

CAREGIVER CONNECTION

EMBRACE ~ EDUCATE~ENGAGE~EMPOWER

IDEA! Strategy for Caregivers

Are you dealing with behavior that you just don't know how to handle? Any caregiver can utilize this strategy but it is especially useful for caregivers dealing with Alzheimer's and Dementia. Try the IDEA! Strategy to help.

An approach to help you figure out why a behavior is happening and what you can do about it.

Identify the behavior

- What is the behavior that is difficult for you to deal with? Be specific.
- Can you see it? Does it bother others? When does it happen? Who's around when it occurs?

Explore what may be causing the behavior

Understand the cause of the behavior

- **HEALTH:** Is the person taking a new medication, getting sick, or in pain?
- **ENVIRONMENT:** Is it too noisy? Is it too hot? Is the place unfamiliar?
- **TASK:** Is the activity too hard for them now? Are there too many steps? Is it something new?
- **COMMUNICATION:** Is it hard for the person to understand what you are saying?



Understand the meaning of the behavior to the person

- Does the person feel confused, scared, nervous, unhappy, or bored?
- Does the person feel like they are being treated like a child?
- Are there things that remind the person of

something that they used to do when they were younger like go to work or pick up the children from school?

Adjust what can be done

You are the one who will need to change, the person cannot. Try different things. Pay attention to the person's feelings. Proactive being calm, gentle, and reassuring.

- **Address what is causing the behavior**
 - ▣ keep tasks and activities simple
 - ▣ keep the home as calm as possible
 - ▣ speak slowly and gently—try not to say too much at once
 - ▣ do not argue—agree and comfort the person whether they are right or wrong
 - ▣ find meaningful, simple activities so the person isn't bored
- **Distract or redirect by:**
 - ▣ offering something they like to eat
 - ▣ watching a TV show or listening to music
 - ▣ asking for their help with a simple activity
 - ▣ leading them to a different room
- **Accept the behavior**
 - ▣ some behaviors you may need to accept rather than change
 - ▣ if there are no safety concerns and it doesn't bother the person, you may need to find ways to live with it.

From: TCAD Caregiver Tip Sheets, ©2018 Alzheimer's Los Angeles. Visit [Caregiver Tip Sheets \(tn.gov\)](http://www.alz.org/caregiver-tip-sheets) for more tip sheets and resources.

Special Points of Interest:

- **IDEA! Strategy for Caregivers**
- **Community Resources Spotlight-Caregiver Education Series**
- **2021...Make It Your Year To Thrive As A Caregiver**
- **Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Corner**
- **Quick Family Recipes**

A Note from Tracy...

It's a new year and 2021 continues to challenge us, so this issue of the newsletter focuses on the IDEA! strategy for caregivers to figure out behavior and deal with it; and we look at challenges for grandparents raising grandchildren and special steps they can take to make the transition smoother.

Please take advantage of the support groups, online programs and online caregiver series on page two.

As always my hope is that the information and resources in this newsletter will help you on your journey as a caregiver.

You are welcome to contact the First Tennessee Area Agency on Aging Disability at any time. We're here to help.

Tracy Buckles
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CAREGIVER CONNECTION

Family Caregiving...Don't Try It Alone

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Thought for the Day...

Good timber does not grow with ease,
The stronger wind, the stronger trees,
The further sky, the greater length,
The more the storm, the more the strength.
By sun and cold, by rain and snow,
In trees and men good timbers grow.

~Douglas Malloch, from Good Timber poem

Community Resources Spotlight

Alzheimer's Tennessee Free Online Caregiver Education Series

Figuring out memory loss, dementia, and Alzheimer's can be overwhelming, especially while balancing COVID. Invite friends and family to join you to learn from the experts and ask your questions:

Registration Required: www.alzTennessee.org/CaregiverEducation

Wednesdays in March @ 2pm CST / 3pm EST

Questions? Amanda.BarlowLeitch@TNalz.org or 731.694.8065

Tuesdays in April @ 8:30am CST / 9:30am EST

Questions? Tracey.KendallWilson@TNalz.org or Linda Johnson 865.544.6288

Please visit the registration link above to see more details about each weeks topics and to register.

For more information go to www.alzTennessee.org or call the Helpline 24/7 1(800) ALZ-GATE (259-4283)

2021...Make It Your Year To Thrive As A Caregiver

It is still early in the new year and I hope this year you will make a conscious effort to make the time to take care of you, the caregiver. The mental, physical and emotional toll caregiving takes is significant. Caregivers often end up experiencing a health crisis of their own.

We want you to thrive as a caregiver this year so we have provided a few suggestions for you. Set a goal now to utilize a few or all of these suggestions to make 2021 a thriving year for you.

- 1) Schedule a physical.** If you are like many caregiver, you have been neglecting your own medical appointments and routine wellness screenings. Call now to schedule an appointment with your primary care physician and be sure to discuss tests or screenings you may have neglected.
- 2) Improve your nutrition.** Make sure that you are not neglecting your nutrition while you care for others. Make an effort to eat a well-balanced diet. Look for

healthy recipes and nutrition advice to keep you going.

- 3) Regular exercise.** Make it a priority to exercise at least 30 minutes a day whenever possible. You can even break it down into 15-minute sessions. See if you can get the person you are caring for to exercise with you as well.
- 4) Healing therapies.** If you haven't tried Yoga, Pilates and/ or Tai Chi then look into them. They not only provide the physical benefits of exercise, but they also teach good breathing techniques and can also help decrease stress and improve your mood. And these can easily be in the comfort of your home.
- 5) Plan "me" time.** Set aside time in your daily routine for yourself. It doesn't matter if it is a few short minutes or a longer respite moment, this will help you to be the most positive and well-balanced caregiver you can be. Do something that makes you happy—walking, reading, meditating,

journaling, or enjoy a call with a friend.

- 6) Ask for and accept help.** This is a big one and one that you should do regularly. Do not let yourself have the mindset that it is your total responsibility to care for your loved one alone. Accept help, even if it is just for a few hours a week, this will help you be a better caregiver in the long run. Make a list of ways others can help you so when someone offers you already know where you need help.

By taking time to care for yourself, you can be a happy and healthy caregiver for your loved one. I

f your situation seems impossible then you may need to consider a longer respite care option either in-home care or at an assisted living community.

Make 2021 your year to thrive as a caregiver.



Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Corner

Get Support, Grandparents!

Today in the United States, more than 2 million grandparents are living with and serving as the primary caregiver for their grandchildren. This trend poses incredible challenges both to the grandparent and the children involved, affecting everything from financial stress to child development to general family cohesion. The good news is that grandparents can find the support they deserve!



reaction to the change and helping the child do the same.

Physical Stress: The high physical demands of raising a child can take a serious toll on a senior's health.

Financial Stress: Grandparents are often living on fixed incomes but have more mouths to feed and more people to fit in their home.

Special Steps for Grandparents: These are steps grandparent caregivers can take to make the transition smoother and the new family unit stronger.

Make daily life as stable and predictable as possible. Establish a daily schedule and stick to it. Set up a routine that is helpful to both you and your grandchild, like preparing meals together.

Involve yourself in your grandchild's school life. Introduce yourself to teachers and coaches at school. They know your grandchild and might be able to provide insight and support.

Decide how to discipline. Start with a short, simple set of rules, and make sure that the children know why these

rules are important to their safety and well-being. Be consistent.

Communicate! Respect what they have to say about rules, routines, and consequences. They are more likely to be open with you. If you are receptive, tolerant, and understanding.

Take care of yourself. Find a trusted babysitter or friend to take over while you exercise, nap, or relax. Your grandchild's school may have before or after-school care.

Join a support group. Even if you have negative feelings towards your grandchild's parents, do not use the child as a sounding board. Instead, try a grandparent support group where you can vent your frustrations, discuss parenting strategies and share successes.

Remember, it is OKAY to feel angry or disappointed with your own child. If you feel they are at fault in leaving your grandchildren. And it's NORMAL to feel discouraged that you've had to change your plans at this point in your life.

Source: SCAN of Northern Virginia Fact Sheet, www.scanva.org/prc

Why do grandparents become parents again?

Grandparents often assume the role of parent in an effort to keep their family together and keep their grandchildren out of the foster care system. It might happen when a parent is deceased, incarcerated, or struggling with substance abuse, mental illness or other long-term health problem.

The challenges...

Although a grandparent most often chooses to raise a grandchild for the right reasons, they are usually not prepared for the high demands of raising a child today.

Mental Stress: Grandparents are often dealing with their own emotional

Internet Safety Tips

Are you concerned about your grandchildren and their time online and keeping them safe. Gransnet has put together some online safety information and tips to help your grandchildren and you with staying safe online. Visit www.gransnet.com/life-and-style/technology/online-safety/online-safety-for-grandparents

The most important piece of advice for grandparents raising their children is the same thing we tell all parents: Parenting is TOUGH. And asking for help shouldn't be.

Raising a grandchild is not an easy task, but it can certainly be something to be proud of and may even turn out to be the most rewarding accomplishment of your life.

Your grandchildren can be a great and unexpected source of happiness.

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**Quick Family Recipes...
Mix and Match Skillet Meal**

Yield: 6 servings

1 cup grain, uncooked
1 cup protein, cut bite sized
2 cups sauce, stirred
1/2 teaspoon spices

1 1/2 cups vegetables, fresh, canned,
or frozen, cut bite-sized
2 tablespoons topping

To make in a skillet:

- Combine all ingredients except topping in a large skillet.
- Bring to a boil. Then reduce heat to low.
- Cover and simmer until grains are tender, about 15 to 45 minutes. Stir occasionally and add liquid if too dry.
- Add topping before serving.
- Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

To bake in oven:

- Preheat oven to 350° degrees.
- Combine all ingredients except topping in a casserole dish.
- Cover with aluminum foil and bake until grains are tender, about 50 to 60 minutes.
- Add topping before serving.
- Refrigerate within 2 hours.

Grains: try bulgur, pasta, quinoa or rice

Vegetables: try a mixture of corn, carrots, green beans, onions, mushrooms, peppers or zucchini

Protein: try cooked cubed or ground beef, pork, chicken or turkey, canned tuna or salmon, tofu or beans

Sauce: try one can (10.75 ounces) condensed cream soup such as chicken, potato or tomato soup plus 1-1/4 cups water or low-fat milk

Spices: try basil, oregano, parsley, chili powder, garlic, onion powder, or ground ginger

Topping: try grated cheese or panko bread crumbs or crushed whole grain cereal or crackers

Source: SNAP-Ed recipes, www.snaped.fns.usda.gov/nutrition-education/recipes



**Connecting People with the
Assistance They Need:**

Contact us at:

Information & Assistance Line

(423) 928-3258

**Save paper and reduce
postage costs**

We hope you find the newsletter informative.

Please let us know if:

- You are willing to receive the newsletter via email
- You are no longer interested in receiving the newsletter
- If you have ideas/suggestions for future editions.

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