

Boomers, Elders, and More E-Newsletter

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<https://www.vanderbilt.edu/child-family->

Message from the Coordinator

As we enter the New Year, this is a great time to make positive changes. A great way to start is by setting new resolutions or goals. Ask yourself, what changes can you make to better serve your loved one? Because let's face it, caregiving can be hard and stressful! So this year, challenge yourself to find new ways to be the best caregiver you can be.

Check out four great ways to get you started for the New Year! Remember the happier you are the more care your loved one receives!

- 1. Appreciate the small things in life-**When you notice yourself becoming critical, press pause. Take 2 minutes to write down something you are grateful for, or close your eyes and reflect on 5 things that you've done for yourself, witnessed, or received recently that you can feel good about. This could be taking 30 seconds to gaze out the window at the trees when you woke up, or that you made a special effort to be patient with your loved one during a tense moment.
- 2. Take time to really love the person you care for-** Life is sacred and daily caregiving can find the work difficult, exhausting, and annoying. Practice not letting the hard parts of caring get in the way of really loving being with that person. Acknowledge how special it is that you can spend close time with this person at such a vulnerable time in their life.
- 3. Set healthy boundaries-** Practice paying attention to when you're heading over the ledge of over-committing yourself. Letting your care team and loved one know you need a break is such an important way of honoring yourself and avoiding caregiver burnout.
- 4. Reflect on what makes you happy-**Setting healthy boundaries creates the space for your New Year's resolutions. Caregiving for a loved one often pulls us away from the activities and practices that we used to identify with. Take time to reflect on practices that bring you joy.

For more information about this article please visit: <https://thecaregiverspace.org/2014-new-years-resolutions/>

If you need information or resources to assist you in your caregiving role, contact Denisha Morris, Family Services Coordinator, at denisha.m.morris@vanderbilt.edu or 615-936-1990.



NEWS HIGHLIGHT

Seniors, leaving the house daily may help you live longer

By: Honor Whiteman

New research finds that older people who leave their homes every day are likelier to live longer than those who remain indoors, regardless of their health status or functional capacity.

Lead study author Dr. Jeremy Jacobs, from the Hadassah Hebrew-University Medical Center in Israel, and colleagues recently reported their findings in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*.

According to a 2015 study, approximately 2 million older adults in the United States never or rarely leave their homes, primarily due to functional difficulties.

Not only does this have implications for their physical health — due to lack of exercise, for example — but it can harm their psychological health, too. Research has shown that those who are confined to their homes are more likely to develop depression, anxiety, and other mental illnesses.

For their study, Dr. Jacobs and colleagues set out to investigate whether or not the frequency with which an older adult leaves their home might be associated with mortality.

The research included 3,375 adults aged between 70 and 90 years. All adults were enrolled in the 1990–2015 Jerusalem Longitudinal Study.

As a part of the study, participants completed questionnaires about how often they left their homes each week. They were divided into three groups, based on their answers: daily (six to seven times weekly), often (two to five times weekly), and rarely (less than once per week).

Mortality among the participants was assessed from 2010 to 2015.

The researchers found that older adults who left their homes on a daily basis were at the lowest risk of death, while those who rarely left their homes had the highest mortality risk.

"What is interesting is that the improved survival associated with getting out of the house frequently was also observed among people with low levels of physical activity, and even those with impaired mobility," says Dr. Jacobs. "Resilient individuals remain engaged, irrespective of their physical limitations."

These findings also remained after accounting for the participants' social status and other medical conditions, including visual impairment, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and chronic kidney disease.

For more information about this article visit: <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/320158.php>



How to Plan for a Manageable Move

First step: Deciding what to take and what to leave

By: AARP

Relocating aging parents or other loved ones from their longtime, memory-filled home to a smaller place in a new community is a challenge — for them and for those who help them. Ideally, the person moving will allow a year to find the new and leave the old. A more likely scenario is that something happens to precipitate the move — the death of a spouse or onset of serious health issues — and family and friends will scramble to divest decades of belongings. Wherever the move — a retirement community, assisted living or in with a child — you'll want to make the transition as seamless as possible. The more stressful the move, the harder it will be for your loved one to adapt to the change.

Hiring a Senior Move Manager can be a lifesaver if you live far away or are in a fraught relationship with your family member. Even when everyone in the family lives nearby and adores one another, an SMM can help keep it that way.

A good SMM is an adviser, problem solver, wise friend, neutral third party and professional downsizer who helps families shuck the stuff while holding onto the memories. SMMs arrive without the baggage that can come with family history. They understand that when an aging parent leaves the family home, it is a loss for the whole family.

Their fee ranges from \$40 to \$80 an hour — and may be higher in some areas. Services are a la carte, but some SMMs will offer packages for two or three services. Interview a few before choosing one: You'll be spending a lot of time and some emotional moments with this person. Start by asking friends and care facilities for referrals. The National Association of Senior Move Managers may be able to recommend someone in your area.

For more information about this article visit: <https://www.aarp.org/caregiving/home-care/info-2017/moving-plan.html>



What is Compassion Fatigue?

By: Harriet Hodgson

You've heard of burnout, but may not have heard of compassion fatigue. As more family members become caregivers, more seem to be learning about this term. A heavy workload and never-ending tasks may make you wonder if you've developed compassion fatigue. What is it and what can you do about it?

Compassion fatigue is a type of stress caused by caring for others. Although burnout develops over time, compassion fatigue comes on suddenly. In his article "Burnout and Compassion Fatigue: Watch for these Signs," psychotherapist Dennis Portnoy classifies compassion fatigue as a form of burnout.

"Compassion fatigue is caused by empathy," he explains. "It is the natural consequence of stress resulting from caring for and helping traumatized or suffering people." According to Portnoy, burnout and compassion fatigue may overlap.

The symptoms of compassion fatigue can be worrisome and include:

- less ability to function
- more stress than usual
- caregiver feels traumatized
- working harder, getting less done
- irritability
- feeling bored
- more sickness, aches, and pain

For more information about this article visit: <https://thecaregiverspace.org/what-is-compassion-fatigue/>

Daily Reminder...



Source: Pinterest

January Upcoming Events

Vanderbilt Family Resource Center's Caregiver Support group will be held on Wednesday, January 10, 2018 from noon to 1 p.m. at Medical Center East (MCE) in 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 expectations.

Are you a family caregiver? Are you new to this role? Family caregiving can be challenging and may require extra assistance. You may be familiar the words in-home care and home health care, but do you know the difference? Carol Keopf with Vanderbilt Home Care Services will speak on the difference and cost between in-home care and home health care. The session will be on Wednesday, January 17th from noon to 1 p.m. in Light Hall Room 412.