

# Boomers, Elders, and More E-Newsletter

Monthly Elder Care Newsletter of the Vanderbilt Child & Family Center



## November is National Family Caregivers Month!

*A message from the Family Services Coordinator*

Please join me in celebrating family caregivers and recognizing everything they do to provide love and care to their loved ones. As former president Obama stated, "each day, courageous individuals step forward to help care for family members in need, their quiet acts of selflessness and sacrifice telling a story of love and devotion. Across our country, parents and children, siblings and spouses, friends and neighbors heroically give of themselves to support those in their lives affected by illness, injury, or disability. During National Family Caregivers Month, we salute the people who play difficult and exhausting roles, and we recommit to lifting up these Americans as they care for their loved ones while protecting their dignity and individuality."

Studies have shown that caregivers often neglect their own care and needs, are in poor physical health themselves, and are at a higher risk for anxiety and depression. Caregivers who are isolated without a strong social support system are most affected by the struggles of caregiving. This November, I encourage you to reach out to other caregivers to make them feel appreciated, and be intentional about practicing self-care if you are a caregiver.

I invite you to join the Caregivers Support Group on November 14th at noon for a time of sharing, information gathering, and learn coping strategies from others. If you need information or resources to assist you in your caregiving role, please don't hesitate to contact me for a consultation at [alice.shi@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:alice.shi@vanderbilt.edu).

Alice Shi  
Family Services Coordinator

### Upcoming Events

November 14th, 12:00 - 1:00 PM  
Caregiver Support Group  
Light Hall Room 437

2019 Lunchtime Sessions will begin the 3rd Wednesday of each month starting January 16.

NOT all SUPERHEROS  
LEAP over TALL BUILDINGS,  
have X-RAY VISION  
and WEAR CAPES.  
SOMETIMES they make  
DINNER, HOLD your HAND  
or TAKE the TIME to  
LISTEN. THANK YOU =  
SUPERHERO. in case you didn't know already, you're the second kind.



## MAKING MEDICARE CHOICES FOR YOUR PARENTS

October 2, 2018 by Anne Tumlinson

“My dad doesn’t have Medicare!” A friend said to me recently. “What?” I responded. This seemed unlikely. Pretty much everyone over age 65 has some form of Medicare and my friend’s dad is at least 90 years old. Then he explained, “Dad has something called ‘Blue Cross advantage.’”

I explained that his dad does have Medicare but it’s a particular form of Medicare that private health plans (like BlueCross BlueShield) offer. It’s called “Medicare Advantage.”

Older adults sign up for Medicare Advantage because private insurers often fill the gaps in traditional Medicare coverage — like vision or dental coverage – and sometimes at a lower price. Also, Medicare Advantage can be a simpler and more streamlined way to deal with Medicare. You get everything — usually including drug coverage — in one big package. Sound good?! Not so fast.

As with everything in your world now, this is COMPLEX. There are trade-offs in choosing Medicare Advantage. Here are some tips and resources to help you figure it out.

### Timing for Making Decisions

If you want to sign up for Medicare Advantage, change plans, or change from Medicare Advantage to traditional Medicare, the window for doing this is during the annual open season, which runs from mid-October to early December.

After that point, you’re generally locked into your decision for one year. But, you do get a test period from January 1st through mid-February to drop the coverage and return to traditional Medicare. And there are some other exceptions to the lock-in. Some examples of this are moving out of the plan’s service area or entering a nursing home.

### Picking a Plan

Your parent will get a lot of lovely, glossy marketing materials from some of the plans. And at first glance it may seem easy to see which one looks like the best choice.

But, be cautious here. Plans can be really different in their cost and coverage. A good place to start is to use the government plan finder. It can be found at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov). Just click on “Find health & drug plans” from the home page.

To help you navigate the government website, invest in AARP’s Medicare for Dummies, and consult Chapter 11. The author guides you through the process. If you want to sit down with a live person, the good news is that the government funds a resource in every state called the state health insurance program (SHIP). SHIP is a FREE, confidential and unbiased insurance counseling service.

Go to <https://www.shiptacenter.org/> and call to make an appointment with your expert and free SHIP counselor. This can be especially helpful if your parent is also eligible for Medicaid, which is available to individuals whose income and assets are below certain levels. When your parent is eligible for BOTH Medicare and Medicaid, the SHIP can help you find special programs for “dual eligibles” that may be available in your state.

*Medicare Open Enrollment, the period when you can sign up, renew or change your Medicare coverage is October 15 to December 7, 2018.*



## SELF-CARE MOVES YOU CAN DO AT YOUR DESK

By Jazmine Polk | January 18, 2018

### Nourish yourself at lunch

With breakfast the most important meal of the day and dinner a time for reconnecting with loved ones, lunch tends to get short shrift. (They don't call it a sad desk salad for nothing, right?) Instead of wolfing down another on-the-fly veggie bowl or sandwich, make your midday meal more of an opportunity for nourishment. Pack or order foods you love that offer energizing protein and complex carbs, which can put you in a brighter mood and help you power through the afternoon.

### Check out a #funny site

Chase away stress by scrolling through the latest adorable animal viral video at @cutepetclub or watching a Saturday Night Live clip on YouTube you missed over the weekend. Laughing can prompt the release of the feel-good hormones endorphins and in turn make you feel more relaxed and revived. Even a few minutes in the break room with a coworker whose stories always crack you up will do the trick.

### Get up, stretch, and move

Stretch your arms and legs at your desk, do laps around the office, walk up and down the stairs, or take on some other activity that allows you to move your body. "When we start to feel our body signaling that we need a break, stepping out of your workspace for 5 to 10 minutes can help shift perspective and gain mental clarity," says DeV Vaughn. "Running quick errands, going to make coffee or tea, or visiting with a co-worker are very helpful for rejuvenation." If you can get outside at some point during your workday, go for it: A 2017 study echoed previous research, finding that exposure to sounds found in nature has a soothing effect on the heart and brain.

### Calm yourself with essential oils

Lavender, wild orange, and bergamot therapeutic-grade essential oils can relax and uplift you, says Krista-Lynn Landolfi, life coach and self-care specialist. Hiding a small stash of these in your desk drawer and occasionally dousing some on a cotton ball you can sniff will help revive your spirits without disturbing others sitting next to you. (But ask your deskmates if they have a hypersensitivity or allergy to these oils before you use them, just in case.)

### Declutter and decorate

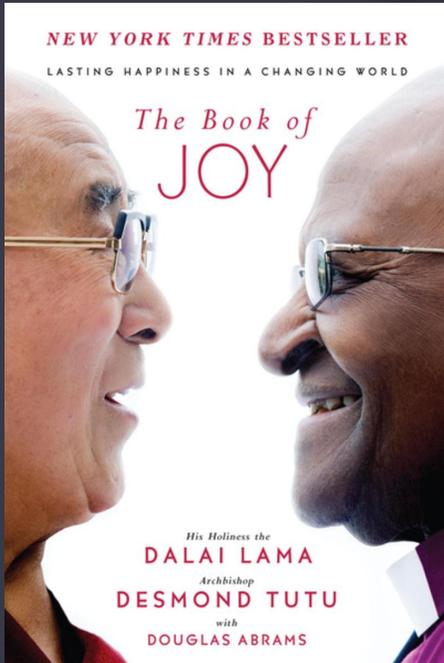
A messy environment can intensify the tension and anxiety you already feel, says DeV Vaughn. No need to be a super organized neat freak if that's not your natural style. And yep, today's open-concept workplaces don't give even high-up employees much room to personalize. But take some time every week to organize your workspace and decorate it with family or pet photos, artwork that resonates with you, or quotes that inspire you.

WHEN YOU RECOVER OR DISCOVER SOMETHING THAT NOURISHES YOUR SOUL AND BRINGS YOU JOY, CARE ENOUGH ABOUT YOURSELF TO MAKE ROOM FOR IT IN YOUR LIFE.

-JEAN SHINODA BOLEN



# Book of the month



## How do we live a life of joy in the face of adversity?

Spend a breathtaking week in deep dialogue and playful laughter with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Join two of the most joyful people on the planet—who are also beloved friends—and share their hard-won wisdom of finding enduring happiness and joy in the face of life’s challenges.

## Research Opportunities: VUMC Center for Cognitive Medicine

*Vanderbilt's Center for Cognitive Medicine conducts research and clinical activities that focus on disorders of cognition (memory, thinking, and learning). A major focus is on the aging brain, including normal cognitive aging and menopause. The Center also studies late-life cognitive disorders, including Alzheimer's disease, Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI), memory impairment in HIV, cancer, and Down Syndrome, and late-life depression.*

To join the research participant registry visit their website at:



<https://www.vumc.org/ccm/>

### Current Research Studies

- Healthy Volunteer Study
- Alzheimer Disease Prevention Study
- MINDstudy: Treatment Study for MCI (Mild Cognitive Impairment)
- Brain Imaging Study-Help Change the Future of Alzheimer's
- HIV and Memory Study
- Aging & Memory
- Memory & Senses Study
- Depression Treatment Study



VANDERBILT  
CHILD AND FAMILY CENTER

# CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

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WEDNESDAY- NOVEMBER 14, 2018  
12 PM - 1 PM  
LIGHT HALL ROOM 437



The Caregiver Support Group is a monthly support group that offers a safe place to discuss the stresses, challenges, and rewards of providing care for a loved one. Feel free to bring your lunch and share your experience, advice, and support to other caregivers. Coffee & Tea will be provided.

For more information, please contact the VCFC Family Services Coordinator Alice Shi at [Alice.Shi@Vanderbilt.edu](mailto:Alice.Shi@Vanderbilt.edu).



**SPRING 2019**

**BOOMER'S**

**ELDERS AND**

**MORE**

**LUNCHTIME**

**SESSION**

**We are gearing up to re-launch the lunchtime series on January 16 for our first session of 2019. Stay tuned for more details to come!**