



NEWS RELEASE – Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

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**“Wellness Wednesday” Livestream Discusses Communicating
with Your Family About Your Healthcare Needs**

A weekly livestream focusing on wellness opportunities through the Area Agency on Aging District 7 (AAA7) is featured each Wednesday on the AAA7 Facebook page. “Wellness Wednesdays” is featured each week at 10:00 am with a new wellness topic for discussion during the broadcast.

As routines have changed through the pandemic, so too have the wellness programs offered through the AAA7. The Agency offers a number of valuable and helpful programs designed to help individuals with their chronic conditions and other health concerns. Prior to the pandemic, the AAA7 would have these classes in person, but have moved them now to telephone classes. Through “Wellness Wednesdays”, the Agency is able to expand the reach to share information about the valuable programs available to help with chronic disease self-management, diabetes self-management, chronic pain self-management, falls management, and caregiver support. The goal is to increase knowledge about these programs and help more and more people learn to live with their chronic conditions and/or embrace helpful tips that can help individuals live healthier.

Recently, the topic of communicating with your family about your healthcare needs was discussed.

Communicating with your family members about your health is just as important as communicating with your healthcare providers. Gathering support from your family and friends is a good tool to help you manage your overall health and handle the stress that comes from living with and managing a chronic condition.

Sometimes, communication can be difficult for an individual and their family when it comes to health, especially when someone is not sure how to share their diagnosis and how they may need help. Family members in return might have a difficult time with feeling guilty that their loved one is experiencing the illness. Expressing these feelings from both sides can help with communication and understanding each other.

Some steps for creating good communication and creating supportive relationships include: showing respect, being clear, not making assumptions, opening up, listening first, accepting the

feelings of others, using humor carefully, and not playing the victim. The livestream elaborated on each of these important steps.

Also discussed were good ways to communicate to express your feelings. Using an “I” message can help you share your views and feelings in a softer way and are better to use instead of “you” messages which usually start with the word “you” and often suggest blame. For example, “I like it when you turn down the TV while we talk,” rather than saying, “You never pay attention.” Other examples of starting sentences with “I” messages include: “I notice” when you are stating the facts; “I think” when you are stating your opinion; “I feel” when you are sharing your feelings”; and “I want” when you state exactly what you would like the other person to do. “I” messages can also be used to express positive feelings and compliments, for example, “I really appreciate the extra time you gave me today.”

Sometimes, conflict does occur when communicating with family members. Both parties can become frustrated and emotional when trying to discuss what the best options are in treating/managing the chronic condition. In addition to “I” messages, other ways to help reduce conflict include: refocusing the discussion, asking for more time, making sure you understand the other person’s viewpoint, looking for compromise, apologizing, and forgiving others.

Understanding when you need help and how to ask for it was also a focus during the conversation. Sometimes it may be difficult for someone to ask for help but many are available and want to help those who need assistance. Specific requests are most likely to have the best response. People like being helpful and feel rejected when they cannot help you, especially if they care about you.

Listening was also discussed during the livestream as the most important communication skill. Some steps to improve listening include: listening to the tone of the voice and observing body language, letting the person know you heard them, and letting the person know you heard both their content and emotion.

Speaking with your family members about your health is a topic that is discussed as a part of wellness classes at the AAA7 including Chronic Disease Self-Management, Diabetes Self-Management, and Chronic Pain Self-Management. Currently, these classes are being conducted over the telephone. If interested in participating in an upcoming class, call the AAA7 at 1-800-582-7277 or e-mail info@aaa7.org.

If you missed any of the “Wellness Wednesday” episodes, you can see a recorded version on the AAA7’s Facebook page or on the AAA7’s website at www.aaa7.org.

Your local Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc. provides services on a non-discriminatory basis. These services are available to help older adults and those with disabilities live safely and independently in their own homes through services paid for by Medicare, Medicaid, other federal and state resources, as well as private pay. The AAA7’s Resource Center is also available

to anyone in the community looking for information or assistance with long-term care options. Available Monday through Friday from 8:00 am until 4:30 pm, the Resource Center is a valuable contact for learning more about options and what programs and services are available for assistance.

Those interested in learning more can call toll-free at 1-800-582-7277 (TTY: 711). Here, individuals can speak directly with a specially-trained Resource Specialist who will assist them with information surrounding the programs and services that are available to best serve their needs. The Agency also offers an assessment at no cost for those who are interested in learning more. Information is also available on www.aaa7.org, or the Agency can be contacted through e-mail at info@aaa7.org. The Agency also has a Facebook page located at www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7.

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Wellness Wednesdays
with the Area Agency on Aging District 7 (AAA7)

Join us on Wednesdays
at 10:00 am **LIVE** on the
AAA7 Facebook page

(Or watch recorded versions
on the AAA7 Facebook page
or www.aaa7.org)

