

Caregiver E-Visit

May 2019

A Few Strategies for Ordinary Heroes

It's a fine spring day outdoors with sunshine and birdsong and beautiful flowers. You are not out there! You are doing your 4th load of unpleasantly soiled laundry, and your day has just begun. Your knees complain as you climb the stairs, and you wonder when this daily rat race will end.

Reaching the top step with a heavy basket, you are greeted by the person you're caring for, with hands on hips, fists clenched, and face wrinkled by a big, honkin' frown. "You have a lover in the cellar, and you have stolen all my money. You @#^*%!"

You feel like running away – far away -or throwing the laundry basket or hurting someone. You wonder if there is anything proper for a good caregiver to do at a time like this. Well, below are few suggestions to consider:

Stress reduction experts may tell you to **S.T.O.P.**, with these guidelines:

STOP – Don't rush into any response. Let there be a little silence if possible.

TAKE A BREATH or two or three. – Feel life-sustaining air fill your belly and lungs. As one wise person said, "Come home to your real self."

OBERVE – Notice your surroundings – your tired legs, your care receiver's expression, the basement with laundry and no lover, and, very importantly, notice the elephant in the room – **the disease!** Observe your care receiver's expression and what need is being expressed. Remember that you have gathered knowledge and strength on this journey and that there are resources you can use.

PROCEED Progress is a direction, not an amount. Do your best – trust your humanity, love yourself, and guide yourself through the baby step that seems best for now.

Sometimes the **S.T.O.P.** plan may not seem adequate to your situation. To find other strategies, I looked in the book **Daily Comforts for Caregivers** by Pat



Strategies... Continued from front page



Samples.* I've heard several variations on this next technique from caregivers over the years.

Vocal Release (page 250)

"I try so hard to be a kind and conscientious caregiver, but all the pressures can get to me.

Sometimes I feel like a volcano ready to blow its top.

I feel tight, pinched, squeezed, trapped – I can't stand it anymore. I feel like I have to let loose somehow, but I don't want to hurt anyone.

"Fortunately, I can blow off steam in the car or in an or isolated room or outdoor getaway where no one can hear me. When I'm safely away by myself, I give my vocal chords some exercise. I yell, scream, chant, roar, hiss, moan, cry, or make any other sound that expresses what I can't exactly say with words. I suppose someone might think I'm crazy, but it doesn't matter. No one is around, I know what feels good, and I let that pent-up energy make noise until I've got it all out of my system. Afterwards, my body feels both calm and energized. I might end up by singing or humming on the way back home."

Here is a good idea that can bring relief to others as well as yourself.

It is also from Pat Samples, is titled simply:

Laughing! (page 106)

"It's a good thing I can laugh. So much is somber and stressful when someone's ill or disabled, I have to be able to laugh to get through the long days and weeks. In fact, I could use more laughter.

"A funny book or movie can loosen me up. Certain people I know automatically make me smile.

Children especially tickle me. I can even get a good laugh from the goofy mistakes I make. Overall, I manage better when I hang around people and things that get my funny bone going. When I get too serious for too long, I almost forget how to laugh. In that case, I have to give myself a jump-start. One way is to "practice" laughing – literally to lie on my back and rapidly repeat "HA-HA-HA" several times. That gets my laugh muscles working every time. I exercise my funny bone every day."

We would all do well to add our funny bone exercise to our daily routine. This is frequently recommended by Family Caregivers everywhere. Given the right circumstances, the Care Receiver may chime in and feel better, too.

**Daily Comforts for Caregivers* offers a short reading for every day of the year (or the opportunity to find the one that fits your today). It is written by Pat Samples, who says among her

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



many accomplishment, “I have also known the pains and joys of caregiving.” This book is available through the ADRC’s Caregiver Support Specialist program. Call for your free copy.

Did You Know?

The Caregiver Support team has put together a library of interesting and helpful books that you are able to check out at no cost to you. The books are available in the lobby of the Aging and Disability Resource Center, 14200 Washington Ave,

You can contact Elizabeth at 262-833-8762 to discuss the titles that are available. It might also be possible to

get a book you are interested in delivered to a support group you attend.

Living Well

Living Well is a six week, two-and-a-half-hour per week course for older adults that is designed to help people with various long-term ailments manage those conditions. Participants learn many different tools to help themselves manage different aspects of their chronic conditions,

Next Class begins August 16th -Registration opens in June but you can call with questions—262-833-8777

Atlas CareMap

Caregiving happens within a web of relationships of relatives, friends, professionals, and organizations. An **Atlas CareMap** is a drawing and a process for self-reflection and action, which also provides a catalyst for conversation. The process has helped people to more clearly see and to better understand their existing care ecosystem. For many, this has led to action and/or changes in perception resulting in stronger ecosystems, better care and more confidence in managing their care situation. They discover they have so much to gain, emotionally and practically, from sharing their respective care experiences and knowledge.

See: <https://atlasofcaregiving.com/caremap/>

Educational Offerings

Chronic Pain Management Class begins May 8th in Burlington

This class is similar to Living Well, offered by Aurora Health Care at the Aurora Wellness Center. Call 800-499-5736 or 262-767-7185.

Alzheimer’s Association Classes: For more information or to register call 800-272-3900

Savvy Caregiver starts June 11th for 6 Tuesdays. Clinical level training for family caregivers. Held at the Community Library, 24615 89th St in Salem.

Alzheimer’s/Dementia Class Series held three Wednesdays at Yorkville UMC, 17645 Old Yorkville Rd in Union Grove. From 6:00 to 7:30 pm. Come to all or just one.

6/5—Understanding Alzheimer's and Dementia

6/12—Understanding and Responding to Dementia-Related Behavior

6/19—Effective Communication Strategies: When Caring for Someone with Dementia



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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

May 3 June 7 July 5

Second Saturday
10:30 am- 12:00 Noon
Living Faith Lutheran Church
2915 Wright Ave, Racine
May 11 June 8 July 13

First 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)
May 7 June 4 July 2

Third Wednesday
1:30-3:00 pm
Cross Lutheran Church
126 Chapel Ter, Burlington
May 15 June 19 July 17

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)
**May 2 June 6 July (will be held
7/11, same time, due to Holiday)**

Second Thursday
6:00 – 7:30 PM
Bethania Lutheran Church
4120 Wright Ave, Racine
(Park and enter in the back of
building)
May 9 June 13 July 11

