

# Caregiver Assistance News

“Caring for You - Caring for Others”

Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

Serving Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence,  
Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton Counties in Ohio

www.aaa7.org **Helping You Age Better!**



**FEBRUARY 2021**

## Understanding Alzheimer's the A-B-C Way

A person with Alzheimer's disease may sometimes act in ways that are upsetting or seem aggressive. They may hit, scratch, or fight with the caregiver. This does not always happen, but if it does, it is likely to be when the person is in the middle stage of Alzheimer's disease. This stage can last for up to four years. These actions can be upsetting and are often hard for caregivers to manage. It helps to have a plan. One that many people find easy to remember is called ABC. Here is what this means:

**A means Antecedent.** This refers to events that happen just before an upsetting action.

**B is the Behavior.** This means any upsetting or aggressive action done by the person who has Alzheimer's disease.

**C refers to the Consequence.** This includes events that happen after the behavior. Sometimes, these events can make the situation worse.



*Here is a story about people we are calling Mary and Robert Jones (depicted in the graphic above). In this story, Mary is the caregiver for her husband, Robert, who has Alzheimer's disease. As you will see, in this story many things go wrong.*

## **A** Antecedent - What Happened Before the Behavior?

Mary slept too late and now is in a hurry. She wants her husband Robert to quickly get out of bed, take a shower, eat, and get dressed before a driver arrives to take them to his doctor's appointment. Because of her late start, Mary yanks off the bed covers and yells at Robert to get up. He does not understand the words but reacts to her tone of voice. Mary gets angry when he pulls the bed covers back up. "So that's the way it will be. I'm in charge here," she yells.

Mary then drags Robert out of bed and rushes to get him dressed. Now he must balance on one leg rather

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## The A-B-C Way...continued from Page 1

than sit down to pull up his pants. This is not their usual routine when Mary takes her time helping Robert get ready for the day.

### **B** Behavior

Robert loses his balance because Mary is rushing him so much. He grabs her arm for support and does not let go. When she yells, he grabs even tighter. Robert is now digging his nails into Mary's arm.

### **C** Consequence - The events that followed the behavior

Mary loses control and smacks Robert in the face (something she had never done before). He hits her back. Mary thinks he is fighting, though it may be that he is just afraid and doing to her what she did to him. One problem leads to others and Mary now worries that Robert will hurt her again. She questions whether she can care for him at home and wonders whether Robert must go to a nursing home.

Now let's look again at this story using the ABC way. Mary can see that the problems started when she rushed around and did not think of how Robert would react. She now knows she must avoid these types of situations.

- Mary learned that because Robert has Alzheimer's disease, he cannot be rushed. While she should not feel guilty, she should realize how her actions made this worse.
- If Mary is ever late again, she will call the doctor's office and ask if they can make a new appointment or come in later in the day. This is better than expecting Robert to change his behavior.
- Mary will make a list of what happened just before Robert's upsetting behavior. She will look for causes of what went wrong and figure out ways to avoid them.
- Mary will also think about her own actions and what did or did not work well.
- Mary will use the ABC way to help Robert to be more cooperative in the future. This is a way to understand what happened, and figure out ways to better manage in the future.

## Behaviors Caregivers Find Especially Difficult

There are some behaviors that caregivers find especially difficult. Not all people with Alzheimer's disease have these behaviors. However, it is likely that the person in your care will have one or more of these problems during the middle stage of Alzheimer's disease. It is important to try to understand why the person may be behaving in ways you find difficult, and learn how to avoid making them worse.

*Source: The Comfort of Home for Alzheimer's Disease*

### *Memory Care*

Everyday steps to help with memory problems:

- Colored paper or a picture of the toilet can be taped on bathroom door.
- Drawers, cabinets and refrigerators can be labeled to show what's inside.
- Objects can be in contrasting colors so they stand out.
- Notes can be placed in plain sight as reminders.

# Taking Care of Yourself

## Tips for Parents Coping with COVID

With COVID-19, there's so much that is unknown and outside of our control. Shift focus towards what you do know and what you can control.

Make a list of all the things you do know such as this is temporary; my family is healthy and taking all necessary precautions; and young people are unlikely to get very sick.



Make a list of the things you can control: washing your hands and practicing social distancing; taking walks outside.

Anxiety can distort our thinking. Check the facts by asking questions such as: "What's most likely to happen?" and "What evidence do I have for this worry?"

*Source: Tips for Parents on Coping with COVID; Columbia University Department of Psychiatry*

## Interested in a Telephone Support Group for Caregivers?

The Caregiver Support Program at the Area Agency on Aging District 7 is offering a free telephone support group for caregivers.

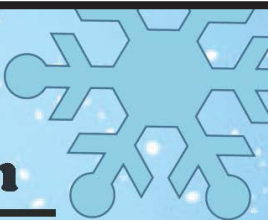
**Upcoming Call: February 18th from 1:30 pm - 2:30 pm**

If you are interested, please call Vicki Woyan for more details.

**[1-800-582-7277](tel:1-800-582-7277), extension 215 or you can e-mail [info@aaa7.org](mailto:info@aaa7.org).**



## **HEAP Home Energy Assistance Program**



Now open for applications for 2020-2021. This program can help eligible Ohioans manage their heating bills. Applications are available from your local Community Action Agency

*If interested or if you have questions, contact your county Community Action Agency or the AAA7 Resource Center at 1-800-582-7277.*

## **Join us for Wellness Wednesdays**

LIVE every Wednesday at 10:00 am on the AAA7 Facebook Page or watch a recorded version on our website or Facebook page.



# Safety Tips - Safe Alzheimer's Activities

Consider activities the person with dementia may enjoy:

- Creative activities such as painting, playing the piano, and using materials such as Play-Doh (if the person will not try to eat it).
- Cognitive activities such as reading a book, looking at a magazine, doing crossword puzzles.
- Spiritual activities such as praying and singing a hymn.
- Spontaneous activities such as taking a short walk or having a picnic on the porch.
- Work-related: things such as making notes, typing, or organizing coupons and other papers.
- Simple household chores: dusting, drying dishes, doing the laundry.



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*Some content in this publication is excerpted from The Comfort of Home: Caregivers Series. It is for informational use and not health advice. It is not meant to replace medical care but to supplement it. The publisher assumes no liability with respect to the accuracy, completeness or application of information presented or the reader's misunderstanding of the text.*



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*Your local Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc. serves the following counties in Ohio: Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton. Services are rendered on a non-discriminatory basis. Those interested in learning more about the services provided through the Area Agency on Aging District 7 can call toll-free at 1-800-582-7277. Here, individuals can talk directly with a trained Resource Specialist who will assist them with information surrounding the programs and services that are available to best serve their needs.*

*The Agency can also be reached via e-mail at [info@aaa7.org](mailto:info@aaa7.org).*