



In Care of You

A newsletter for Caregivers from Greene County Council on Aging

December 2022

Keeping Caregiver Depression at Bay

Social connections are very important for caregivers to help ward off depression. Historically, people did not spend a lot of time alone. We lived in groups/tribes/extended family situations and we connected regularly with others. Unfortunately, many caregivers feel isolated in their caregiving roles.

Why are social connections so important to us?

Humans are a social species and we are hard wired to connect with others. Being with close friends & loved ones, and pets, helps to lower our stress levels and our blood pressure, which in turn, helps protect us from depression and lowers our risk of developing dementia.

Basically, feel good hormones are released when we are with people we love. Our brain and body respond positively when we are with our people, we feel safe, happy and cared about, and all is well.

Good healthy connections are important to all of us, especially for caregivers. Caregivers may find that they have very little time for socializing or find it very challenging to strike a balance between caregiving and self-care which includes socializing. Further, in this time of a pandemic, none of us are socializing at the same rate that we did a little over a year ago. This scaling back on socializing, whether the cause is caregiving or the pandemic, can lead to depression, which can lead to further social isolation.

Why does depression lead us further into social isolation?

Withdrawing from others when we don't feel well due to, say an illness, like a common cold or flu, helps us to

protect others from getting sick as we have all learned during the pandemic. Unfortunately, when we are depressed, we tend to withdraw from others because our brain interprets depression similarly to the feelings of being unwell in a bodily illness sort of way. This in turn leads us to withdraw from those who could be most helpful to us, and thus makes our depressive episode even worse. When we are depressed and withdrawing, our brain is not leading us in a good way as it does when we have a cold, so we have to resist the tendency to withdraw and force ourselves to socialize – whether it be in person, over the phone, on a Zoom call, or some other method.

What do you suggest caregivers do?

Seek outside assistance with your caregiving in the form of respite, adult day services, or personal care assistance. Practice self-care. And, if you feel a depressive episode coming on seek professional help in the form of medical exam and professional counseling.

Further you might share your feelings of depression with a few trusted others and let them know that you need their encouragement to not withdraw. Force yourself to accept their invitations knowing that this is what you need- just as much as you need exercise, sleep, sunlight and good nutrition.

Also remember that there are Caregiver Support Groups offered by The Council on Aging.





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Providing support for those who support others

Decorating Safely for the holidays When a Family Member has Dementia

Decorating your home can be an official start to the holiday season. Here are a few considerations to help keep your loved one with dementia safe.

Avoid flashing or twinkling lights inside the home. They can be disorienting to someone with dementia.

Animated decorations that sing and dance, and those with motion detectors that play carols when you walk by can be frightening to someone living with dementia.

Limit noise. A noisy, busy environment can cause confusion, even agitation. Try to be mindful of the environment. Make sure your loved one has a quiet room they can go to and relax.

Make sure to keep pathways clear of decorations and extension cords to avoid tripping hazards that can lead to falls.

Use battery operated candles. Dementia interferes with good judgement, and your loved one may not recognize the danger of a lighted candle.

Steer clear from decorating with items that resemble food (berries, popcorn, etc) – real or artificial – to avoid anyone attempting to eat them.

Two Mothers Remembered

by Joann Snow Duncanson

I had two mothers – two mothers I claim,
two different people, yet with the same name.
Two separate women, diverse by design,
but I loved them both because they were mine.

The first was the mother who carried me here,
gave birth and nurtured and launched my career.
She was the one whose features I bear,
complete with the facial expressions I wear.

She gave her love, which follows me yet,
along with examples in life that she set.
As I got older, she somehow younger grew,
and we'd laugh as just mothers and daughters do.

But then came the time that her mind clouded so,
and I sensed that the mother I knew would soon go.
So quickly she changed and turned into the other,
a stranger dressed in the clothes of my mother.

Oh, she looked the same, at least at arms length,
but now she was the child and I was her strength.
We'd come full circle, we women three,
my mother the first, the second and me.

And if my own children should come to a day,
when a new mother comes and the old goes away,
I'd ask of them nothing that I didn't do.
Love both of your mothers as both have loved you.

Support Groups

- 1st Monday of the month at 6pm, First Presbyterian Church, 314 Xenia Ave, Yellow Springs (January will move to 2nd Monday January 9th due to holiday on Jan 2nd)
- 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
- Online support group is on the 3rd Tuesday (Dec 20), from 2:30 — 4pm. Contact us for information.

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