

CAREGIVER CONNECTION

EMBRACE ~ EDUCATE~ENGAGE~EMPOWER

Focus on Caregiver Well-Being in the New Year

As a family caregiver, it can be easy to get caught up in the daily demands of caregiving and lose sight of your own personal goals and aspirations. How long has it been since you've distanced yourself from caregiving long enough to decide what is good for you? Have you sought out help recently so that you can take some time to recharge and rediscover yourself?

The new year is upon us, which is the perfect time for taking inventory of our lives, pinpointing some changes we want to make and adjusting our attitudes to help us see these things through. Changing how you approach your caregiving responsibilities doesn't mean that you love the person you are caring for any less. To the contrary, changing your mindset can be a clear indication of the depth of your love.

Goal setting can be a powerful tool for caregivers, as it allows you to set specific goals, achievable targets that can help you manage the challenges of caregiving and improve your overall well-being. So, if a list of resolutions seems to be overwhelming then focus on one or two goals for the year.

Ideas and Tips to Help You Take on the New Year with New Goals, a New

Mindset, and a Focus on Self-Care...

Take time for yourself – Caregiving can be all-consuming, and it's important to make time for yourself and your own needs. Don't feel guilty about taking time off from caregiving. Getting adequate rest as well as exercise is important for you as well as for your family members. Make a commitment to spend a minimum of three hours a week taking time to exercise, meditate, visit with friends, or enjoying a favorite hobby.

Seek support – Caregiving can be a challenging and isolating experience and it's important to seek support from others. Join an in-person caregiver support group or find one that meets online. Seeking help is a part of doing the best job you can. Hire help so you can have a break from caregiving. Or look for a suitable facility for your family member.

Educate yourself – Take the time to learn about the symptoms of dementia and other health issues so you won't feel so lost and confused. Become knowledgeable about Medicare and Medicaid

Contact an elder attorney when you need legal advice. By educating yourself you can remove some of the stress related to caregiving.

Be kind to yourself - Don't hesitate to seek support when needed. See a therapist if you need emotional support. Avoid negative people who will add stress to your life. Realize there are certain circumstances caregivers cannot control. Do not punish yourself. Step back and stop trying to solve every situation, do not stress circumstances you cannot control.

Hold others accountable – Caregiving, if possible, is best managed by having a team of individuals willing to provide support by way of time, tasks, or financial support. This team can be family, friends, and paid caregivers. Once tasks have been assigned then hold everyone accountable to perform the agreed upon tasks.

Know that you are equally important as the person that you are caring for. It may be difficult to accept, but the truth is that you will become a better caregiver if you take care of yourself.

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Special Points of Interest:

- **Focus on Caregiver Well-Being in the New Year**
- **Community Resource Spotlight**
- **Five Ways to Be Healthier in the New Year**
- **Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Corner**
- **Recipe Corner—Sweet Potato & Apple Bake**

A Note from Tracy...

As you embark on a new year I wish each of you a year filled with less stress and more joy, and I hope you will find and utilize the resources available to improve your quality of life.

I hope you will take some time for self-reflection and set some goals for the new year. Use the tips given in the article to help guide you. Setting goals can provide avenues to monitor things before they can lead to caregiver burnout. Remember that you need to nurture yourself as well as others.

Be sure and check out the information on page 2 about a new online Support Group for caregivers. Take advantage of this opportunity.

I hope the resources and information in this newsletter will help you with reducing the stress and strain that can come from caregiving. Please contact myself or our I&A line at anytime. We're here to help!

Wishing you a blessed day!

Tracy Buckles
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 Coordinator

Family Caregiving...Don't Try It Alone

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Thought for the Day...

“To love a person is to see all of their magic, and to remind them of it when they have forgotten.”

~Anonymous

NEW Virtual Caregiver Support Group Available

The Tennessee Respite Coalition has a new monthly support group meeting for caregivers across the state. The meetings will occur on the **fourth Monday of every month over Zoom at 7:00 pm Eastern Time.**

This is a wonderful opportunity to connect with other caregivers, be able to express feelings and to learn resources available.

Email respite@tnrespite.org to RSVP. Or visit their website at [TN Respite](http://TNRespite.org) or <https://tnrespite.org> for more information.

Join the Zoom Meeting from this link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82624315793?pwd=UnVkdDlOWE1Tb2RBQlYvUGJZbndxUT09>

Meeting ID: 826 2431 5793
Passcode: 2003



Caregiver Peer Support Group

4TH MONDAY OF EACH MONTH
6PM CENTRAL STANDARD TIME
VIRTUAL ON ZOOM
EMAIL: RESPITE@TNRESPITE.ORG TO REGISTER

What We Offer:

- **Peer Connection** Connect with fellow caregivers who share similar experiences.
- **Safe Space** A confidential and non-judgmental environment to express yourself.
- **Resource Sharing** Exchange valuable tips, resources, and coping strategies.
- **Empathy and Understanding** Gain insights and support from those who walk a similar path.

Community Resources Spotlight

The Dementia Caregivers Community Podcast by Alzheimer's Tennessee

Join hosts, Marketta Puckett and Tracey Kendall Wilson as they connect with you, encourage you, offer resourceful suggestions to equip you, inform you, answer your questions, and educate each other from our own life experiences by sharing concerns and laughs. Marketta and Tracey each brings a unique perspective to the Dementia Caregivers Community from personal experience and professional experience. **Check out Episode 9: When the Casseroles Stop Coming.**

You can find the podcast at www.alzTennessee.org/Podcast, Apple Podcasts, Amazon Music, Spotify, iHeart Radio, PodBean or Tune In. Questions? Tracey.KendallWilson@TNalz.org, or call 423-232-8993.

Five Ways to Be Healthier in the New Year

It is a New Year and a great time to focus on healthy eating and physical activity. As a caregiver it is important for you to take care of yourself even while you care for others. Below are 5 ways to be healthier in the new year. Try one or all of them as you begin your journey into this new year.

1. **Cut back on added sugars.** Reduce your sugar by including more whole foods rather than packaged foods. Also consider drinking water instead of sugary beverages.
2. **Limit salty snacks.** Many people have too much salt in their diet, which can lead to high blood pressure and cause stress on the heart. Enjoy low sodium snacks like unsalted nuts, fresh fruits or veggies and avoid processed snacks and foods to limit your salt.
3. **Fill your plate with fruits and vegetables.** Eating more fruits and vegetables can improve your health and reduce your risk of certain diseases. Check out the back page of the newsletter for a sweet, nutrient-packed treat!
4. **Make at least half your grains whole grains.** Whole grains have fiber, that helps with digestion and may assist with weight management. Check out <https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/shop/aisle-by-aisle/grains> for more information on whole grains.
5. **Commit to staying active all year long.** If you haven't been active before, you can start with small amounts of time and work up to about 30 minutes a day of moderate activity. Choose activities you enjoy and maybe ones that the person you are caring for can join you. Visit <https://eatsmartmovemoreva.org/move-more/> to access some great ideas and exercises you can try at home from SNAP-ED in Virginia.

Source: *USDA SNAP-Ed Connection News*

Continued from page 1- Focus on Caregiver Well-Being in the New Year

No matter how busy life gets, it is your responsibility to always chisel out opportunities to decompress, reset and recharge.

Find ways to enjoy the new year and support good physical and mental health. Make sure you have taken time to do some self-reflection and goal setting to make sure your own needs are met so that you can be a better caregiver. In the end, everyone will benefit.

Grandfamilies Corner: Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Bullying: What's Your Role in Bullying Prevention

As grandparents you can play an important role in bullying prevention. Unfortunately bullying is an all-too-common problem that can happen to any child at any time, anywhere.

Added to regular bullying now we also have cyberbullying that makes it a 24/7 problem for our children.

Bullying often takes place outside the view of adults—in the classroom when the teacher leaves the room, on the playground, on the bus, or online. As adults we need to empower them as advocates for themselves and others.

Children are often reluctant to tell someone they are being bullied because they believe that nothing can be done about it or that telling someone will make the situation worse. Showing your grandchild love, concern, and reassurance is important. But children involved in a bullying situation also need specific help and guidance.

Bullying is a serious problem that requires immediate attention and a well thought out response. Its important to address bullying whether your child is being bullied, they have witnessed bullying or they are the one doing

the bullying. It is important to understand what bullying is and how to recognize it. **Some of the characteristics of bullying:**

1. There is aggressive, unwanted words or action that hurt or harm another person physically or emotionally.
2. There is a real or perceived imbalance of power. A child who bullies chooses children to bully that he or she perceives as vulnerable.
3. There is a pattern of bullying behavior, although bullying can occur in a single incident depending on its severity or the history of those involved.
4. A child who is bullied feels that he or she is intentionally being targeted.



Recognize the warning signs that a child is being bullied:

- * Bruises and scratches
- * Lost items
- * A decline in school achievement

- * Problems with eating or sleeping
- * Changes in friends, loss of friends
- * Headaches or stomachaches
- * Reluctance to join in activities

Let your grandchild know that you take bullying seriously. Determine if the problem is really bullying. Talk with your grandchild about if they have told another adult about the situation and if not encourage them to do so.

If the bullying is occurring at school discuss the situation with the child's teacher as they may be able to help solve the problem.

The best way to stop bullying is to stop it before it starts.

For more information check out the **Eyes on Bullying Toolkit** at www.eyesonbullying.org/pdf/toolkit.pdf or print the brochure **Bullying Prevention: When Your Child is the Victim, the Bully, or the Bystander** at

www.massmed.org/violence. You can also find activities you can use with your grandchild by requesting the **Stop Bullying Now! Activities Guide** and the **Stop Bullying Now? DVD Video Toolkit** by calling 1-888-ASK-HRSA.

Coffee and Conversation Groups

A monthly gathering for relative caregivers to provide encouragement, connection, and resources.

Johnson City - 2nd Monday each month, 10:00am,

Memorial Park Community Center, 510 Bert Street. Call 423-434-5750 to let the center know you are coming. For more information contact Elizabeth Renfro at 423-753-1680 or eelizondo@utk.edu

Erwin—1st Thursday each month, 4:0pm

Drug Prevention Coalition, 105 Rock Creek Rd, Ste 4. For more information contact Tracy Chandler at 423-735-1637. ext. 109 or tpate6@utk.edu

Elizabethton - 3rd Wednesday each month, 6:00pm

Elizabethton Senior Center, 428 East G Street. For more information contact the Elizabethton Senior Center at 423-543-4362 or visit their website at www.elizabethtonseniorcenter.org

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Recipe Corner

Sweet Potato & Apple Bake

A sweet, nutrient-packed treat!

Sweet potatoes contain vitamin A, which is good for healthy eyes and skin!

Ingredients

2 cans (15 ounces each) sweet potatoes, drained
2 apples, cored and chopped
2 tablespoons (orange or apple) juice
1/4 cup brown sugar
1 tablespoon vegetable oil



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375° F.
2. Slice sweet potatoes
3. Place sweet potatoes and apple chunks in baking dish and add the fruit juice.
4. Sprinkle brown sugar on top of apples and potatoes.
5. Drizzle with vegetable oil.
6. Bake for 30 minutes.
7. Serve hot as a side dish or dessert.
8. Refrigerate leftovers.

Serves 5 · Serving: 1 cup

Source: Just Say Yes to Fruits & Vegetables, visit their website at <https://jsyfruitsveggies.org> for more recipes to try.

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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