

January 2023

Boomers, Elders, & More E-Newsletter

Monthly Elder Care Newsletter of the Vanderbilt Child & Family Center



Feeling accomplishment requires reflecting on the achievements of the past year and setting goals for the new. Caregivers often overlook the very real contributions they make as they co-create a life of dignity and respect for their loved one and themselves. It is important to have reminders and to revisit these to draw strength and support - these three simple affirmations may help:

- I contribute meaningfully to the emotional and physical wellbeing of someone through elder care.
- I am a person deserving of rest, renewal, and my own personal health so that I can live my best life.
- Seeking help is a sign of strength and resilience and I can create a community of support.

Before making new year's resolutions, first think about the hours of compassionate care you managed in 2022 and which may have included some of these tasks: bill paying, food preparation, house cleaning, home maintenance and repair, pet care, personal hygiene

assistance, pill planning, and scheduling and facilitating medical appointments. A gentle reminder that you probably recently expended extra effort to include elderly loved ones in holiday celebrations, and some managed this while also taking care of children and guests.



As you navigate this new year, reflect on all that you already do before you create those to-do lists. Try not to allow the stress of responsibility to deprive you of the joy of your relationship with the elderly relative. A great new year's resolution is to schedule one fun activity monthly for you both to enjoy doing together: attend a concert, complete a jigsaw puzzle, cook a family recipe, create a craft, go to the movies (or host a movie night at home), visit a gallery or museum (or check out an Art book from the library and peruse it together), walk through a botanical garden (maybe take a flower home.)

[VCFC maintains a list of resources](#) for caregivers seeking a community of support. If you have ideas for activities or speakers that would benefit caregivers, please contact: famcenter@vanderbilt.edu



Vanderbilt University will transition to [new well-being and employee assistance program](#) services starting in 2023, expanding service offerings and making resources available to employees' families.



“We are invested in the holistic health of every member of our community and are committed to responding to our community’s needs,” said Eric Kopstain, vice chancellor for administration. “We have expanded our offerings for mental health and well-being needs on campus. Our new EAP and well-being packages will provide services that touch on mental health, physical health and financial health, further improving the overall health of faculty, staff and postdocs. We want all members of the Vanderbilt community to feel supported and valued, and we believe this change shows our commitment to our colleagues.”

Vanderbilt’s faculty, staff, postdoctoral scholars and their families will receive expanded support through Lyra, a behavioral health service provider, which will deliver greater access, 24/7 concierge navigation care 365 days a year, and support for behavioral and mental health needs.

“We are most excited about the services and who is covered,” said Pam Jones, associate vice chancellor for health and wellness. “We currently offer services only to faculty, staff and postdocs. With Lyra, Vanderbilt also will be able to offer services for their spouses and children ages 2 and older. Lyra covers 12 counseling sessions per year, which is three times more than what we currently offer. I am very passionate about mental health, especially after these last few years of the pandemic. Lyra will bring increased resources and services to Vanderbilt’s faculty and staff.”

Employees will have access to Virgin Pulse, a well-being management and coaching platform that encourages increasing or maintaining overall well-being—from taking a health risk assessment to completing well-being challenges.

“Over the years, Vanderbilt offered services to improve the health and well-being of our faculty and staff, but with Virgin Pulse, we are about to take a big step forward in these efforts,” said Stacey Bonner, wellbeing manager. “This new platform gives faculty, staff and postdocs personalized resources to help kick-start healthy habits and maintain them for the long term in a fun and rewarding way.”

More information on the new employee assistance program and well-being management platform will be shared in advance of the launch of these services in January 2023. If you have questions, please email Wellbeing@vanderbilt.edu.

Caregiving apps to check out

- [Caring](#). Like Carely, Caring is a free platform (with an optional premium/paid option) that lets you manage tasks, share the load with others, access your loved one's medical and medication info, and much more. Available for Android.
- [Dementia Talk](#). A handy app that focuses on dealing with loved ones living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementia, offering a behavior tracker, care plan, medication lists and a schedule.
- [eCare21](#). Remotely monitor your loved one's heart rate, glucose levels, sleep and other health data via wearable devices that capture and share the info.
- [MyMeds](#). A medication app that sends reminders via email, in-app notifications or text messages.
- [RxSaver](#). This app and website helps cut prescription costs with tools to compare prices.

MEMORY & ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT GROUP

The Vanderbilt Memory & Alzheimer's Center [support group](#) is for individuals recently diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment or early stage Alzheimer's disease and their loved ones.

These support groups meet monthly in the early evening at the Vanderbilt Memory & Alzheimer's Center. The group is currently meeting virtually via Zoom due to COVID-19 safety measures.

To learn more or reserve your spot for an upcoming meeting, please call Sydney Wilhoite at (615) 875-9601 or email sydney.wilhoite@vumc.org.

Books for Children:

