

care SHARING

Summer 2011

www.overlakehospital.org/seniorcare

Editor: Alison Nesmith. For your free subscription to Caresharing call Overlake Hospital Senior Care at 425-688-5800 or email seniorcare@overlakehospital.org.

Resources for Family Caregivers of Older Adults



Family ties are not the only reason people start caregiving.

Why do you care?

Your reasons for caregiving can affect the experience every step of the way.

People become caregivers in many ways and for many reasons. Sometimes it's out of love or a sense of connection that transcends traditional roles. Sometimes it's out of obligation based on familial duty or a promise such as a marriage vow. Sometimes it's a response to a crisis and the feeling that there are few alternatives. Often it's a blend of many reasons.

Family and connection

I think the most common image of caregivers is of people caring for spouses or parents. In these cases, caregiving may be an expression of lifelong relationships, grounded in our sense of ourselves and our families. But not all caregiving relationships are based on family bonds.

Sometimes friends step in to fill the caregiver role. One Eastside caregiver "Janet" did just that when her friend "Maggie" was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer.¹ Maggie was divorced and her surviving parent was 85 years old and unable to care for her daughter. Janet moved Maggie into her home and, as she said, got "a new roommate!" For many months Janet took Maggie to treatments, made meals, and offered her comfort. She embraced the task with no regrets and, looking back, she says it "was the best thing I ever did, it brought the best out of me, it was my shining moment."

Obligation

"James" grew up in a time when it was difficult for a mother to be a single parent. His mother often was not around, would send him to live with foster parents, and sometimes in desperation locked James in his room for the day. James left home at an early age and severed his relationship with his mom. Years later, his mom developed a number of health problems that required her to have around-the-clock care. Suddenly, James came back into her life and cared for her until she

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Summer calendar:
Balance classes · Long-term care · Low cholesterol

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died. Their relationship was still rocky but James felt strongly that it was his duty to care for her because she was his mother.

Looking deeper

Oftentimes caregivers jump into the role without thinking about what will be required of them, how long they may be needed as a caregiver, and what they may need to change in their lives to continue in this role. Outsiders may say they are doing too much or making too many sacrifices. But this often fails to stop caregivers because the reasons they started caregiving are so embedded in them.

Our American culture constantly sends us the message that we must be strong and independent. We carry this ideal into our caregiving relationships, believing we alone must care for our loved ones. Married couples or partners often feel that the vows they made mean it is up to them to care for their spouses; that other people can't know their partners like they do, or know them well enough to care for them so intimately. We tend to keep caregiving in the family, and even if we want to look outside for help, the costs can be considerable and perhaps difficult to justify.

Self-assessment

However, if you can take the time to assess how you are doing in your role as a caregiver, you may be able to negotiate a system that works better for both you and the person you are caring for. Consider the following questions:

- How long are you willing to do this job?
- Are you risking your health, are you making sacrifices? And if so are there other ways that you can do your caregiving without having to take such risks?
- Are the risks causing you to resent the person you are caring for?
- Are the sacrifices you make changing how you feel about the person you care for?

home or assisted living, turn to your religious community, seek respite care and much more.

If you would like to get started looking at different options, a list of resources to help you manage your caregiving role is included in the box on this page. You may also want to connect with the experts at Overlake Hospital Senior Care who can discuss the range of approaches you can take and services available for negotiating your caregiving journey.

Getting started

Overlake Hospital Senior Care (425-688-5800 or seniorcare@overlakehospital.org) social workers can help you formulate a plan to provide great care without burning out or risking your own health. Senior Care also publishes a number of free resource guides for caregivers:

- Directory of Eastside Respite Care
- East King County Resource Guide for Older Adults & Their Families - includes caregiver support group listings.
- Eastside Retirement & Assisted Living Communities
- Eastside Private Pay Home Care List

The Family Caregiver Alliance website www.caregiver.org provides online caregiving groups, publishes fact sheets about health, caregiving strategies, and more.

The Family Caregiver Support Program (425- 899- 3200) helps provide financial support so that caregivers can obtain respite care.

Being a conscious caregiver

When you take time to talk about your role as a caregiver, it can slow down what may seem like a constant onslaught of decision-making and crisis situations. By being deliberate, you may have the opportunity to put many new solutions in place. By deciding what aspect of the care you want to be directly involved in and what part you are willing to delegate, the time with your loved one may be less fraught with stress. Caregivers may gain greater understanding, the person being cared for may experience less guilt. Finally, when you are able to reflect on all you have done and will continue to do, you may discover an important truth, that as a caregiver you have developed skills and abilities you never thought you would be capable of.

In fact there are numerous ways that caregivers can get assistance without giving up overall control. You can negotiate with family members for more assistance, hire in-home help, move to a smaller

This article was written by Susan Dailey, MSW, of Overlake Hospital Senior Care.

1. The names and some details in this article have been changed to protect the caregivers' privacy.

Caregiver to Caregiver

Question: My husband has advanced Alzheimer's and lives in a skilled nursing facility. What do I say when he asks me "when am I coming home?"

Answer from an Eastside caregiver: It was so upsetting to hear my husband ask this question, I felt like I had betrayed him. In the end I just told him he would come home when he got better (he had broken his hip). Eventually he did stop asking.



Alzheimer's experts say that when people with dementia move to a new facility and keep asking about going home it is because the new surroundings cause confusion and they are scared. Families can reassure loved ones that they are safe. Sometimes it is helpful to ask the person with dementia to talk about his/her home and then redirect the

conversation away from coming home. The Alzheimer's Association publishes a booklet on communicating which is downloadable at: http://www.alz.org/national/documents/brochure_communication.pdf

Question for next time: How do I ask my family to help? I am worried that my daughter will try to push us into moving into assisted living, but I can't take care of my wife 24/7, I need a break. Please send in your caregiving quandaries, tips, or answers to the question above by emailing us at seniorcare@overlakehospital.org.

Yoga in a chair

This summer, you can sign up to improve your balance. In a once-a-week class called "Seated Yoga to Maintain Balance," you will relearn how to move muscles and joints to keep them flexible and strong. This breath-oriented practice will help you increase your circulation, release tense muscles, and strengthen core muscles. Yoga is done on a chair with exercises adapted to each individual's abilities.

Seated Yoga costs \$44 for a 4-week session and there are lots of sessions to choose from

throughout the summer. Classes will be held at **City University - Building F, 150 120th Avenue NE, Bellevue**. Call Senior Care at **425-688-5800** to register for a session:

Tuesdays: July 5 to 26;
August 2 to 23; or
September 6 to 27
Time: 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.
or 12:30 to 1:45 p.m.

or

Thursdays: July 7 to 28;
August 4 to 25; or
September 8 to 29
Time: 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

Don't miss this

Overlake Hospital Senior Care's publication, "Services that Come to Your Home" has been updated. This FREE directory can help caregivers save time and find in-home services they need. It provides contacts for attorneys, beauticians, vet services, home repair, meals, pharmacies, volunteers and many other services. Call 425- 688-5800 or email us at seniorcare@overlakehospital.org and we will mail you a copy.



Overlake Hospital Senior Care staff reminds you to keep in touch over the summer months. If you have questions about caregiving or resources, please don't hesitate to contact us at 425-688-5800 or seniorcare@overlakehospital.org. (Clockwise from top left: Susan Dailey, MSW, Senior Care Volunteer; Alice Lingham, MBA, Administrative Assistant; Joan Luster MSW, LICSW, Senior Care Manager; Andy Linn Nelson, MSW, Social Work Case Manager; and not pictured, Lynn Shapley, RN, Transition Coach)

CALENDAR

Summer 2011

CLASSES

Classes are free unless noted otherwise.

A Matter of Balance

This class is designed to reduce the fear of falling and increase activity levels. Participants learn simple exercises to increase strength and balance. Registration is required by calling 425-688-5800.

When: Tuesdays and Thursdays, Sept. 6 to 29, 10 a.m. – noon

Where: City University, Bldg. F, 150 120th Ave. NE., Bellevue.

Exercise to Improve and Maintain Balance

Build a balanced, elegant posture, gain confidence in your stability and move with grace and agility. Cost is \$18.38 for two sessions and registration is required by calling 425-688-5800.

When: Tuesdays, August 2 and 9 – or – August 16 and 23, 2 - 3 p.m.

Where: Same as above.

Living Wills: Does Your Family Know Your Wishes?

This class will cover how to develop your own advance directive for health care through a workbook covering living wills, durable power of attorney and value statements. Registration is required by calling 425-688-5800.

When: Monday, September 19, 10 a.m. to noon

Where: Same as above.

Long-Term Care Insurance

Whether you already have a long-term care insurance policy or might consider one in the future, this informational seminar (not a sales presentation) will teach you how to compare policies, plans and providers. Registration is required by calling 425-688-5800.

When: Thursday, September 22, 1 to 3 p.m. or 7 to 9 p.m.

Where: Bellevue College – North Campus, 10700 Northup Way, Bellevue

Low Cholesterol Diet

An Overlake dietician will discuss ways to prepare low cholesterol meals that taste good and are good for you. Cost is \$7 for Bellevue residents and \$8 for non-residents. Advanced registration required by calling 425-452-7681, mention class number 59402.

When: Monday, September 26, 1 - 2:30 p.m.

Where: North Bellevue Community Center, 4063 148th Ave. NE, Bellevue.

GI Blues

Symptoms, diagnosis and treatment of digestive problems encountered as you age will be discussed. Advanced registration is required at 425-746-9900.

When: Wednesday, September 14, 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Where: Bellevue YMCA, 14230 Bel-Red Road, Bellevue.

Importance of Foot Care for Diabetics

Proper foot care is essential for people with Diabetes. Loss of nerve function and decreased blood flow can increase the chance of infections. Learn ways to prevent and manage common foot issues before the condition becomes critical. Advanced registration required by calling 425-556-2314.

When: Wednesday, September 21, 10 - 11:30 a.m.

Where: Redmond Senior Center, 8703 - 160th Ave. NE, Redmond.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Alzheimer's Caregivers Group, 1st Thursday each month, 3:00-4:30 pm, Community Center at Mercer View. Call 206-230-0166.

Alzheimer's Family Support Group, 3rd Monday each month, 3:00-4:30 pm, Overlake Senior Health Center. Call 425-688-5807.

Caregivers of Older Adults Support Group, 2nd and 4th Thursday each month, 3:00-4:30 pm, Overlake Medical Clinics Bellevue Senior Health Center. Call 425-688-5807.

Caregivers Support Group, 2nd and 4th Monday each month, 10:00-11:30 am, Northshore Senior Center. Call Janet Zielasko, MS, LSW at 425-286-1035.

Caregivers of Older Adults Support Group, 2nd Tuesday each month, 3:00-4:30 pm, and 4th Thursday of each month, 10:00-11:30 am, Overlake Medical Clinics Mercer Island Senior Health Center. Call 425-688-5637.

Grief & Loss Support Group for loss of loved one due to cancer, 1st and 3rd Thursday each month, 6:30-8:30 pm, Overlake Medical Tower, Suite 160, Radiation Oncology. Call 206-709-1400.

Grief & Loss Support Group for adults 65 & older, 2nd Thursday each month, 1:00-2:30 pm, Community Center at Mercer View. Before attending, please call Betsy Zuber at 206-230-0166.

Parkinson's Support Group, 1st and 3rd Tuesday each month, 2:00-3:30 pm, Community Center at Mercer View. Call 206-230-0166.

Parkinson's Support Group, 3rd Tuesday each month, 10:00-11:30 am, Northshore Senior Center. Call Andrea Parker, MSW, LSW at 425-486-4564.

Stroke Support Group, for stroke survivors and caregivers meets the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Monday each month, 1:00-2:30 pm, St. Andrew's Lutheran Church. Call 425-746-8396.

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Volume 24, No 3

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