!** to LaCrosse, Wisconsin



Fortune Cookies
by Bonnie Dudovitz

Steering into the Skid
by Arnold Johnston & Deborah Ann Percy

THURS. OCT. 13, 4:30PM SKID

FRI. OCT. 14, 11:00AM FORTUNE COOKIES

Altra Credit Union Operations Center -
Onalaska

Registration Required: ADRC 608-785-5700

Encore Showings:

Nov. 1st 4:30pm Fortune Cookies

Nov. 2nd 11:00am Steering into Skid

*free on-site respite.

Call Black River Beach 608-789-8640

Grief Education for Care Partners (Late Stage/End of Life)

10/26 Palliative Care, 11/9 Ambiguous Loss, 12/14 Holidays & Grief

10-11:30am Community Connections 1407 St Andrew Street, LaX

To register: 608-519-2088

SPARK! 3rd Wednesday of Month, 10:30am-12:00pm

10/19 Autumn, 11/16 Friendsgiving, 12/21 Christmas

Clearwater Farm Onalaska | 760 Green Coulee Rd

Registration Required: Call Amber 608-385-4819

A free cultural program that actively engages people living with dementia and their caregivers

October Memory Cafes

10/21, 12-2pm "Equestrian Therapy" HorseSense unmounted activities. Register by 10/5. 608-785-5700

10/25, 10-11am "Fall Harvest" Fun and Activity to wrap up the year. At Black River Beach 1433 Rose St. La Crosse.

Connect Smart

2nd & 4th WEDNESDAYS: Oct 13&27, Nov 9&23, Dec 14*

12:30-2:00pm 1407 St Andrew Street, La Crosse

Physical, social, and cognitive engagement for persons with dementia. Care partner support and education is offered in a separate room. Register: 608-519-2088

Club Connectivity

10/10&24, 11/14 & 12/12 - times and location vary

For care partners and people living with Early Onset Dementia/Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI). The Club provides a warm, welcoming atmosphere for fun and to stay socially connected to the community. Questions& Register: 608-519-2088

Dementia Caregiver Education Hour

12:30-2pm Community Connections 1407 Saint Andrews St, LaX

Join us in viewing recorded webinars on a variety of topics.

10/31:Palliative Care, 11/28:Family Conflict & Changes in Support.

Grief and Ambiguous Loss in Caregiving

October 24th, 10:30am-2:30pm

Black River Beach Neighborhood Center, 1433 Rose St. LaX

We will explore the experience of grief and loss along the caregiving journey. Presentation, Lunch & Caregiver Panel.

Must Register: 608-785-5700.



**SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 12, 2022
12-2:30PM**

**HOLMEN COMMUNITY CENTER
600 N. HOLMEN DRIVE
HOLMEN, WI**

- Intergenerational activities & Therapy Pets
- Play "Grandpa & Lucy" 1pm - 2:15pm

A story about building positive relationships between children and aging adults. This play cultivates conversations around empathy and focuses on raising awareness about Alzheimer's and dementia. Ideal for grades 1-5 and their families

Register with ADRC 608-785-5700

Join us! Community Conversation: A listening session to hear from you as we assess community dementia care needs. Share challenges, solutions and priorities. Input from the session will be incorporated in the 2024-28 WI State Dementia Plan. Register by calling 608-785-5700

Thursday December 8th 10:30am-Noon (Forum begins at 11am)
First Free Church 123 Mason St. Onalaska, WI 54650, Refinery Room

For up-to-date offerings, check out the La Crosse ADRC Calendar:

www.lacrossecounty.org/adrc/calendar.asp?View=MonthlyView&AppID=3

Find listings for virtual caregiver resources and events on the Wisconsin Caregiver website:

<http://wisconsin-caregiver.org/virtual-events-for-caregivers>

For WI Alzheimer's Association Monthly Education & Support go to: <https://www.alz.org/wi> and scroll to bottom of page.

For a listing of La Crosse Area Dementia Caregiver Support Groups: Call the ADRC 608-785-5700

