

# Boomers, Elders, and More E-Newsletter

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<http://vanderbilt.edu/child-family-center/>

## *Message from the Coordinator*

Medicines play an important role in treating many conditions and diseases and when they are no longer needed it is important to dispose of them properly to help reduce harm from accidental exposure or intentional misuse.

Caregivers should remove expired, unwanted, or unused medicines from their home as quickly as possible to help reduce the chance that others may accidentally take or intentionally misuse the unneeded medicine.

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has scheduled a National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day which will take place on Saturday, April 30, 2016, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

The National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day aims to provide a safe, convenient, and responsible means of disposal, while educating the general public about the potential for abuse of these medications. Medicines that hang in home cabinets are highly susceptible to diversion, misuse, and abuse. Too many medicine bottles can be confusing in a medicine cabinet. Old and unused medicines can cause accidental overdose.

Americans are advised that their usual methods for disposing of unused medicines – flushing them down the toilet or throwing them in the trash – both pose potential safety and health hazards.

Find a collection site near you at [www.dea.gov/list](http://www.dea.gov/list). Items which cannot be accepted on this day are needles, mercury thermometers, oxygen containers, chemotherapy or radioactive substances, pressurized canisters and illicit drugs.

This service is free.

# News Highlight

## **Simple Steps Can Ease Care of Loved One with Alzheimer's**

Limit their choices and distractions and always keep safety uppermost, expert advises

By Robert Preidt



As Alzheimer's disease progresses, patients find that simple tasks become difficult or impossible, but caregivers can help them maintain a sense of independence and dignity, a doctor says.

Create a routine that makes days more predictable and schedule the most challenging tasks— such as bathing or medical appointments—at a time of day when your loved one is typically most calm, advised Dr. Ronald Petersen, a Mayo Clinic neurologist.

Adapt to your loved one's needs. If he or she insists on wearing the same clothes every day, for instance, consider buying a few identical outfits. Limiting choices will make it easier for the person to decide. Instead of a closet full of clothes, offer a choice of two outfits and do away with belts or accessories that he or she is likely to put on incorrectly.

Expect things to take longer than they once did. This will help you avoid having to rush your loved one.

“Allow your loved one to do as much as possible with the least amount of assistance. For example, perhaps your loved one can dress alone if you lay out the clothes in the order they go on,” Petersen said in a Mayo news release.

Turn off the TV and minimize distractions during meals and conversations so your loved one is better able to focus.

Consider safety. To reduce the risk of falls, remove scatter rugs, extension cords and clutter that could pose a tripping hazard. Install handrails or grab bars in appropriate locations.

“Install locks on cabinets that contain anything potentially dangerous, such as medicine, alcohol, guns, toxic cleaning substances, dangerous utensils and tools,” Peterson said.

Lower the setting on the hot water heater to prevent burns and keep matches and lighters out of reach. If your loved one smokes, make sure he or she is supervised while doing so.

source: [https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/news/fullstory\\_157976.html](https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/news/fullstory_157976.html)

# The Realm of Resiliency

By: Diana Hull Pa-C, MPH (licensed health care practitioner)

“Out of clutter, find simplicity. From discord seek harmony. Through difficulty lies opportunity.”

Caregivers know what it is like to face adversity. The ability to bend without breaking, to hold steady when a gale-force of stressors threaten Stability, to remain curious through confusion and energized by uncertainty—skills needed by every care-giver and found in those with the highest resiliency.

Resiliency is a skill that care givers can cultivate by finding effective ways of dealing with stressors—the unexpected, unpredictable and uncomfortable challenges life brings to everybody at one time or another.

Some people seem to cope better than others when difficulty strikes. The resilient are the ones who bounce back early and move on quickly. Optimistic, zestful and energetic, research has shown how resilient people gain strength and energy from challenging experiences. These are the people who find positive meaning from adversity.

In its narrowest definition, resiliency can be viewed as: the successful adaptation to change with the ability to competently function through stressful experiences. For those who are the most resilient, research recognizes successful adaptation to change is the broad outcome of one very specific quality.

Is this quality the luck of a particular personality? Or is there a technique for protecting ourselves from the psychological and health risks of stress?

Research shows that resilient people are not immune to the effects of stress. They do experience reactions such as anxiety and fear. But compared to those with low resiliency, the degree of reactivity is less and the presence of positive emotion is greater in people with the highest resiliency.

Rather than resisting or bolting, resilient people face fear, lean into the unknown and traverse discord, transforming the energy of arousal—fight or flight—into strong psychological resources that promote adaptation.

**RESILIENCE**



The one particular trait common among the most resilient has been identified.

Resilient people harness the capacity to utilize the powerful force of positive thinking.

Positive emotion has the effect of broadening thinking and increases coping skills. A positive outlook heightens the ability to find value, purpose and meaning in challenging events, thus enhancing states of wellbeing.

Caregivers who maintain positive thoughts in the face of struggle help the mind seek positive solutions to difficult problems.

Psychological research has shown that people are not “gifted” with resiliency. Resiliency is a learned skill that is developed and strengthened with practice. A sense of humor helps, but relaxation and meditation techniques have been shown to improve positive thinking and can proactively build resiliency reserves.

Meditation and relaxation offer effective techniques to train the mind to settle into the positive. By flipping our thoughts, speech and actions positively, we not only heighten resiliency but deepen understanding and insight.

To proactively prepare for the next challenging circumstance that is certain to come, begin a practice that encompasses regular deep-relaxation or meditation techniques. And the next time adversity strikes, take the following steps toward resiliency:

- Maintain a connection with others—find trusted listeners who will provide honest feedback.
- Observe and name what you are experiencing in this moment.
- Identify your own strengths—use your energy to promote positive influence.
- Accept change as an opportunity to create something new.
- Recognize the positive in every situation—think, speak and act from the positive position.

Thinking, speaking and acting from the positive perspective will take commitment and practice. Eventually the payoff arrives in broader awareness, strengthened self-confidence and a greater capacity to successfully traverse difficulty. For caregivers, the greatest benefit becomes the ability to find the positive and step into the realm of the highly resilient.

Source: [http://www.caregiver.com/magazine/digital/caregiver\\_jan\\_feb16/](http://www.caregiver.com/magazine/digital/caregiver_jan_feb16/)

# Champions With A Cause: An Ode to Caregivers

By: Angela Shaw

A bather, a baker, a yummy meal maker.  
A caregiver is this and more.  
Just how much does a caregiver do?  
It's impossible to try to keep score!

A caregiver is a chef.  
They can cook almost anything.  
But given the choice of homemade or not,  
All agree that take-out is king!

A caregiver is a coach.  
Who keeps you in the game.  
Sometimes they may seem bossy,  
But they love you just the same.

A caregiver is an EMT  
They can fix any cut, scrape or bruise.  
They respond to every emergency,  
As if they had something to lose.

A caregiver is a soldier.  
They defend, protect, and serve.  
A heartfelt smile is their greatest reward,  
But a medal they really deserve!

A caregiver is a chauffeur  
To appointments through traffic they've fought.  
Speed barriers they break to get there on time.  
And somehow they never get caught!

But most of all...

A caregiver is a trusted person.  
Who'll listen, encourage, and console.  
And caring for their loved one,  
Is their honor and ultimate goal.

Source: <http://www.caregiver.com/articles/careverses/>

## Upcoming Events

Lea Johnson, Attorney at Law, will provide information on living wills, power of attorney, and durable power of attorney. You will learn why these forms are important and how they work. This month's Boomers, Elders, and More Luncheon session will be held on Wednesday, May 4, 2016 from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. in Medical Center East 8380B. Please feel free to bring your lunch.

Vanderbilt Family Resource Center's Caregiver Support group will be held on Wednesday, May 11, 2016 from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. in Medical Center East Room 8380A. The caregiver support group is a time to share information and openly discuss your problems without judgment, to process your feelings, and to hear others talk about their experiences.

The Vanderbilt Child & Family Center will host a FREE Estate Planning event for employees on Thursday, May 19, 2016 from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Light Hall Room 411. Several attorneys will be available to answer your specific questions regarding power of attorney, living will, advance directives, last will and testament, trust, probate, and conservatorship. Plan to arrive no later than 1:30 p.m. if you would like to take advantage of this service. Please note you may have to wait. Consultations will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis and will last approximately 15 minutes.