

# Caregiver Chronicles

AREA AGENCY ON AGING OF DANE COUNTY  
2865 N SHERMAN AVE, MADISON, WI 53704  
[HTTPS://AAA.DCDHS.COM/](https://aaa.dcdhs.com/)

Fall 2024



*Autumn teaches us the  
beauty of letting go.*



# Planning Guide: Caring for Older Adults

An adult caring for a child is the natural order of things but when someone becomes caregiver for a spouse, parent, other family member, or friend it can feel like the relationship has suddenly been turned upside down. One way to help ensure the best possible situation for everyone is to plan ahead. If at all possible talk to your loved one—long in advance of need—about the kinds of care that may be required in the future and how they would like to receive it. Together you can come up with a map for care that will give you a place to start.

## Some Things to Think About Early On

If your potential care partner is geographically distant from you and other family members would they consider moving closer? If their current home does not accommodate modifications for changes in mobility would they consider apartment or condo living? In either case, take the time to encourage evaluation of their current home for safety. Some hazards, like stairs, are obvious but other important modifications like brighter lighting or removing hazardous floor coverings can help prevent falls.

While you are having discussions, consider addressing finances. I often encounter older adults who are reluctant to spend savings or sell a home to cover the cost of care because they would like to leave their assets to children and grandchildren. It can be helpful for their future caregivers to weigh in and say that what may be more important is for their loved one to have good care and depend less on family members who may already be juggling work and childcare. Or, as is often the case when a spouse is providing the care, depend less on a caregiver who is older and more frail themselves and who can only be asked to do so much.

Find out what kind of leave your employer offers for elder care and learn the parameters of the Family and Medical Leave Act if you are an eligible employee of a covered employer.

Most critical is to have Health Care Powers of Attorney in place along with a will and specific spelling out of their end-of-life wishes. It is also important to know if your care partner has long-term care insurance in place.

## Do a Resource Reality Check

Shortages of in-home care providers for older adults aging in place have been the norm for years now. What is available in the community where your loved one lives, particularly if their home is in a rural area? What are the costs for services? Transportation is also a critical topic to discuss. Is there public transportation available? Is the neighborhood at all walkable? What options exist if your care partner is no longer able to drive? What kind of community and social supports are available? Are there community centers with programming for older adults? What are ways your care partner can stay connected?

While individual situations vary, in general, everyone needs to keep their care partner's home safe, help them get around and avoid social isolation.



## Know That Plans Can Change

A caregiver's role accelerates when their care partner needs help maintaining their own independence and managing things they had always done on their own before. Perhaps the person who needs care is ill and requires more than companionship or help with general or seasonal chores at home. They may need personal care, from assistance with hygiene to preparing healthy meals. Additional housekeeping help—including more personal tasks like laundry—and more support for healthcare such as getting your care partner to appointments and managing medications may also be needed. As your care partner grows more frail they may also require more emotional support with safety checks and closer monitoring.

Sometimes the change in your care partner's health and ability is sudden and dramatic such as after a serious fall or an Alzheimer's or dementia diagnosis. The caregiver and care partner both may have strong feelings about what type and level of care is needed. The caregiver may have feelings about their own capacity to provide a more intense level of care and the care partner may feel strongly about what type of care they are willing to accept. If you have a basic plan in place, it will be less difficult to adjust when more support is needed.

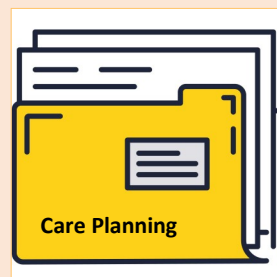
If you haven't been able to have a detailed financial discussion earlier it becomes imperative when needs accelerate. You will also need permission to receive information from your care partner's healthcare providers and to access their electronic chart. You may need to talk more seriously about living arrangements and resources for longterm care if you weren't able to broach these topics in detail earlier.

## Take Care of Yourself

Family caregiving for older adults is often a years-long marathon averaging four to ten years. There is no way of knowing exactly how things will progress and the stages that you will move through with your care partner. This reality makes caregiving one of the most difficult roles we take on in life even while it can also be a loving, compassionate, and rewarding act. Because caring for someone else so easily pulls focus from your own needs it is important to prioritize your own wellbeing. Doing so will help you do a better job for your loved one while preserving your own health. Be sure to make time for adequate sleep and relaxation. Stay connected to friends and family. Join a support group if you need more structured support. Most importantly, set boundaries and limits on what you are realistically able to offer. An honest assessment of your own situation will go a long way to helping you solve problems as they arise.

Finally, consider getting involved in advocacy early on. We are hearing more about the Care Economy (includes paid and unpaid work through which care is provided for others) and activists are now working on behalf of caregivers who provide elder care much in the way they advocate for families caring for children. Let your representatives in state and local government know what you need.

—Jane De Broux, Caregiver Specialist





# Monthly MIPPA Moment: September is National Ovarian and Prostate Cancer Awareness Month

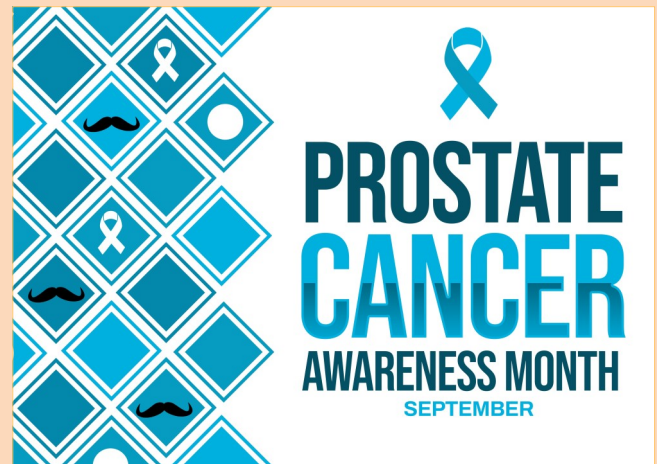
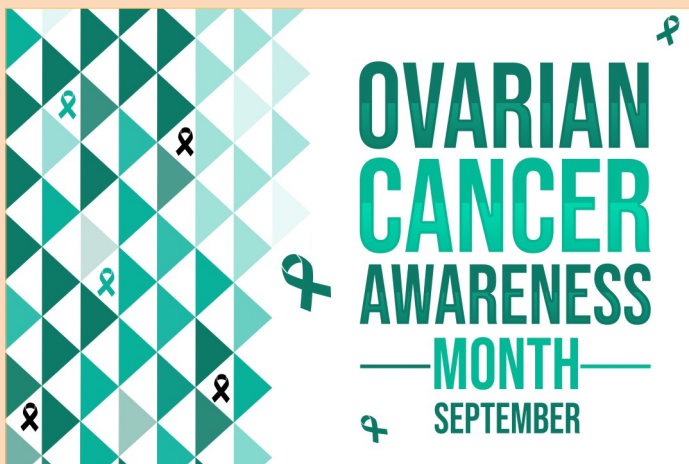
*MIPPA (Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act) has a goal of educating older adults on Medicare's cost-saving benefits & preventive services.*

September is National Ovarian and Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. Ovarian cancer happens when abnormal cells grow on one or both ovaries and make and store eggs for reproduction. About 18,500 women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer each year in the United States. Prostate cancer is when abnormal cells grow in the prostate gland. Outside of skin cancer, prostate cancer is the most common cancer among men.

Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance) covers pelvic exams for females once every 24 months. Medicare Part B also covers some of the digital prostate exams for males and all of a prostate specific Antigen (PSA) blood test once every 12 months for men over 50 (beginning the day after their 50<sup>th</sup> birthday) if you get the test from a provider who accepts Medicare assignment.

It's important for beneficiaries to remain vigilant with their health. To stay on top of your preventive services, check the CMS publication here: <https://www.medicare.gov/publications/10110-Your-Guide-to-Medicare-Preventive-Services.pdf> for more preventive services information!

**For more MIPPA Program information, call MIPPA Program Specialist, Leilani Amundson, at 608-240-7458. This project was supported by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services with financial assistance, in whole or in part, by grant number 2101WIMIAA, from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201.**





# CAREGIVER TELECONNECTION

[www.caregiverteleconnection.org](http://www.caregiverteleconnection.org)

WELLMED



Date	Time	Topic	A LEADING VOICE FOR CAREGIVERS
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*All sessions will be available on Zoom and/or the telephone. Your choice!  
You may log in or call in to participate*

<b>Wednesday September 4</b>	<b>4:00 pm Eastern 3:00 pm Central 2:00 pm Mountain 1:00 am Pacific</b>	<b>Ask Dr. Tam Questions with Tam Cummings, PhD</b> <i>What kind of questions do you have about dementia? As a caregiver, how do you survive the journey? Dr. Tam Cummings will cover quick stress relief tips and answer any questions you have about dementia. <b>**Sponsored by VITAS Healthcare**</b></i>
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<b>Monday September 9</b>	<b>1:00 pm Eastern 12:00 pm Central 11:00 am Mountain 10:00 am Pacific</b>	<b>Effectively Engaging with Medical Professionals with G. J. Hodson, MA</b> <i>Presentation will include a brief overview (medical training systems, paperwork standards, and logistical limitations), followed by practitioner-informed communication strategies that engage medical professionals effectively and a brief Q&amp;A. <b>***Sponsored by the North Central Texas Caregiver Teleconnection**</b></i>
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<b>Thursday September 12</b>	<b>11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific</b>	<b>Guilt and self-care with Lucy Barylak, MSW</b> <i>Caregiving comes with a complex set of emotions and one big one is guilt. Guilt occurs frequently because caregivers' expectations are often unrealistic. The session will explore what is guilt, its causes as well as how to cope better with guilt and the importance of self-care.</i>
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<b>Thursday September 19</b>	<b>2:00 pm Eastern 1:00 pm Central 12:00 pm Mountain 11:00 am Pacific</b>	<b>Caregiver Stress: What It Is and What You Can Do About It with Aaron Blight, EdD</b> <i>Caregiver stress is a frequent and real outcome of devoting yourself to ongoing care for your loved one. In this presentation, we will examine the nature of caregiver stress, explore how stress leads to burnout, and review strategies for stress reduction that will produce improved well-being for caregivers. Knowledge gained from the presentation will help caregivers recognize the impact of stress in their personal situations and learn how to cope more effectively.</i>
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<b>Wednesday September 25</b>	<b>12:00 pm Eastern 11:00 am Central 10:00 am Mountain 9:00 am Pacific</b>	<b>Are You on the Anxiety Loop? with Evalyn Greb, LCSW and Glenda Rogers</b> <i>Lower your stress level! Stop your on-going anxiety response! Join Glenda Rogers and Evalyn Greb (yes, the "talking heads"! ). Help them present and gather tips on intervening when that anxiety habit rears its head. Start listing your ideas for this discussion now!</i>
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<b>Monday September 30</b>	<b>11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific</b>	<b>Conceptos básicos de Medicare con José Díaz</b> <i>¿Ha oído hablar de la inscripción abierta de Medicare? Únase a José Díaz que explicara los conceptos básicos de Medicare para que haga un decision informada para su ser querido.</i>
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**A program of the WellMed Charitable Foundation**  
**Register online at [www.caregiverteleconnection.org](http://www.caregiverteleconnection.org) or call 866.390.6491 Toll Free**



Increase your confidence, knowledge, and skills.



**SAVVY  
CAREGIVER™**  
KNOWLEDGE. SKILLS. MASTERY.

## 6-WEEK COURSE

*for family caregivers caring for persons  
with Alzheimer's Disease or related  
dementias*

**Weekly on  
Thursdays**

Oct 10th – Nov 14th

3:30–5:30 PM

Pinney Public Library  
516 Cottage Grove Rd  
Madison, WI 53716

## WHAT YOU WILL GAIN:

- Strategies to manage activities of daily living
- Skills to assess your loved one and how to adjust your approach to care
- Understanding of the different types of dementia and how decline in cognition affects behavior
- Ability to manage emotions & feelings of caregiving
- Decision-making skills and confidence-building to achieve caregiving goals



## TO REGISTER:

- Visit [https://countyofdane.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_9vgSbINKenOx62q](https://countyofdane.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9vgSbINKenOx62q) or call 608.240.7464 by the deadline of September 30th, 2024.
- No cost associated. Please plan to attend all 6 sessions.
- A limit of up to 2 additional family members may attend with the primary caregiver, if desired.
- Minimum group size of 6 is required.



608-240-7400



danedcs@danecounty.gov



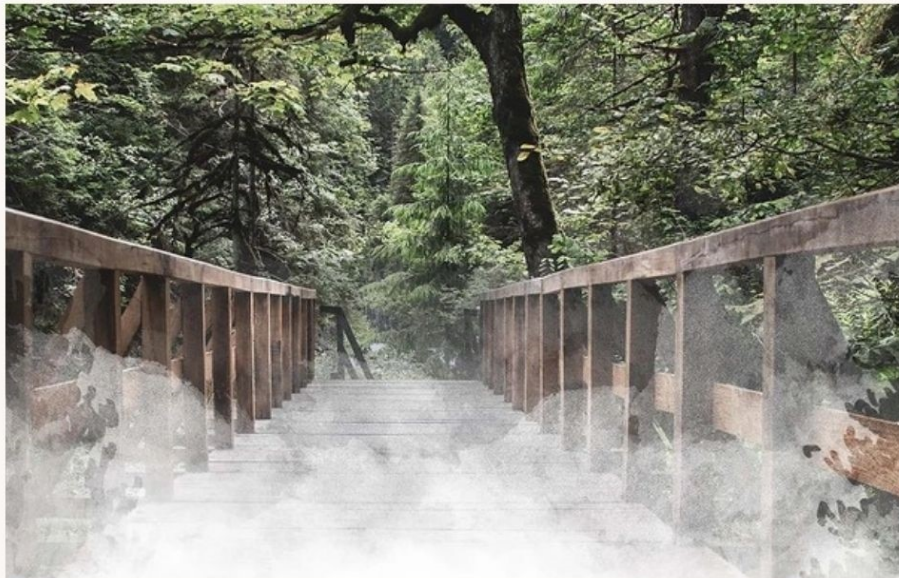
www.daneadrc.org



## Crossing Bridges

An educational 4-week program for people who have mild memory loss or the early stages of Alzheimer's disease or dementia, and their primary care partner.

Learn coping skills, enhance family communications, and have some guidance toward developing plans for the future.



### Time & Location

Thursdays - 10:00 to 12:00 pm

October 10th - October 31st

Oregon Senior Center



For questions or registration please contact  
Ellen Taylor or Kayla Olson at  
[danedcs@danecounty.gov](mailto:danedcs@danecounty.gov)

\*Registration is required, and program space is limited.

**Facilitated by the ADRC of Dane County**





# Enroll in Riding in the Moment™!



Riding in the Moment™ is an evidence-informed program designed to increase the quality of life of adults living with dementia and their family members/friends. This program will be delivered by trained staff and volunteers at Three Gaits (located in Stoughton) in partnership with the UW Geriatric Health Services Research Lab.

## The Program

- Complete intake packet and riding eligibility assessment
- 8 weekly visits for approximately 60 minutes
- Visits include opportunities to ride, groom, and pet horses, and engage in other nature-based activities
- Research demonstrates increased quality of life among participants

## Eligibility

To be eligible, participants must:

- Have a documented diagnosis of Alzheimers disease or related dementia in the early or moderate stage
- Have reliable transportation from a family member or friend (funding to available upon request)

**Fall Session - Tuesdays, 10:00-11:00 AM, September 10-November 5**

Contact [ashley@three-gaits.org](mailto:ashley@three-gaits.org), visit [www.three-gaits.org](http://www.three-gaits.org), or call (608) 877-9086 to sign up and get more information!



**GERIATRIC HEALTH SERVICES  
RESEARCH LAB**



**Three Gaits**  
Therapeutic Horsemanship



**Wisconsin Partnership Program**  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN  
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH



Riding in the Moment™ at Three Gaits is generously funded by the Wisconsin Public Partnership at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health

The Riding in the Moment™ program was created by Hearts & Horses, LLC. Hearts & Horses, LLC is not affiliated with nor participates with Three Gaits and its use of the program.