

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!**



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Resolving Disputes - Communication When Providing Care

When someone has a chronic illness, you sometimes are called upon to help them make important life decisions before their illness or condition reaches the crisis stage. It is important to do this while the person in your care can still be involved - before he or she may be too sick to participate in the choices that impact his or her life. People often delay making important choices until it's too late because they don't know how to bring up difficult issues for discussion.

Bringing Up Tough Issues

Available choices should:

- Be positive.
- Be stated accurately and as informed as possible.
- Take into account important cultural, religious, or family values.
- Include key individual concerns.

How to Reach a Decision

First, be informed about the options. After assessing the situation, call community, hospital, legal or hospice resources to find out all of the possible options. Next, approach the family and the person in your care with those options and help guide them to a decision.

- Present the decision to be made in new ways. Sometimes, people see a choice that is difficult as the wrong choice. Remind them that it may be difficult, but not wrong, and there may be other choices.
- Present the decision to everyone involved. Don't leave out key family and health representatives.
- Be sure the older adult is involved in the discussion. The decisions affect their life most of all and you need to respect their dignity.
- If needed, call in extra help such as a geriatric care manager. Sometimes, an expert or an additional go-between is needed.

Handling Disagreements

Difficulty can arise when family members disagree with one another on what course of action to take. Here is how to handle those disagreements:

- Find common ground. Emphasize the ways that the family does agree.
- Respect each other's opinions.
- Respect the right to remain silent. Some family members will not want to express opinions or make decisions, and that's alright, too.

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What is Your Role?

1. To ask, "Whose decision is it?"
2. Be a translator or go-between of people's opinions.
3. Be an advocate. You are on the same side as the person in your care. Remember, the decision should respect the wishes of the person who is chronically ill.

Adapted with permission from a presentation by Mark A. Edinberg, PhD, psychologist and author of "Talking with Your Aging Parents."

For Effective Communication

Whether with our own family, or in a professional caregiver relationship, we need skills to communicate effectively.

1. Assess the situation. Listen to every member of the family 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 becoming overwhelmed by their concerns.
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 becoming 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.



Alzheimer's/Dementia Lunch and Learn for Families

May 21st - Jackson County (Jenkins Care Community in Wellston)
12 Noon - 1:30 pm

June 23rd - Highland County (Highland County Senior Center in Hillsboro) 11:30 am - 1:00 pm

July 14th - Scioto County (Best Care Nursing and Rehab Center in Wheelersburg) 1:30 pm - 3:00 pm

For more information or to register, call Melissa Dever with the Alzheimer's Association at (740) 710-1821

Don't Fall!

Be Safe!

When in public buildings, stay on carpeted runners. Many public buildings have marble or other surfaces that may become very slippery.



"One definition of insanity is to believe that you can keep on doing what you've been doing and get different results."

- Zig Ziglar -

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

Keeping a Lid on Anger



When communication fails, stress levels go up. Higher stress is associated with heart attacks, high blood pressure, and more severe diabetes symptoms. Ask yourself these questions to help reduce stress and avoid anger triggers:

1. Is what I am arguing about really important? Pick your battles and let the small stuff go.
2. 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.
3. Don't take it personally. Be polite and keep your boundaries. You don't need to become angry just because you don't like what someone is saying.

Falls Prevention is Important!

Did you know that what you do to and for yourself throughout your lifespan has a greater impact on your well-being than genetics? Even as your abilities change with age, there is ALWAYS something you can do to be healthier and keep chronic conditions in check.

According to the Ohio Department of Health, falls are the leading cause of injury-related emergency room visits, hospitalizations and deaths among older Ohioans. One in three older adults will fall this year; however, falls are not a normal part of aging and most falls can be prevented with minor changes to your home, health and habits.



**Preventing Falls...
One Step at a Time**

Home: Remove or secure throw rugs; improve lighting, especially near stairs; install grab bars in the bathroom; rearrange the home to make frequently used items easier to reach.

Health: Ask your doctor about a falls risk assessment and talk about medicines you take and whether they increase your risk for falls; have your hearing and vision checked annually.

Habits: Stay active to build muscle strength and improve balance; slow down and think through tasks; stay hydrated and eat a well-balanced diet that includes calcium-rich foods.

Learn more at www.steadyu.ohio.gov.

Resources for You

National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys - search for an elder law attorney in your area - www.naela.org

National Association of Geriatric Care Managers - provides a list of care managers in your state - www.caremanager.org

Area Agency on Aging District 7 - contact us for more information about long-term care resources in your community - call us at 1-800-582-7277 or e-mail our general information account at info@aaa7.org.



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Safety Tips - Getting There Safe and Sound

Do you think that the person in your care may be a high risk driver? If driving seems it is no longer a safe way to get around, don't worry. There is a network of transportation services, public and private, that will pick up seniors and those with disabilities at their home.

Community transportation services may be provided by:

- Home health care agencies
- Religious organizations
- Local American Red Cross
- Providers through the Area Agency on Aging
- Local public transportation companies

NOTE

Many states require transportation to necessary medical care for Medicaid recipients. Check with your local Medicaid office to see if you qualify.

