

Caregiver E-Visit

February 2018

When Caregiving Ends

The following article was written by Jane Mahoney, who helps to oversee the Caregiver Support program for the state of Wisconsin. As you'll see, she has provided caregiver support in her own family as well. I hope you'll find her suggestions helpful.

Taking care of a loved one takes a lot of time and energy. Your own needs move lower on the priority list as you spend more time caring for your loved one. You start saying no to the weekly coffee clutch, decrease the number of days you participate in volunteer or paid work, leave your favorite hobbies on the shelf and slow down your travel plans. As your loved one needs more and more assistance it is tempting to just drop out of everything so you can be there for the person as much as possible.

While your intentions might be good, giving up things you enjoy also has negative consequences. The stress of intense caregiving can put your physical and mental health at risk now and leave you vulnerable when your role as caregiver is over. When deciding what activities to give up to be a caregiver, don't just think about your life situation now but also ask yourself the question, "What will I do

when I am no longer needed as a caregiver?"

I have been spending a lot of time thinking about what a caregiver's life is like when caregiving ends. The death of my father left my mom with an entirely new life ahead of her. She went from having her days filled with caring for my dad to a world in which she lives alone. For several years she put



her activities on hold and put Dad's needs first. During that time, I encouraged Mom to keep doing some of those things she really loved, even if it was infrequently. At the time, my hope was to keep her healthier and happier by designating time out of the week for herself. But now I see that keeping active in those activities was important in another way, too. Finding a new routine for her life

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When Caregiving Ends

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now is a little easier because she remained involved with those activities. Had she given up everything, her whole identity would be lost now.

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

No matter what, life after caregiving will be a transition and will be a difficult adjustment. Here are some points to consider to help you when your job as caregiver has ended.

- Begin thinking about your future when you are still a caregiver. Having some long-term dreams and goals will make this transitional time easier.
- Time helps – while you will never forget your loved one, as time passes it will become easier to find your way in life without that person.
- Accept and express your feelings of loss, loneliness and whatever else you may be feeling – keep attending your caregiver support group, join a grief support group or find a trusted friend to share with. Seek help from a counselor if your grief leaves you overwhelmed by feelings of depression or hopelessness.
- Reconnect with things and people you used to be involved with.
- Look for new challenges – a

new job, volunteer work or planning a trip somewhere you've always wanted to go will help you focus on positive things.

- Keep busy, but allow for quiet times to grieve. Reflect on what you've been through, be proud of the good work you did for your loved one and let go of any guilt you may feel.

Change is the name of the game – reshaping your life and creating a “new normal” is what you need to do, but it is not done overnight. Give yourself time to find your way.

Even if you don't want to think about the death of your loved one, start creating a plan for what your life will be like after caregiving has ended. It isn't selfish to look at the future in which your caregiving role is over; it is simply practical and healthy. If you are able, involve your loved one in this discussion as they most likely want you to be happy, too. Life after caregiving happens, and it may even include a new, fulfilling adventure.

If you have questions about caring for a loved one or would like help in your caregiving journey please call 262-833-8777 and ask for a Caregiver Support Specialist.

*Jane Mahoney
Older Americans Act Consultant
Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging
Resources*



Grief Resources

GRIEFSHARE is a grief recovery group offered soon in Burlington. Beginning of February 8th from 10:30 – noon, it will meet for 13 self contained sessions. Burlington United Methodist Church, 857 E State St. Call 262-763-0894

Ongoing Bereavement Support Meetings

On-going bereavement support ministry. Sessions begin at 5:30pm with breaking bread together. (Bring a bag lunch and share a meal with friends.) The sessions end at 7:00 pm. Dessert, coffee, and water will be available each evening.

- **1st Tuesdays of the month at St. Paul the Apostle Parish** in the Parish Library. (Park in the main west parking lot and enter through

the main entrance. Library is on the left.) *This group will meet on the first Tuesday of each month at 6400 Spring St. Phone: 262-886-0530.*

- **3rd Monday of the month at St. Lucy Parish** in the large conference room. (Park in the small parking lot south of the church and enter through the main church entrance.) *This meeting will take place on the third Monday of each month.*

Program: Finding Strength after Loss Discussion with author Mary Lou Bailey Wednesday, February 7th, 7:30 -8:30 p.m. Donation encouraged.

After suddenly losing her
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Other Ideas for Grief Support

Check with your Funeral director or Hospice agency for groups or events related to grieving.

Check the local newspaper for listings of grief support groups.

Check with your church community and Pastor, Minister or Priest for opportunities to share your grieving.

Spring Class Offerings

April will be here sooner than you think!! Welcome spring by joining other caregivers in the very popular class called Powerful Tools for Caregivers.

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is a class designed to help you form the habit of taking care of yourself! Participants learn to reduce stress, improve self-confidence, Locate helpful resources, effectively communicate feelings, and increase their ability to make to make decisions.

Dates: April 19th – May 31st
(No class on May 10th).

Time: 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Location: Aging and Disability Resource Center, 14200 Washington Ave., Sturtevant, WI (just west of I-94.)
Cost: \$10 for snacks and textbook (Scholarships available.)
For more information and to register, call Marilyn at 262-833-8764.

Living Well with Chronic Conditions

This class is scheduled to be held for 6 weeks beginning June 8th. For more information contact Elizabeth at 262-833-8762.



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

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husband of 24 years,
author Mary Lou
Bailey needed an
outlet for her grief
and sadness,
discovering that she
needed to become
"her own rug." No
one or nothing else
could pull the rug
out from under her
again. She captured
her thoughts in her
newly-released book
"I am my Own
Rug."

Held at: **Racine
Community
Acupuncture** 10502
Northwestern Ave.
Franksville, WI 53126
* www.racineca.com



Connecting you to your community's resources

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

Feb 2 March 2 Apr 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)

Feb 13 March 13 Apr 10

Second Saturday
10:30 am- 12:00 Noon

Atonement Lutheran Church
2915 Wright Ave, Racine

Feb 10 March 10 Apr 14

Third Wednesday
1:30-3:00 pm

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

Feb 21 March 21 Apr 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)

Feb 1 March 1 Apr 5

Second Thursday
6:00 – 7:30 PM

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

Feb 8 March 8 Apr 12

