

Caregiver E-Visit

August 2017

“An Invisible Epidemic”

Max is a 92-year-old gentleman who lives at a care facility. Max is in his room most of the time. He has a malignant tumor on his face and is receiving hospice services. He sometimes hears music and laughing from somewhere. When this happens, he feels left out. “I’m just a piece of garbage,” he thinks.

Elena is a caregiver to her husband Todd, who has Early Onset Alzheimer’s Disease. Elena and Todd have been married for many years and they say they have “always done everything together.” They still do, but they have lost opportunities to socialize with friends and family. They have become isolated together. Todd resists leaving the house, so Elena stays there with him day and night. She misses her friends and her grandchildren. Sometimes she pines for a movie at the theater, one of her favorite outings. Then she feels guilty thinking of anything without Todd.

Sarah lives in a condo, where she “downsized” after selling the home where she raised her large family. Oh, how she used to love entertaining an intergenerational crowd of family members there. For several years her children had been pointing out risks

and telling her they were worried about her safety there. Finally, with promises of continued good times and frequent visits, Sarah agreed to settle into a living space designed for a “person of a certain age.” Now her family seems to have all dissipated into their own busy lives. Sarah feels abandoned and, honestly, angry.



Health Effects of Loneliness

These people are experiencing the all-too-common conditions of loneliness and isolation. Fortunately, these conditions and their symptoms are receiving attention currently. I was lucky enough to attend a presentation by one of the leaders in this field. She described the symptoms and complications of loneliness and isolation and what can be done about them. ...Continued page 2

“The impact of loneliness on health is like 15 cigarettes a day!”

“Want to relieve loneliness? Just say hello.....and then just listen.”

*Dr Carla Perrossinotto,
Keynote Speaker for
Wisconsin Institute for
Healthy Aging*

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

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Isolation is separation from the society of others. Loneliness is the feeling of being alone. Most caregivers I've met over the years have reported this feeling.

"WOW! I thought I was the only one" This is a common reaction when attending a support group or class, or, for that matter reading a caregiver newsletter.

Effects of loneliness go beyond feelings of nostalgia, abandonment, and sadness. There are measurable effects on a person's health and well-being. We are social creatures just as surely as we are breathing creatures.

Connection with other people is a human need. When it isn't met, stress ensues, with its accompanying risks to immune and cardiovascular functions and every other body system. Evidence even points to an increased presence of amyloid in the brain (a chemical that has been related to increased risk of future cognitive problems). As a stressor, loneliness can interfere with restful sleep, increasing the

risk of falls and other accidents. Over half of people with ongoing loneliness neglect their own care (including needed medical attention). Loss of independence



is not uncommon. You, as a caregiver, and those you care for need to remain meaningfully involved with other people throughout life.

Antidotes for loneliness and isolation available in Racine County

Relief of loneliness and isolation are not time consuming or expensive. Risky, expensive medication isn't necessary. (Most people suffering from these conditions are not depressed.) Treatment for loneliness and isolation involves facilitating meaningful interaction between human beings.

Antidotes For the Person(s) You Care For:

Our Harmony Club – Social model, low-cost Respite Care for people whose needs are attended to by Family Caregivers. Call: 262-880-5301 for more information.

Memory Cafés - places where persons with mild or early-stage dementia can go with their care partners* to socialize and have fun with other people experiencing similar situations. First-time attendees should call the Alzheimer's Association at 800-272-3900;

SPARK! Cultural Programming for People with Memory Loss – Free hands-on Art Experiences and Gallery Engagements at Racine's Art

Museums for people with memory challenges and their care partners. *

*Care Partners may be any relatives or friends. So, you, the caregiver, could ask someone else to accompany your care partner, and have a little free time.

Senior Dining/Congregate Meals

for People over 60 – Midday meal for served on weekdays at several sites in Racine county. This can be an opportunity for good nutrition and regular socialization – food for body and soul!! Care partner pairs can enjoy a social meal together and interact with familiar people. Reservations are necessary at 262-833-8766.

Senior Companion Program – provides a volunteer who will become a regular visitor to a person who has a risk of loneliness and/or isolation. Call 262-898-1941

Video Chats – Not a substitute for a visit and a real hug, but can supplement in situations where distance precludes frequent visiting.

Antidotes For Caregivers:

Keep up with other relationships during your caregiving journey. Don't let caregiving swallow your identity.

Make new friends who understand your caregiving story.

Caregiver Support Groups and classes are excellent places to make

friends with people who are on similar paths – people who understand the many-sided aspects of caregiving.

Pursue opportunities for the person you care for to participate in an accepting social group (see at left). This affords you some respite time and opportunities to interact with other caregivers

Ask family members to stay with your care partner while you have some social fun. (This is a basic need, not a frilly luxury!)

Hire a paid caregiver who can provide socialization and activities for the person you care for (such as a game, puzzle activity, or reading aloud. Meanwhile, you can find a hobby or activity that pleases you.

Find a fun and lasting social niche for yourself and your care partner in our resource-rich community.

Take good care of both of you!



NEW CLASS
Dementia
Caregiving 101
September 7th
1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

New to Caregiving
for a person with

dementia?

- What Now?
- Understand dementia
- Where to go for Support.

For questions or
to register, contact

Marilyn
262-833-8764



AGING AND
DISABILITY
RESOURCE CENTER
OF RACINE COUNTY

14200 Washington Ave
Sturtevant, WI 53177

Phone: 262-833-8777

Email: adrc@racinecounty.com

www.adrc.racinecounty.com

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

Aug 4 Sept 1 Oct 6

Second 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)

Aug 8 Sept 12 Oct 10

Second Saturday

10:30 am- 12:00 Noon

Atonement Lutheran Church
2915 Wright Ave, Racine

Aug 12 Sept 9 Oct 14

Third Wednesday

1:30-3:00 pm

Burlington Senior Center
209 N. Main St, Burlington
Eppers Room

Aug 16 Sept 20 Oct 18

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)

Aug 3 Sept 7 Oct 5

Second Thursday

6:00 – 7:30 PM

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

Aug 10 Sept 14 Oct 12

