

February 2021

Boomers, Elders, and More E-Newsletter

Monthly Elder Care Newsletter of the Vanderbilt Child & Family Center



VANDERBILT
UNIVERSITY

Child and Family Center

A Message from the Wellbeing Manager

The recognized cliché says, “Time flies when you’re having fun.” As a family caregiver, you can agree time is moving quickly. While you may not be having fun as a family caregiver, your role as a family caregiver is meaningful.

As we enter another year, hope is essential for family caregivers. Hope helps you see there are possibilities ahead. Hope provides you with energy and it helps you see something better up ahead. Hope is putting one foot in front of the other to move forward.

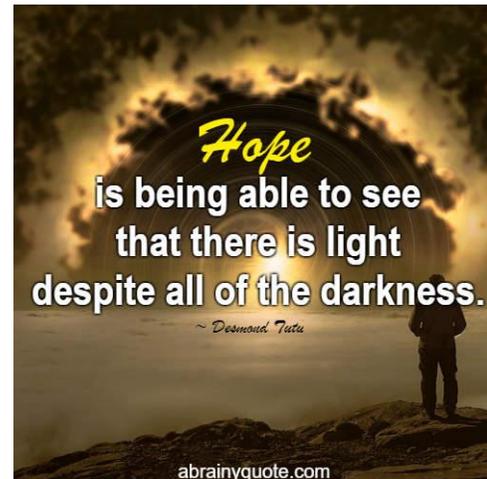
As a family caregiver, you can find hope in your role by recognizing your power. Believe it or not, every action you take has an effect on things. Every action pushes you toward a particular outcome. It is up to you to use this power in a way that is beneficial to your life and your care receiver’s life. Connecting with other family caregivers makes it easier to find hope when you know that you’re not alone.

Remember that hope is a show of trust in the likelihood of a positive outcome. If you struggle to find hope because you don’t know how everything will turn out, or even the steps you’re required to take, don’t worry. You can’t know the answers to all the questions. You just have to trust that things will happen and that something good will come of it.

When hope is missing, life can seem drained of all its color and vibrancy. But you can combat this feeling and find your hope by recognizing the little things and brief moments of calm in your life.

Hope is not just important; it is one of the most important things in the life of a family caregiver. Hope keeps you going. It reminds you that bad times cannot last. It spurs you on to great things.

Find the full article at: [7 Reasons Why Finding Hope For The Future Is So Important \(aconsciousrethink.com\)](https://aconsciousrethink.com/7-Reasons-Why-Finding-Hope-For-The-Future-Is-So-Important/).





Family Meeting for the Care of An Aging Loved One

Elder Law, Long Term Care, Senior Living

A family caregiving meeting is an essential tool when dealing with the care of an aging loved one. These meetings are beneficial for helping to keep all family members abreast of decisions that need to be made along with changes in diagnosis or prognosis. They also help to ensure that all family members feel that they have a voice. Family meetings can help to keep caregiving responsibilities from falling solely on the shoulders of one family member. In addition, family caregiving meetings can foster cooperation among family members and lessen the stress associated with caring for an aging loved one.

Who should attend a family caregiving meeting?

There are a number of people who should be included in a family caregiving meeting. First and foremost, it is important to include the aging loved one in the meeting whenever possible. This helps the aging loved one to feel that they are being heard and that their opinions and thoughts are being considered. If a spouse is living, the spouse should be included, as well as any children and possibly siblings of the aging person. Anyone else involved in care for the person should also be there. This could include paid caregivers, family friends, or neighbors. Depending on family dynamics, a facilitator can be helpful in running the meeting.

When should a family have a caregiving meeting?

First it is important to note that family caregiving meetings are not a one-time event. They must occur on a regular basis. The first family meeting can occur before an aging loved one

actually needs care. This can give the person who may eventually need more care a say in their future. Most families will plan to meet when an aging loved one begins to show signs of needing care or when a diagnosis is given that determines care will soon be needed. In addition, meetings should be scheduled regularly to discuss changes in diagnosis, prognosis, or the general needs of the loved one or the caregivers.

How can a family hold a successful caregiving meeting?

The key to having a successful caregiving meeting is cooperation. This doesn't mean that family members will agree on everything, but it is important that all family members are respectfully heard and considered. Families must be willing to compromise and seek the best plan for their aging loved one. Additionally, a smoothly run meeting should have an agenda and families should try to stay focused on the items included on the agenda. When holding a meeting, always put things in writing and be sure that all those involved get a copy of the important information and everyone's responsibilities.

What challenges do families face in caregiving meetings?

One of the biggest challenges to family caregiving meetings is the family's history. All families have their own dynamics that can cause problems in a caregiving meeting. There may be members of the family who are at odds with one another. This can become an obstacle to having a successful caregiving meeting. The role that each family member plays can be a challenge. Some members may be overbearing and demand control, while others are peacemakers and do not feel free to share their thoughts. Another challenge is that some family members may be in denial of the severity of an aging loved one's needs. This may make it difficult to get a consensus for care.

What are the benefits of a family care meeting?

Family caregiving meetings are beneficial and necessary when an aging loved one can no longer care for themselves. These meetings can help to divide the responsibilities of caregiving and reduce stress placed on the family members. It is important that families remember that the meetings are for the care of their loved one and that they should focus on cooperating with one another to help the process to run more smoothly and successfully.

Find the full article at: [Hold a Family Caregiving Meeting for the Care of an Aging Loved One - Red Oak Legal \(redoaklegalpc.com\)](https://www.redoaklegalpc.com/blog/hold-a-family-caregiving-meeting-for-the-care-of-an-aging-loved-one)

Reminiscing

Thinking and talking about the past can be comforting and enjoyable for a person with Alzheimer's disease. Celebrating special occasions is also a good way for people to share special moments.

People with Alzheimer's disease sometimes live in the past. Reminiscing about childhood can be a pleasant way for them to experience old memories, use verbal skills, and connect to others socially. Talking about events and people they remember might even stimulate them to remember more about their lives.

To encourage a person with Alzheimer's disease to reminisce:

- Ask the person to talk about his/her schooling and teachers.
- Ask the person about his/her family (brothers, sisters, or cousins).
- Talk about a favorite memory from your childhood.
- Tell him/her about something a young child did that made you laugh.



Be prepared for questions about where these people are now. Keep in mind that a person with Alzheimer's disease may not realize someone is deceased. There is no need to stimulate a grieving process.

You can also look at pictures from parenting magazines. Pictures of children lift most people's spirits. This can also be a way to spur a conversation about childhood memory.

Use old photographs to reminisce about the person's younger days. Pictures of his/her children, nephews, and nieces can also be a good way to initiate a conversation. If the person is not particularly talkative, you can tell him/her about what you liked to do when you were child.

This activity can be found here <https://www.amazon.com/Alzheimers-Activities-Guide-Caregivers-Activites/dp/B000V20XHC>

FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

The Caregiver Support Group is a monthly group that offers a safe place to discuss the stresses, challenges, and rewards of providing care for an aging loved one. The meetings will be held virtually for the foreseeable future from noon to 1 p.m.

February's session will be held on Thursday, February 11, 2021 from noon to 1 p.m. Please RSVP (stacey.l.bonner@vanderbilt.edu) for Zoom details by Wednesday, February 10.



LUNCHTIME SESSION

The Lunchtime Session is a monthly educational session to receive valuable information while providing care to your loved one.

This month, Dr. Jennifer Kim and Dr. Kanah Lewallen with Vanderbilt University School of Nursing will present a 4-part course for family caregivers of individuals with dementia/Alzheimer's.

In February, they will provide an overview of dementia. This session will cover stages of dementia, medication management, changes in communication, caregiver role in decision making, and caregiver self-care.



February's lunchtime session will be held on Wednesday, February 17, 2021 from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. Please RSVP (stacey.l.bonner@vanderbilt.edu) for Zoom details by Tuesday, February 16 or select the February's zoom link on the attached flyer.

"Some days there won't be a song in your heart. Sing anyway."

-Emory Austin