

Boomers, Elders, and More E-Newsletter

2140 Belcourt Avenue
Nashville, TN 37212

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

Message from the Coordinator

The Vanderbilt Child & Family Center is available to support you in your role as a family caregiver. The center is always thinking about programs and events that will help you relieve some stress.

Over the last few months, the center has been planning events for the rest of 2016, with you in mind. The center will be sponsoring their annual elder care fair on Wednesday, September 28, 2016 from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Light Hall, North Lobby. There will be over 15 family caregiving agencies available to provide you with information pertaining to their resources and services.

The center has planned the monthly lunchtime sessions and there are some great speakers and topics scheduled. Please be aware some of the lunchtime sessions will be the first Wednesday instead of the third Wednesday of the month.

Vanderbilt Child & Family Center cannot plan these sessions without your suggestions. If you have a suggestion for a guest speaker or a topic of interest, please contact Stacey Bonner, Family Services Coordinator, at stacey.l.bonner@vanderbilt.edu.

As always, the Vanderbilt Child & Family Center appreciates your help in spreading the word about family caregiving resources that are available to the Vanderbilt community.

*Stacey Bonner
Family Services Coordinator*



News Highlight

Why Pleasant Mealtimes Could Be Key to Alzheimer's Care

Enhanced atmosphere reduces odds of malnutrition, dehydration, study suggests



Making meals more enjoyable for people with dementia might reduce their risk of malnutrition and dehydration, researchers report.

Family-style meals and music, in particular, showed promise for improving eating and drinking habits, British researchers found.

“It is probably not just what people with dementia eat and drink that is important for their nutritional well-being and quality of life—but a holistic mix of where they eat and drink, the atmosphere, physical and social support offered, the understanding of formal caregivers, and levels of physical activity enjoyed,” said lead researcher Lee Hooper, of the University of East Anglia.

The researchers assessed various ways of improving food and fluid intake among more than 2,200 people with dementia.

“The risk of dehydration and malnutrition are high in older people, but even higher in those with dementia,” Hooper said in a university news release.

Understanding how to help people eat and drink well is very important in supporting health and quality of life for people with dementia, she explained.

“We found a number of promising interventions—including eating meals with caregivers, having family-style meals, facilitating social interaction during meals, longer mealtimes, playing soothing mealtime music, doing multisensory exercise and providing constantly accessible snacks,” Hooper said.

Providing education and support for both formal and informational caregivers also appeared helpful, she added.

However, further research is needed to pinpoint the most effective methods, she said.

The study was published recently in the journal *BioMed Central Geriatrics*.

Source: https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/news/fullstory_158885.html

Sources of a Senior's Bad Mood

By Renata Gelman (assistant director of clinical services)

Caring for your loved one every day is stressful in any situation, and it becomes especially challenging when your loved one is never satisfied. Everything you do just doesn't seem to be enough. You may begin to feel like you are letting them down, even though you are efficiently handling all their requests. You feel hopeless because they just won't let up with the constant complaints, criticisms and demands.

Sometimes you may not understand your loved one's reasoning: therefore you take the criticism or complaints personally. It is important to take a step back and analyze the situation with a fresh set of eyes.

Common Factors That Can Cause a Senior's Bad Mood

Could it be stress? It's no surprise that stress takes a toll on one's body, mind and soul. Seniors can become especially irritable when feeling stressed, and caregivers need to have compassion and learn to not take things as seriously. Try to understand they are perhaps feeling vulnerable and just need to vent to someone. Unfortunately, that someone may be you—but try to keep a positive attitude.

Is it health related? Changes in behavior could be a sign of physical or mental decline. Look for these signs, as well as signs of pain. Keep in mind that your loved one might be confused or afraid to say anything to you about it. Cognitive difficulties can have strange or surprising sources, such as bacterial infections like a Urinary Tract Infection (UTI). If you notice changes in your loved one's behavior, contact their doctor and request an evaluation.

Are medications to blame? Drastic shifts in personality can be the result of new medications or even new drug interactions. Keep a lookout for changes in behavior after your loved one begins a new prescription, and always make sure a pharmacist checks all drug combinations. Abuse of prescription medications can cause marked changes in personality as well.

Has this been a life-long behavior? In some ways, people change, grow and evolve with age. But it is very likely that if your loved one has been grouchy, verbally abusive, or just plain mean his entire life, old age will not cure that. In fact, the personality traits may become more prevalent. How does a caregiver handle an elder who is never going to change? Read the next tip!

Take a step back and set some boundaries. Breathe. Relax. Be patient. Figure out a good plan to set boundaries for your loved one if their behavior gets out of control, because you don't want to feel burned out. Get some help. Taking a break will help both you and your loved one deal with the frustration. If your loved one needs more help than you can give, or you feel you are no longer willing to care for that person (a normal reaction to difficult elders) consider a home care company. Your loved one will be in good hands, and you can keep your sanity.

source: <https://www.agingcare.com/Articles/seniors-bad-mood-154967.htm>



The Caregiver's Bill of Rights

Even as a caregiver I have the right:

To take care of myself. I affirm that as I care for myself, I gain the strength and will to care for others.

To seek help from others even though my loved ones may object. I recognize that there are limits of my endurance and strength.

To maintain parts of my own life that do not include the person for whom I care, just as I would if he or she were healthy.

To get angry, be depressed, and express other difficult feelings occasionally.

To reject (or ignore) any attempts by my loved one (either conscious or unconscious) to manipulate me through guilt, and/or depression.

To receive consideration, affection, forgiveness, and acceptance for what I do. I recognize that the person for whom I care may not be able to provide these, and I look to my loved ones for these qualities, and I give them in return.

To take pride in what I am accomplishing and celebrate the courage, wisdom and tenacity that I express in fulfilling my role as caregiver.

To protect my individuality and the life style I choose which will sustain me after my loved one no longer needs my care giving energies.

To expect and demand that resources dedicated to aiding physically and mentally impaired persons in our country include aiding and supporting caregivers.

Source: http://www.alzsupport.org/uploads/THE_CAREGIVERS_bill_of_rights.pdf

Upcoming Events

Join Tiffany Cloud Mann, VP of Programs for the Alzheimer's Association, to explore how communication takes place when someone has Alzheimer's, learn to decode the verbal and behavioral messages delivered by someone with dementia, and identify strategies to help you connect and communicate at each stage of the disease. This month's Boomers, Elders, and More Luncheon Session will be held on Wednesday, July 20, 2016 from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. in Medical Center East 8380A. Please feel free to bring your lunch.

Vanderbilt Family Resource Center's Caregiver Support group will be held on Wednesday, August 10, 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.

If you need information or resources to assist you in your caregiving role, contact Stacey Bonner, Family Services Coordinator, at stacey.l.bonner@vanderbilt.edu or 936-1990.



COMING SOON!