

July 2022 Boomers, Elders, & More E-Newsletter

Monthly Elder Care Newsletter of the Vanderbilt Child & Family Center



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A Message from the Wellbeing Manager

July is Social Wellness Month. Social Wellness refers to the relationships we have and how we interact with others. It involves building healthy, nurturing and supportive relationships as well as fostering a genuine connection with those around you. No matter how old you are, engaging socially with other people is important.

The lack of social support contributes to negative impacts on health and well-being. Having a variety of positive supports can contribute to the psychological and physical wellbeing of an individual. Support from others can be important in reducing stress, increasing physical health and defending against psychological problems such as depression and anxiety.

Joining a group of interest in your community, volunteering, choosing a hobby or connecting with a pet are ways to boost your social wellness this July.

To maximize your social wellness, learn to embrace who you are and surround yourself with positive, caring people. Doing so will improve your ability to develop strong interpersonal relationships and live a socially rewarding life.

Upcoming Event

Family Caregiver Support Group

Wednesday, July 13th

12:00 – 1:00 PM

Location: Zoom

The Caregiver Support Group is a monthly group that offers a safe space to discuss the stresses, challenges, and rewards of providing care for an aging loved one.

Please RSVP for Zoom details to stacey.l.bonner@vanderbilt.edu

Being healthy is a success that many people forget to celebrate -
OurMindfulLife.com

Ask an Expert: Five Tactics for Dementia Caregiving

Caregiving for a loved one living with Alzheimer's or dementia can be an incredibly tiresome job. From the long hours to psychological exhaustion, to the physically demanding environment, there are very few ways to actively prepare for and predict the responsibilities that caregiving entails. Silverado's Director of Clinical Education Sue Kruse shares key tactics for managing the day-to-day challenges of dementia caregivers.



Communication Through Understanding

According to Kruse, one of the most frustrating problem areas for individuals with dementia and their caregivers is communication. Many times, the person living with dementia may be unable to express their needs, leading them to become increasingly frustrated.

Kruse says that it can be easier to identify the need by attempting to understand what the person with dementia is trying to express. For example, if an individual protests taking a shower, Kruse suggests thinking of alternative ways of presenting a solution. "Postpone the shower until later in the day or give the person a reason to take the shower, 'Your son Bob is coming for lunch today, so we need to take a shower,' Kruse says.

Acknowledge is Key

Typically, when a person with dementia says something that may not be true, it's best not to rationalize and correct their thoughts. "If the person says they need to go to school today, make a simple statement such as, 'Today is Saturday, isn't it wonderful that we have no school today?'" Kruse says. Because dementia patients can have a false sense of reality, trying to explain something may confuse or frustrate them even more.

Know your Own Limits

With the physical and psychological demands that come with dementia caregiving, studies show that caregivers are at risk for increased health problems, such as chronic fatigue, loss of appetite or even depression. "Caring for someone with dementia is a 24 hour a day job and is overwhelming for anyone," says Kruse. Therefore, knowing your limits and practicing self-care is critical in order to fully be present and care for your loved one. Kruse advises to take help offered by friends, family or day care programs.

Minimize Disrupted Sleep

Kruse explains that as dementia progresses, sleep disturbances can often occur for both the person with dementia and their caregivers. "The person with dementia can be up during the night attempting to leave the house or rummaging throughout the home, causing the caregiver to be sleep deprived," Kruse says as an example. Though uninterrupted sleep throughout the night may not always be easy to achieve, taking a few extra steps can minimize distractions so both parties can have restful nights. For example, you can make the sleeping environment extra comfortable by playing restful music.

Never Take Rejection or Frustration Personally

It's important to remember that changes in mood and personality are caused by chemical changes in the brain, not by daily tasks. "Realize that the person with dementia is often afraid and confused and this is a defense mechanism," says Kruse. Learn to compartmentalize their behaviors with performance as a caregiver.

Full article - [Ask an Expert: Five Tactics for Dementia Caregiving - SeniorNews](#)

10 Questions to Ask When Considering a Memory Care Community

Let's say you've been taking care of your loved one with dementia and their care needs have exceeded your skills. Perhaps your health is being affected, or it is just time for a change in their care plan. It may be time to start looking for a memory care community.

Care for individuals with dementia and Alzheimer's can range from assisted living in the earliest stages, when less personalized care is needed, to memory care in mid-to-late stages. Use these questions to guide your search:

- 1) **Who's running the place?**
You'll most likely tour with the community's marketing and sales director. Talk with the executive director about how you will engage as a family member, how issues are resolved, how staff are trained and what certifications they have, as well as COVID policies and resident security.
- 2) **How big or small?**
Consider the number of resident rooms, the size of the room, whether they are private or companion rooms, the number of dining rooms, and indoor and outdoor activity spaces.
- 3) **What type of medical care is available?**
Most memory care communities have at least one registered nurse or licensed nurse practitioner on the floor 24/7. Speak to the nursing staff and the medical director before choosing your community to understand their level of engagement with family members.
- 4) **How do staff interact with residents?**
All staff should be trained in dementia care. A common caregiver ratio is one caregiver to five or six residents. Some facilities assign residents to the same caregiver every day. All of this may vary. Ask how caregivers are trained to manage dementia behaviors, especially distress, anger and aggression. It's important to understand their approach and decide if you feel comfortable with it.
- 5) **What's to eat?**
Yes, food is a factor. What is the meal setting and cleanliness level? Meet the registered dietician and ask about how they'll address your loved one's nutrition needs. Find out if there's an alternative if your loved one doesn't like a particular meal.
- 6) **What types of stimulation are available and how often?**
Do they have specific areas to accommodate higher-functioning and lower-functioning individuals? How do they ensure activity participation? How much time do residents spend in their rooms, if any?
- 7) **Are companion rooms available?**
If a private room is not available or if budget is a concern, a companion room is a great option. The executive director will match the information of your loved one with another resident and they will observe the compatibility.
- 8) **Are they regulated?**
Regulation varies by state, not by community, and is typically overseen by the State's Department of Health.
- 9) **Is there a waiting list?**
Unfortunately, waiting lists are common, especially at the best communities. When they're at capacity, you have to wait for an opening. This is the main reason to start your search when symptoms are first observed. You can get on waiting lists and then pass if you're not ready. Find out if there are any consequences to passing.
- 10) **How much does it cost?**
Many people sell their homes and use the profits to pay for memory care. Medicaid can help with expenses if the community accepts Medicaid payments and your loved one qualifies. Medicare does not pay living expenses, only medical expenses.

Full article - [Alzheimer's Foundation of America | 10 Questions to Ask When Considering a Memory Care Community \(alzfdn.org\)](https://www.alzfdn.org/10-questions-to-ask-when-considering-a-memory-care-community)

Tune In To Music & Tone Out Stress!

Many studies show music improves the quality of life for older adults. Music is an amazing drug-free way to reduce stress, anxiety and pain. It also improves immune function, helps memory and encourages exercise.



Music is often recommended for people with Alzheimer's or dementia. It reduces anxiety and agitation, and boosts happiness and engagement.

To help you find music seniors love, compiled is the top hits from the '30s, '40s, & '50s.

1950's Music
for

70
Year Olds

1940's Music
for

80
Year Olds

1930's Music
for

90
Year Olds

♪ *Mona Lisa* – Nat King Cole

♪ *Hound Dog* – Elvis Presley

♪ *Rock Around the Clock* – Bill Haley & His Comets

♪ *I Walk the Line* – Johnny Cash

♪ *Great Balls of Fire* – Jerry Lee Lewis

♪ *La Bamba* – Ritchie Valens

♪ *Jailhouse Rock* – Elvis Presley

♪ *Slippin' Around* – Floyd Tillman

♪ *Smoke on the Water* – Red Foley

♪ *New San Antonio Rose* – Bob Wills & His Texas Playboys

♪ *Candy Kisses* – George Morgan

♪ *Lovesick Blues* – Hank Williams

♪ *Bouquet of Roses* – Eddy Arnold

♪ *Chattanooga Choo Choo* – Glen Miller & His Orchestra

♪ *Begin the Beguine* – Artie Shaw

♪ *Pennies from Heaven* – Bing Crosby

♪ *The Way You Look Tonight* – Fred Astaire

♪ *God Bless America* – Kate Smith

♪ *Sing, Sing, Sing* – Benny Goodman

♪ *Cheek to Cheek* – Fred Astaire

♪ *Puttin on the Ritz* – Harry Richman