

# 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](http://www.aaa7.org) **Helping You Age Better!**



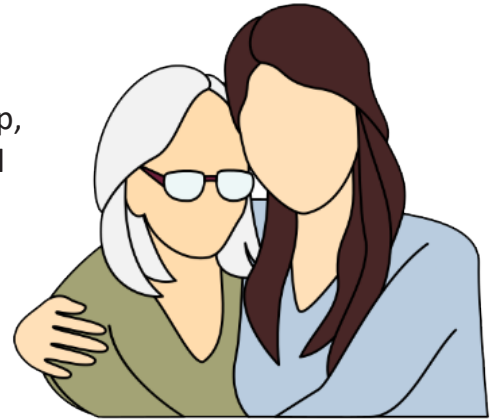
**SEPTEMBER 2024**

## **Conflict and Family Dynamics**

Whether with our own family, or in a professional caregiver relationship, we need skills to communicate effectively. The right words can make all the difference.

Tips for effective communication:

1. Assess the situation. Listen to every member of the family or person in the group to figure out what the issue really is. Look for meaning and emotions behind what is being said.
2. Let them know you understand. You can share their feelings without getting overwhelmed by their issues.
3. Try to be a reporter, not a judge. Instead of saying, “It is wrong for you to smoke and you are hurting yourself,” try, “I notice that you are having trouble breathing and it’s getting worse from smoking.”
4. Maintain personal balance. Allow yourself time to decompress and have a separate life with your own activities and down time. Find people you can confide in when you are puzzled or overwhelmed. Join a support group if you feel isolated.
5. Avoid guilt, depression and judgments. You can grieve, feel frustrated or overwhelmed, and know these are normal feelings. Accept the tough outcomes and still feel good that you gave it your best.



### **Listening is More Important than Talking**

Have you ever acted like you were listening to someone who was talking, but in reality you were thinking about how you were going to answer the other person when it’s your turn to talk or thinking about something else? Many of us are guilty of not really listening to what others say. Ways to improve listening skills:

- Try not to interrupt someone who is talking.
- Try to really hear their words and repeat back what they have said. This way, they know that you really heard what they said. (Then they might also be more willing to listen to you.)
- Avoid being defensive.
- Remember to show respect to the other person—even if you do not agree with their actions or words.

Effective communication leads to mutual understanding. It helps both parties find a solution to a problem. This means that your goal is not to win an argument or prove that you are right, but to reach an understanding.

*Source: Adapted with permission from a presentation by Mark Edinberg, Ph.D., author of the book, “Talking with your Aging Parents™”*

## **Being Heard**

Sometimes communication is made more difficult by the simple fact that the senior is hard of hearing. A person with hearing loss may appear like they are slow or uninterested. Speak in a normal tone, facing the person and making eye contact. Check if they are using their hearing aid. To make communication effective:

- Be in a position where you are at eye level with the person. Make eye contact while facing the person.
- Allow the other person to see your face in the light so they can see your facial expression and lip movements.
- Avoid startling a person, approach them from the front and say who you are as you approach.
- Call them by name.
- Speak in simple language, using normal tone. Do not shout or use a high pitch.
- Ask one question at a time.
- Don't interrupt the person while they are talking.
- Use appropriate body language (pointing, nodding, etc.) and facial expressions.
- Aside from their hearing aid, some people need their eyeglasses to see you better when communicating. Make sure they have these and that they are working properly.



## **Setting Your Boundaries**

How can you take care of yourself when the demands on you are increasing? Clear, polite but firm, communication can help. Here's an example:

A caregiver is asked by her father (or a client) to do a task that would keep her beyond her scheduled hours. She wants to be helpful and has a hard time saying "no," but knows that she can't take on more tasks right now.

Good communication can include the following responses:

1) "I'm sorry. I'd like to be able to do that task for you, but I have family commitments starting in one hour. Why don't we get to that next week at the beginning of the day so I can finish it properly for you."

OR

2) "I know you'd like for me to stay longer with you today, but I need to get back and take care of my children (or other clients). Why don't I bring you a TV schedule and set out a cup of tea so you can relax after I leave."

*Source: Adapted with permission from a presentation by Mark Edinberg, Ph.D., author of the book, "Talking with your Aging Parents™"*

**Our Resource Center is OPEN and available to answer questions about programs, services and resources in your community!**

**1-800-582-7277 - [info@aaa7.org](mailto:info@aaa7.org)**



# Taking Care of Yourself



## The Simple Joy in Just Hanging Out

Many adults are accustomed to only doing scheduled activities with one another. Often, we think time spent together must be structured—exercising, going to a movie, or shopping together. We don't think something is beneficial unless it's productive. Teenagers enjoy hanging out with friends, but as we get older and more scheduled, we lose the ability to enjoy simply being with a friend and chatting or even being silent. Social media shows a trending desire for a "couch friend" — a buddy that will sit with you on the couch and happily do nothing.

Friendships improve our physical and mental health and are vital for our well-being. If you are not quite sure how to start, you might look for places in your community where people gather—a dog park, a community center, or a park bench and invite your friend to join you to simply watch the world go by.

*Source: New York Times; Well – Why Don't We Hang Out Anymore? February 2024; "Hanging Out: The Radical Power of Killing Time" by Sheila Liming.*

## Can the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Discount Help You?



**Low Income Subsidy (LIS) or "Extra Help" is a benefit that can:**

- Lower your prescription co-pays
- Cover all or part of your Medicare Part D monthly premiums
- Eliminate the "donut hole" of coverage for your medications

### 2024 Asset and Income Guidelines

**Single** - Monthly income of \$1,903 or less with assets less than \$17,220

**Married** - Monthly income of \$2,575 or less with assets less than \$34,360

**Not Subject to Estate Recovery**

If you would like to find out if you are eligible for "extra help" with your Medicare Part D coverage, we can help!  
Contact your local Area Agency on Aging District 7 (AAA7) today!

**1.800.582.7277** TTY: 711  
**info@aaa7.org**

Covering the following counties in Southern Ohio: Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton.



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## Memory Care

### Be Kind

*The tone of our voice can mean more than the words that we actually say. Singing, dancing, hugging, holding, and other body actions are some of the ways we can communicate to people in our care who have lost the ability to understand spoken or written language.*

## HEAP Summer Crisis Program

Eligible households can receive a one-time benefit to assist with electric utility bills, central air conditioning repairs, and air conditioning unit and/or fan purchases.

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

# Getting a Lid on Anger

When communication fails, stress levels go up. Higher stress is associated with heart attacks, high blood pressure, digestive problems, chronic pain, reduced lung function and more severe diabetes symptoms—even skin flare-ups. You can stay healthy, and help those in your care stay healthier, by asking yourself these questions to help reduce stress and avoid anger triggers:



- **Is what I am arguing about really important?** Pick your battles and let the small stuff go.
- **Am I storing up resentments from the past that are making things seem worse in this conversation?** Stay on the topic—don't bring past issues into the current discussion.

Don't take it personally. Resist the urge to keep score. Be polite and keep your boundaries. You don't need to get angry just because you don't like what someone is saying.

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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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Facebook: [www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7](https://www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7)

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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 email at [info@aaa7.org](mailto:info@aaa7.org).*