

Caregiver E-Visit

October 2018

“Home Alone”

Lila, a 70-year-old retired librarian, lives with her husband Larry, a retired professor. Lately Lila has noticed that Larry is not as helpful as he used to be with household tasks. Sometimes he will mow the lawn on his own, more often he needs many reminders or the task falls to Lila to avoid arguments. Recently, while driving the car, Larry stopped in the middle of the road “to let the children cross.” There were no children, and the driver behind them barely avoided an accident. Another time he left the house in the middle of the night. When Lila found him down the street, he said he was trying to catch up with “the children.” Both times, he was back to his usual, alert, intelligent self in a short amount of time. Lawrence finally had a thorough neurological evaluation and was diagnosed with Lewy Body Dementia. Lila has been with Lawrence day and night since the diagnosis. She has become very depressed and sometimes thinks she’s going crazy. She desperately wants to get together with a friend for lunch and attend a Caregiver Support Group. Can she leave Larry home alone for an hour or so? He says he’ll be just fine, and he protests having anyone come in to “babysit” him.

Meanwhile, Dan, a 40-year-old machinist, lives with his mother, Nancy since she had a stroke a year ago. Nancy has

managed to care for herself while Dan is at work so far. However, Dan has noticed that she asks the same questions over and over. He also finds her medications untouched occasionally, and he has noticed that she sometimes has difficulty with kitchen appliances. The doctor says she may be having “mini-strokes” that affect her memory. Dan worries about her while he is at work, operating heavy machinery. His mother seems unaware of her changing abilities.



There is often no clear answer as to whether a care receiver can safely be left alone. There are several factors to consider when making such a decision. Armed with knowledge of risks and solutions, you’ll make the best decision you can, given your circumstances.

Concerns about leaving a care
Continued next page.

Dementia Conversations: Driving, Doctor Visits, and Making Legal and Financial Plans: October 18th, 5:30-7:00 PM at Gateway in Racine.

This workshop will offer tips on how to have honest and caring conversations about going to the doctor, deciding when to stop driving, and making legal and financial plans. For information and to register call: the Alzheimer's Association at 800-272-3900

Living With Loss Caring for a Loved one with Alzheimer's:

Date: October 29
Time: 7:00-9:00 pm
Location: Student Center Ballroom

Address: 900 Wood Rd Kenosha,
Register Online
<https://www.uwp.edu/bhhs>

Description:
Darcy Harris from the University of Western Ontario will be speaking to our community on caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's. The presentation is supported by a long-standing grant from Bader Philanthropies.

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receiver alone fall into several categories: The ability to summon help, hazards in the environment which could cause a fall or injury, the person's strength and mobility, the presence of dementia, and the possibility of the person leaving home and getting lost. Here are some questions a caregiving family will want to ask when pondering this decision:

- Is your loved one able to summon help when needed? Could she find and use a phone or wear and use a button for an Emergency Response system?
- Is he steady on his feet and able to walk and navigate stairs if necessary? Does he have and use a device like a cane or walker?
- Is she able to find and safely prepare nutritious food and beverages?
- Can he find and take medications safely and accurately?
- Does she use appliances in a safe manner?
- Are precautions in place for the possibility that he would leave the home and become lost?

As your loved ones needs increase, there may be several phases of help needed. First, the person you care for may be okay alone, then perhaps you need to give frequent reminders or leave notes; as time goes on, you realize that the time alone needs to be shorter and shorter (caregivers seem to develop an internal timing device); and you may reach a time

where your loved one needs help and guidance at all times. Needless to say, these descending steps are hard on family caregivers who have other obligations and/or may feel imprisoned at home. Fortunately, there are some helpful resources listed on the next page.

Lila and her friends and family work out a schedule where Lawrence is always with someone. They make each visit so friendly that Lawrence enjoys this arrangement, a blessing for which Lila is exceedingly grateful. Lila also begins to plan for what will be needed as time goes on. She asks for Options Counseling from the ADRC for an overview of what she might need as they go along, and how to access services. She has a meeting with her family and a representative from the Alzheimer's Association, so that they all can understand what challenges may arise and how they can make the best of their time with Larry. As a precaution, they enroll Larry in Safe Return, Safe Assured, and fill out the Racine Elopement Alert Form- providing that information to their local law enforcement agency, just in case he thinks "the children" need him and leaves home.

Dan and his siblings have a meeting about changes they can make. They and their mother's friends arrange to check in with her each morning that Dan works, and they make sure her medication has been taken. Nancy is enrolled in the Meals on Wheels program, and she enjoys seeing her volunteer driver and having meals prepared for her. She also starts

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attending *Our Harmony Club*. As time goes on, friends from her church join those who are dropping in, and they begin to stay longer, keeping track of who will be there when. Eventually, an In-Home Assistance Agency is hired to provide someone who will stay for longer periods of time and provide personal care if needed.

Caregiving changes a lot over time, and each change brings the duty of recognizing new needs, planning and arranging for help, and getting accustomed to the new situation.

These transitions are said to be the most stressful times for caregivers. The most important duty, then, is to be kind and gentle with yourself by practicing calming techniques e.g. deep belly breathing, enjoying hobbies, nature, exercise, music, etc.; by using resources like the ADRC, Caregiver Support, Caregiver groups, and any letting go of the idea that you have to do it all! It is so very important to

Take Good Care of Yourself!

Home Alone Resource Ideas

These are described along with their location in the *Community Resource Directory*. It is available in print and online at: https://www.adrc.racinecounty.com/site/453/service_directory.aspx or call 262-833-8777.

Personal Emergency Response System – Summon help by pushing a button. There are many such systems that range from responding only from the home to full-blown GPS systems. See Page 72

Cameras that can be synced with a smart phone -widely available online and at retail stores. You can also check with the local Independent Living Center for the most recent assistive technology. They may know of things you have not even thought of. See page 41

Nutrition programs - can be helpful in two ways - Meals on Wheels are delivered to door by a volunteer, who will summon help if door is not answered or the meal recipient is in distress; Congregate Meals Sites serve a low-cost midday meal and can be attended by anyone over 60 and their spouse of any age. For your care receiver, this could become an



outing with a friend. See Pages 37 and 38

Our Harmony Club, Adult Day Programs (places that provide for the needs of people who need help at home. In most cases transportation can be arranged. See Pages 28 and 78.

In-Home Assistance Agencies can provide varying lengths of home visits and help with household chores, and sometimes errands and transportation. See Pages 20-24

Care Team – a group effort involving family, and friends taking turns spending time with the person who needs care, running errands, bringing food, or doing whatever is needed that suits each volunteer. See Pages 16 or 78.

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

Join us on

November 2, 2018

for our Annual

Caregiver

Appreciation Day

“A Recipe for

Healthy

Caregiving.”

to be held at Grace

Church in Racine.

Free program with

respite care available

on site. Call Felicia

at 262-833-8761 to

register Today!

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

Oct 5 Nov 7 Dec 7

Second Saturday

10:30 am- 12:00 Noon

Atonement Lutheran Church

2915 Wright Ave, Racine

Oct 13 Nov 10 Dec 8

Third 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)

Oct 16 Nov 20 Dec 18

Third Wednesday

1:30-3:00 pm

Cross Lutheran Church

126 Chapel Ter, Burlington

Oct 17 Nov 21 Dec 19

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)

Oct 4 Nov 1 Dec 6

Second Thursday

6:00 – 7:30 PM

Bethania Lutheran Church

4120 Wright Ave, Racine

(Park and enter in the back of
building)

Oct 11 Nov 8 Dec 13

