



In Care of You

A newsletter for Caregivers from Greene County Council on Aging

June 2023

Anticipatory grief

Anticipatory grief is the deep sorrow one feels when faced with a significant change or loss before it occurs. Typically, anticipatory grief is felt when a loved one has a terminal or progressive illness and death is expected. Anticipatory grief is about what has been and what will never be while attempting to enjoy the time left with a loved one. Most people think grief only happens after a death has occurred, but that's not the case.

Family members of individuals with dementia often grieve for years. The individual they knew is no longer there. Grief is felt from the time of diagnosis until the time of death. This grief may be hard to discuss with anyone. You may have guilt over your feelings, especially if you have a sense of relief at the thought of your loved one's passing. This is normal; it's okay for you to want their "suffering" to be over and the unpredictability of daily life to resolve. Still, the difficulty of talking about it can make you feel even more alone in your grief. Anticipatory grief is real, and part of the emotional process of accepting the inevitable outcome.

Symptoms of Anticipatory Grief may include:

- Feelings of anger, denial, anxiety, depression, hopelessness, loneliness;
- Forgetfulness;
- Caregiver exhaustion (mental and physical);

- Guilt due to looking forward to the end of their suffering and your exhaustion.

Suggestions for dealing with Anticipatory Grief:

A counselor is a safe person to talk to about these complicated and unexpected feelings. Your doctor or nurse practitioner may also be helpful, or may assist with finding a counselor.

It may help you to talk with your loved one, if possible, about any unresolved issues. Asking for and/or granting forgiveness is helpful in resolving grief.

Find a support group. Speaking with others that are suffering with or have suffered anticipatory grief will help with your recovery. It is freeing to speak about your feelings out loud, in a place where others do not pass judgement.

Help from GGCOA on the Radio

Yes, we are on the radio! We've mentioned this before, but did you know that you can listen to recordings of past Partner-in-Care segments? It's true: go to

gcco.org/radio

to find recordings about caregiving & tips on how to care for loved ones living with dementia. You'll find topics such as: Becoming a Caregiver, Sibling Caregivers, Caregiver Depression, Tangible ways to help caregivers, Communication, Shadowing, Sundowning, Hospital stays, Visiting, and much more.



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Providing support for those who support others

Why is it so hard for some people to ask for the help they need?

The 4 major reasons people do not ask for help:

1. Many people do not want to give up their independence and they are afraid that asking for help will make them feel dependent on others.
2. Some folks assume that getting help will be too expensive so they avoid finding out if they can afford to pay for help or ask about resources that are available for older adults within their community.
3. Other people are fearful of becoming a burden to their family members and are reluctant to ask for what they need.
4. Many people are afraid to have strangers come into their home.

Family members/caregivers can introduce the idea of getting help by...

1. Figure out what type of things need to be addressed – household chores, personal care, help with meals, transportation, or a way to call for help in case of an emergency.
2. Approach their loved one with respect because the elder is still in charge of their life.
3. If a loved one is tired much of the time, ask “what is the most difficult thing you do” and see if their answer will shed light on a specific need. They may say, “I just can’t clean the bathroom anymore because it hurts my back/knees to bend down and clean around the toilet.” That answer provides an opening to offer an alternative to them.

4. If the person doesn’t think they need help with anything, offer examples of things that family members have noticed that cause concern. Once those things are identified, respectfully offer suggestions on how they might be addressed.
5. Let your loved one know that you are worried and that you would like to work together to find solutions. Caregivers do not need to take on all responsibilities; utilize community services.
6. Take advantage of unusual circumstances. For example: if a loved one goes into the hospital or becomes ill at home, that might be a good time to introduce services that insurance might cover for a month or two. This is another way to offer older adults a chance to try something new. Many older adults come to appreciate the added assistance and the friendly visitor that enters their life through in-home services and will be open to keeping that service or adding others.

Support Groups

- 1st & 3rd Mondays of the month at 6pm, First Presbyterian Church, 314 Xenia Ave, Yellow Springs
- 1st Tuesday of month at 11:30 am, GCCOA Xenia office
- 2nd & 4th Tuesdays at 9:30 am, Peace Lutheran Church, 3530 Dayton-Xenia Rd, Beavercreek

Weekly Radio Segment: Partners in Caregiving every Thursday soon after 6pm, WBZI—FM 100.3 AM 1500