



*A Bi-Monthly Newsletter for
Family Caregivers*

Sauk County ADRC:

(608)355-3289

www.co.sauk.wi.us/adrc

f @adrcsauk

Happy New Year!

I start this note off by saying WELCOME 2023! Welcoming in a new year always gives us a chance to reflect on the previous year. Maybe 2022 was difficult. Maybe it had some bumps in the road. But you made it! We now have a chance to start anew. I wish you the best in 2023 and know the ADRC is here to support your caregiving journey!

As we start a new year, I'd like to ask you a couple things! On page 2 you will find a request for the following information:

- 1) Submit your advice! Do you have a tip or a piece of advice that has helped you as a caregiver? Maybe something that works with your loved one. Share it so we can share with other caregivers!
- 2) Ask Kurt. Do you have a question for our Dementia Care Specialist Kurt? Wondering about a behavior your loved one is exhibiting? Have questions about communication? Ask Kurt!
- 3) We are continually expanding our Caregiver Lending Library. Have an item that would be helpful to add to our library? Let us know!

Lastly, the ADRC has some big news to share! As of January 1, 2023, we are no longer part of the ADRC of Eagle Country region. We are now a standalone ADRC - ADRC of Sauk County! Our programming will remain the same. We now have sole control of our services and funding - allowing for more personalized services for Sauk County residents. As always, reach out if you need us!



Sincerely,

Marina Wittmann

Aging Program Coordinator

Caregiver Support Program Coordinator

marina.wittmann@saukcountywi.gov

*The ADRC office
is closed on
January 2 & 16*


Let your voice be heard!

1) Submit your advice! Do you have a tip or a piece of advice that has helped you as a caregiver?

2) Ask Kurt. Do you have a question for our Dementia Care Specialist Kurt?

3) What items should we add to our caregiver lending library?

Mail to:
Sauk County ADRC
505 Broadway
Baraboo, WI 53913
Attn: Marina

Rather submit your responses online? Open your phone camera, scan the qr code  and click on the link that appears!



Ask Kurt

Kurt Goeckermann

Dementia Care

Specialist



Dear Kurt,

**My loved one has some memory loss. How important is it to get a dementia diagnosis? Is it worth the time and effort?
Sincerely, Concerned Caregiver**

Dear Concerned Caregiver,

The thought of yourself or a loved one having dementia is one that evokes some level of fear and worry. A natural human response is denial or avoidance. However, we may be able to overcome these tendencies if we understand the benefits of getting an evaluation and potential diagnosis.

The first benefit is finding out if the issue is indeed dementia related. Some people become worried about the normal brain changes involved in aging. An evaluation may ease this anxiety. It is also possible that more serious issues are not dementia related at all. The brain is a complex organ that can be affected by many factors. Cognition can be negatively impacted by depression, medications, illness, infections, insomnia, substance use and chemical imbalances to name a few. These can impact brain function on their own, or can make issues related to dementia worse. They are often reversible.

If the problem is indeed dementia, one benefit is having an idea of what to expect. Everyone is an individual, but there are general symptoms and patterns that often go along with different dementias. Knowledge about what symptoms and patterns may be present will allow the individual and caregiver to be better prepared. The earlier diagnosis also allows the person with dementia to be involved in the discussion to a greater extent than when the progression is further along. This does not make discussions about driving difficulties or potential need for a facility easy, but it often makes them EASIER in the long run.

Another benefit is being able to intentionally do activities or have conversations before the continuing effects of the disease make it problematic. These may include travel, visiting friends and relatives or activities that would become more difficult as progression occurs. As is wise for anyone, a diagnosis may also spur discussions of what the individual wants in their health care decisions and finances. If not already in place, this is the time to create a Health Care Power of Attorney and use that creation as an opportunity to discuss the individual's wishes with doctor and family. One may also involve a financial planner, lawyer or the specialists at the ADRC in looking at your finances, options and estate planning. This will alleviate the stress of having to make last minute decisions when they are more difficult for the person with dementia to be involved or a crisis occurs.

Having an earlier diagnosis allows for earlier discussions of options and potential treatment. Some treatments have more efficacy in earlier dementia. This gives more time to consider options and to understand them. Whether through a primary MD or consult with a specialist, the diagnosis gives more clarity to treatment and planning efforts.

All these create more control and autonomy for the individual. Discussions that increase the emotional and systemic support for those diagnosed and their caregivers. It is still difficult and scary but understanding the benefits of early diagnosis can overcome some fear and avoidance. A first step is often to make an appointment with the primary MD. They may be comfortable making a diagnosis and suggesting treatment or they may refer to a specialist or specialty clinic. If the individual is not ready to take that step, another option may be to have your county Dementia Care Specialist meet with you and administer a memory screen. This is a brief test that may alleviate concerns or may show memory issues that should be evaluated. The individual is in control of what happens with that information. If they desire the Dementia Care specialist can send the test to their doctor, thereby initiating a discussion or exploration of the results. This may or may not lead to a diagnosis of dementia, but either way better outcomes are likely. Connect with me at the ADRC: (608)355-3289

Sincerely, Kurt

Alzheimer's & Dementia Alliance



Online Programs - January 2023

Communication Tips & Strategies: Understand how dementia affects communication, how to carefully observe, listen and interact effectively with persons with dementia and learn practical strategies and tips.

Thursday, January 5th | 10:00am - 11:30am

Register here: https://bit.ly/communication_tips

Understanding Behavior Change: Understand reasons why behavior changes occur and get problem-solving tips to help prevent and cope with them.

Friday, January 6th | 10:00am - 11:30am

Register here: https://bit.ly/understanding_behaviors

Safety at Home: In this program we will cover the effects of dementia that impact safety. Learn how you can create a safe environment for your loved one at home.

Thursday, January 12th | 10:00am - 11:30am

Register here: https://bit.ly/January_Home_Safety

Creative Engagement: Learn how to creativity and imagination are beneficial tools for those with dementia.

Friday, January 13th | 10:00am - 11:30am

Register here: https://bit.ly/January_Creative_Engagement

Making the Decision about Facility Care: At some point along the dementia journey, support from family, friends and local programs may not be enough. Review items to consider when moving to facility care.

Thursday, January 19th | 10:00am - 11:30am

Register here: https://bit.ly/facility_care

End of Life and Dementia: Discuss the critical decisions often faced at the end of life.

Friday, January 20th | 10:00am - 11:30am

Register here: https://bit.ly/End_of_Life_Dementia

Our Aging Brains: Review what is normal for our brains as we age and what to do if you are concerned about your cognition. Learn ways to maintain your brain health.

Thursday, January 26th | 10:00am - 11:30am

Register here: https://bit.ly/January_Aging_Brains

For February programs,
visit the ADAW website:
www.alz.wisc.org/program-calendar

Janet Wiegel
Dementia Outreach Specialist
janet.wiegel@alzwisc.org
(608)697-2838



Caregiver Support Meetings Around Sauk County

General Family Caregiver Groups

- **First Congregational Church** in Baraboo, 2nd Monday @ 2pm | Contact Mary Larson, 254-7002
- **VA Clinic*** in Baraboo, 3rd Monday @ 1:30pm | Contact Meghann Schmitt, 256-1901 ext. 12308
*caregiver of enrolled veteran or enrolled veteran who is a caregiver

Parkinson's Specific Groups

- **First Congregational Church** in Baraboo, 3rd Monday @ 2pm | Contact Sylvia Kriegl, 356-7096

Dementia Specific Groups

- **Maplewood** in Sauk City, 4th Tuesday @ 3pm | Contact Theresa Grimes, 643-3383
- **Virtual Morning Coffee Connect**, Every Monday @ 10am | Contact Pam Kulberg, 548-3954
- **Reedsburg Library**, 3rd Wednesday @ 12pm | Contact Janet Wiegel, 697-2838 ***canceled for January**
- **Spring Green Library**, 4th Monday @ 1pm | Contact Janet Wiegel, 697-2838 ***canceled for January**

Huntington's Disease Specific Groups

- **Monk's Restaurant** in Sun Prairie, 3rd Saturday @ 10:30am | Contact Deb Zwickey, 414-257-9499
*All are welcome - those with HD, family and friends
- **Virtual Huntington's Disease Group**, 3rd Tuesday @ 6:30pm | Contact Deb Zwickey, 414-257-9499, dzwickey@hdsa.org

Memory Cafe's

A safe space where caregivers and loved ones with dementia can socialize, listen to music, and have fun!

- **Sauk Community Center**, 3rd Thursday @ 9:30am | Contact Janet Wiegel, 697-2838 ***canceled for January**
- **Fusch Community Center**, 2nd Friday @ 10am | Contact Janet Wiegel, 697-2838 ***canceled for January**
- **Reach Out Lodi**, 4th Friday @ 1pm | Contact rkearney@alzwissc.org
- **Woodman Senior Center, Richland Center**, 4th Thursday @ 10am | Contact heather.moore@alzwissc.org

Alzheimer's Association Virtual Statewide Groups | call 800-272-3900 to register

- **For Persons Living with Mild Cognitive Impairment**, 2nd Wednesday @ 10am
- **Family Caregivers for Loved One with Dementia Living at a Facility**, every other Friday @ 10am
- **Family Caregivers for Loved One with Frontotemporal Degeneration**, 3rd Wednesday @ 6pm
- **Family Caregivers for Loved One with Dementia in the Early Stages**, 4th Tuesday @ 10am
- **Grief & Bereavement Group** | contact Shai Wise 414-775-7578

Alzheimer's & Dementia Alliance: www.alzwissc.org | Alzheimer's Association: www.alz.org/wi

ADRC Support for Caregivers

- Powerful Tools for Caregivers, Caregiver Lending Library, Respite Funding and more available!
- Contact Marina Wittmann at the ADRC: marina.wittmann@saukcountywi.gov | ADRC (608)355-3289



BUILDING A CARE TEAM

Article by: Alzheimer's Association (alz.org)

A care team is the group of people who you'll partner with and rely on to provide you help, care, support and connection throughout the course of the disease. You are in the center, but you are not there alone.

Importance of building a care team

The help provided by others can minimize stress and feelings of being overwhelmed. Developing your own network of helpers may help you lead a more productive, active and engaged life while living in the early stage of the disease.

Getting people to help you with certain tasks works better with a well-thought-out plan rather than trying to find help in an emergency situation. This plan will provide you – and the people assisting you – with confidence that the assistance you need will be there when you need it.

Who should I include on my care team?

Family, friends, neighbors, professionals and your community are all part of your care team. Start building your team by identifying a decision-maker you trust. Often this person is a family member or friend. Have a conversation with this person about the type of help you may need and your long-term priorities. Build up your team with other helpers.

Your care team should include:

- Family members, whether living with you or living across the country
- A close friend(s)
- Neighbors or others who may help with your day-to-day tasks
- Your general practitioner, neurologist, counselor and/or other specialist
- A volunteer from a community organization, members of your church or other social group



Your care team circle

You are at the center of the care team with those closest to you with you. Regardless of who is with you as you start the process, you will expand your inner circle as you tell others about your diagnosis, as well as add the additional circles of medical care professionals and community resources with time.

Tips to develop your care team

- Identify which friends, family and neighbors may be willing to help you.
- Discuss the help you may need. Have a conversation with each person who may be willing and able to assist you.
- Be specific. State clearly what help is needed or may be needed in the future.
- Ask if you could do things together. Examples include shopping or preparing meals.
- When asking for help, seek individuals who are willing to listen and who care. Avoid people who seem judgmental, critical or blaming.
- If someone isn't able to help you, don't blame yourself. It's usually not because of anything you did, but has more to do with what's going on with the other person.
- Say thank you! Everyone likes to feel appreciated, and thanking people makes it more likely that they will help again in the future.

LIVING WITH ALZHEIMERS & LEAVING YOUR LEGACY

Article by: Alzheimer's Association (alz.org)

Now that you are living with Alzheimer's, it becomes even more important for you to live your life in a way that will preserve the essence of who you are and make an impact in the areas that are most important to you. This positive effect on others becomes your legacy.

What it means to leave your mark on the world

You can choose how to live your life with Alzheimer's disease, and thinking about the legacy you want to leave may help bring perspective to facing a disease like Alzheimer's. What you value and the life lessons you have learned can leave an extraordinary imprint on future generations. Being mindful of how you want to be remembered will help shape how you choose to live each day.

"Leaving a legacy" can seem like such a grand idea. But, think about how you can make an impact and how your life has been touched by others who have come before you. The ways these individuals have touched your life is the legacy he or she has left you. These may be very simple things – what a person has taught you, created or given to you. It can be a skill passed on to you, or a different way of seeing the world that has become part of your core values.

Now is the time to think about what you'd like to pass on to others or making changes that affect something you care about.

To start this process, ask yourself:

- What is the purpose of my life?
- What do I stand for?
- How will I choose to live my life as an example for others?
- What brings me joy now? How can I share that with others?
- Who has been important to me? How have they had an impact on me? Can I honor them in some way by passing it on?
- What am I proud of? How can I build on those things to affect the future?
- What can I create for someone? What skill can I teach?
- How can I help others? How can I make life better for other people?

- How do I want to be remembered?
- What do I want my family/friends to know about me?

Ideas for leaving your legacy

There are many examples of how people living in the early stage of Alzheimer's have decided to leave their legacy for their families to have and cherish.

Some people have chosen to create something for others to have and keep. One woman videotaped herself reading stories to a grandchild so that future generations can experience the same joy. Another person wrote a cookbook of favorite recipes for family members to enjoy. Others focus on spending quality time with family and friends to create memories to cherish.

Ideas that may help you leave a positive effect on others include:

- Creating a family tree that includes details about each person.
- Writing letters to grandchildren about your life. Share what you have learned and what you hope for them.
- Making photo albums for the important people in your life that give details of a wonderful time you had spending time together.
- Volunteering your time with an organization you believe in. One way you can volunteer with us is becoming an Alzheimer's advocate. Your voice and efforts will help people with dementia have access to the care and support services they need to live their best life.
- Making family celebrations especially meaningful, such as a destination family reunion or theme party.
- Bringing back family traditions that have slipped away in recent years.
- Taking trips to places you have lived or visited, and sharing your experience with others.
- Participating in Alzheimer's research as a clinical trial volunteer is a great way to make a difference for future generations. Search "clinical trials" at alz.org for information.

Take 5!

QUOTE OF THE DAY



An arrow can only be shot by pulling it backward. So when life is dragging you back with difficulties, it means that it's going to launch you into something great.

~Anne Lamott



Solution on Page 12

6	3		9	2	5		8	4
	5	4					3	
8				3	4		7	9
		3	5	4			9	
7	4		2		6	3		
2						4	6	
	8			6	7		2	
		9	8					
4						8	5	

Sudoku Rules:

Fill in the blanks so that each row, each column, and each of the nine 3x3 grids contain one instance of each of the numbers 1 through 9.

Rebus Puzzles - Can you guess the words/expressions? Numbers in the bottom will not help solve the puzzle. Solution on page 10.

M1Y L1I1F1E

1

Get it
Get it
Get it
Get it

2

Try $\frac{\text{stand}}{2}$

3

$\frac{\text{Travel}}{\text{cccccc}}$

4

Fast

5

T
O
W
N

6

EYE

7

Father

8

once

9

POT

10

D movie
D movie
D movie

11

SECRET ←
SECRET
SECRET

12

For Grandparents and Relative Caregivers

What Do You Do to Keep Your Emotional Well from Running Dry?

Being a foster parent is hard work 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. It is wonderful and awful – sometimes at the same time. Friends who are not foster parents cannot understand why we keep on keepin' on.

Yet without the support of those who understand, we either cannot continue to be foster parents or we begin to provide less than the best care possible. This lessening in the quality of the care we provide is unintentional—we simply have a dry emotional well. But it has profound effects on the lives of the children in our care. After 19 years as foster parents, we recently considered surrendering our license. This was the first time that our well had gone very nearly dry. There had been occasions when we talked about taking a break between placements, but never a time when we felt we just could not do this any longer.

So what was happening that led to our dry well?

We were in the process (still are) of adopting two children and it was not going smoothly. Foster parents sure are emotionally out there once they have decided to adopt! The role becomes totally different emotionally (or at least it has for us).

Add to the situation, a child previously placed with us needed to come back into care. Suddenly we found ourselves caring for three preschoolers! Our licensing agency was undergoing a major reorganization so we were no longer working with the people we'd worked with for ten years. My husband's employer was in the midst of a fight for survival in this strange new economy. We were looking for a new church home (predominantly African-American) to reflect the experience of the children we hope to adopt. It is no wonder our well was nearly dry. Refilling the well happened slowly. We took a week's vacation with all three kids, flying several hundred miles to spend a week at a ski lodge near where our first son is stationed with the Navy. There were no phones and very few distractions. We played and we read and we slept. We shared our stresses with our friends in our Racial Reconciliation Group and in our Covenant Group.

Orphans of the Living, by Jennifer Toth, was one of the books I read that helped fill the well. In its case study format, the reader is drawn into the lives of four children in the social services system. This nonfiction book is one that might be dismissed as far fetched by non-foster parents, but we know better. Another is *The Lost Children of Wilder*, by Nina Bernstein. This book is a multigenerational recounting of one family's experience with foster care. Through three generations, the reader follows the effects of the child welfare system on one family.

Swings Hanging from Every Tree, edited by Ramona Cunningham, is a book of daily inspirations for foster and adoptive parents that I highly recommend. Each entry is only a single page, yet flipping through to read the entry for a specific date or stopping to read because the title caught my eye invariably strengthens my resolve to be a good foster parent.

The Privilege of Youth, by Dave Pelzer, is the latest in the series that began with *A Child Called It*. In my view much of this book is a bit "over the top," but parts are certain to touch any foster parent's heart. We really can make a lasting difference in the life of a child, even if we share in their life for only a short while. Dave was not an easy child to foster, yet foster families made a real difference in his life.

As we continue as foster parents, my husband and I will continue to read and participate in training opportunities like the ones offered by the NC Foster Parents Association. We know now—more than ever—that our emotional well needs to be replenished constantly if we are to do our best for the children in our care. Article by: *Fostering Perspectives* (<https://fosteringperspectives.org>)

The Balance Beam: Caring for Yourself While Caring for Your Kids

Article from: Coalition for Children, Youth & Families

Valuing the importance of taking care of yourself is an essential component of successful parenting. Life, work, and family commitments take a toll on all of us. We all have responsibilities that pull us in countless directions, making us feel stressed out, short-tempered, and, at times, overwhelmed.

For foster and adoptive parents, self-care becomes especially vital. The job you are doing comes with a number of complexities and challenges. In addition, you may experience secondary trauma, which is the emotional toll you experience from hearing about, seeing, and living with the trauma that kids bring with them when they come into care.

Because of the challenges, some families can reach a point where they feel the task is too difficult and the emotional cost too high. Before getting to the point of having to make such a large decision, we invite you to read on for tips and suggestions to weave some self-care strategies into your family's routine.

Keeping Your Cup Filled We know it's often hard to fit one more thing into your incredibly busy day. And, it is true that self-care takes time. However, finding time to taking care of ourselves is vital for every member of your family. You may have heard the saying, "You cannot pour from an empty cup." It's true. You can only be your best self to take care for others when you are taken care of—when your cup is full. Self-care is all about finding ways to fill your cup.

Below you'll find some ideas that touch on each of these areas. Think about what might or what does work for you. Remember that what works for you may not work for everyone in your family and you each may need time to get into a new routine that includes self-care.

Tips for Taking Care of Yourself: Mind, Body, and Spirit Mind

•Honor yourself by acknowledging that this work is hard and, if it were easier, more families would be adopting and fostering.

•Take breaks! Respite care is a valuable resource. Build a support system of caregivers who can step in when you feel that you're at your breaking point. Or tap into the system your agency has in place.



•Participate in trainings and conferences. Knowledge is power and provides you with additional parenting resources.

•Ask for help. We all need help sometimes and it's more than okay to reach out when you're feeling overwhelmed—it's actually one of the strongest things you can do! Take advantage of supports from your agency (such as mentoring or more frequent contact from a caseworker), your circle of support, and from us at the Coalition. It's also okay to seek support from a therapist or counselor.

•Join a support group—either in person or online—or network with other foster and/or adoptive families. It can be very rewarding to share experiences with others who foster or have adopted. (Need help finding a connection? Contact us at the Coalition and we can point you in the right direction.)

•Engage in a hobby or interest. While you may feel there's little time for such luxuries, an activity that requires immersing your mind on a task or creating something that delights you can free your mind and help you feel more present later.

•Meditate. Practicing mindfulness and/or meditation is something that many people find helpful. Those who engage in this kind of activity say it brings them a sense of well-being, gratitude, and acceptance.

Body

•Nutritious eating is one of the biggest underpinnings of our immune system, and new research shows healthy eating is a major factor in our mental health. If you can do only one thing for your body, do this.

•Getting enough sleep can be challenging, especially with children who have special needs in your household. This may require planning a respite overnight for your children or yourself. Could you and your partner trade off nights? Or perhaps fit in some daily naps.

Article Continued...

•Movement is known to relieve stress and improve health. Simply standing rather than sitting can be more beneficial than you might know! Yoga and many other kinds of exercise will improve your strength and flexibility. Yoga can have emotional and spiritual benefits, as well.

•Massage can be a tremendous stress reliever, and helps tissue heal. Touch has a power to heal like no other.

•Laugh! Turning upsetting events into funny moments is sometimes as simple as how we frame it. Most foster and adoptive parents say humor is essential.

Spirit

•Lean on and use your faith group if you belong to one.

•Spiritual reading, meditating, or praying on a regular basis can be renewing and put you in a frame of mind that will help you cope when things feel challenging.

•A spiritual retreat could be rejuvenating for you and your partner, or for the whole family.

•Let go of guilt. Remember: there is no such thing as a perfect parent.



Don't Forget the Kids

Remember to include kids in your family's self-care plans. Encourage the children in your care to participate in activities that fill their cups, too. It could be quiet reading time, a special program or movie they enjoy watching, sports or extra-curricular activities, or even some one-on-one time with Mom or Dad. Other suggestions include mindfulness training for kids, family digital downtime, or sessions with a therapist.

Parenting isn't an easy job. We want to encourage you to take time for you so that, when life throws you loops, you are fully charged and ready to lean into the curve.

Coalition for Children, Youth & Families
800-762-8063 | info@coalitionforcyf.org

Powerful Tools for Caregivers (PTC)

PTC is a 6-week evidence-based workshop that teaches you how to take care of yourself while caring for someone else. By taking care of your own physical, emotional, and financial needs, you become a better caregiver. This program can help you cope with the challenges of caregiving. Whether you are caring for a parent, spouse, family member or friend, PTC is beneficial to you!

Join us for our next workshop!

6 consecutive Tuesday afternoons

Starts Tuesday, April 4th - Ends Tuesday, May 9th

1:00-2:30pm | Virtual via Zoom

Registration is required

Call or email Marina to register (608)355-3289 | marina.wittmann@saukcountywi.gov

I learned that you don't have to go it alone. It's OK to ask for help.



Please note - the ADRC Caregiver Program has a supply of iPads and tablets for loan. If you need a device to attend this class, call us!

Solution to Rebus Puzzle!

1. For once in my life (4 ones in my life)
2. Forget it
3. Try to understand
4. Travel overseas
5. Breakfast
6. Downtown
7. Eyeshadow
8. Stepfather
9. Once upon a time
10. Potatoes (pot 8 o's)
11. 3D movie
12. Top secret

6	3	7	9	2	5	1	8	4
9	5	4	7	8	1	2	3	6
8	1	2	6	3	4	5	7	9
1	6	3	5	4	8	7	9	2
7	4	5	2	9	6	3	1	8
2	9	8	1	7	3	4	6	5
5	8	1	4	6	7	9	2	3
3	7	9	8	5	2	6	4	1
4	2	6	3	1	9	8	5	7

Solution for Sudoku

ADRC
 505 Broadway St
 Baraboo, WI 53913

SELF-CARE
 FOR
SEASONAL DEPRESSION
(SAD)

- Focus on eating healthy foods, rest and exercise.
- Build positive experiences into this time of year.
- Have a good support network of family and friends, and reach out to them.
- Talk about feelings, and try not to bottle them up.
- Balance stress.
- Try light therapy boxes. They can be an effective treatment, but talk to your provider about which type is right for you.

UnityPoint Health