

CAREGIVER CHRONICLES

BULLETIN

Dane County Caregiver Program

Jane De Broux
Caregiver Specialist

608-381-5733

Debroux.Jane@countyofdane.com



Accepting Care with Grace

Some of life's most challenging moments arise when caregivers face a reversal of the normal order of things. An adult caring for a young child is expected, but when someone becomes caregiver for a spouse, parent, or other older adult relative or friend it can feel like the relationship has suddenly been flipped. It may be that someone who has always been there is no longer able to fulfill that role for us. More than that, they may need help maintaining their own independence and managing things they had always done on their own before. Perhaps the person who needs care is chronically or seriously ill and requires more than companionship or help with chores at home—maybe they need help with personal and medical care as well.

In some cases the level of care required evolves over time. Sometimes the change is sudden and dramatic. In any case, it can be a difficult balance between the caregiver and the one receiving care. One of the most difficult situations presents itself when the person who now needs care refuses to accept help or to acknowledge help is needed. This is a situation I hear about from caregivers often—the worry and anxiety about a loved one who needs help but is not at a point of being able to accept it even when there is risk if they continue to go forward on their own. Exploring the care receiver's point of view may help provide insight. Putting yourself in the place of a person who needs care might help provide clues for how to approach someone who struggles to accept it.

When I think of how I hope to receive care when I need it one day I think of my great aunt. My grandmother's sister was one of the most important people in my life as a child. Patient, kind, and possessing endless good humor, she was a source of unconditional love and warmth. She had fallen before I was born and seriously damaged her hip. It ended her career as a waitress and she walked with a cane from her late 50s on.

(continued on page 2)

She was slow to move so we enjoyed doing quiet things together. She patiently allowed my sister and me to play beauty shop. We would glop her hair with styling gel, roll her hair on onto brush rollers secured with pink plastic picks, and paint her fingernails bright red. We loved to watch her favorite soap operas and classic movies or play old records. Sometimes we played cards but often we just quietly hung out together—her sitting outside on the chaise lounge and me spinning on the tire swing nearby that hung from one of the old oaks.

My great aunt was self-sufficient for a very long time and cared for both her parents until they died while running the family business. After her injury she moved in with my grandmother's family. In her mid 80s it became too difficult for her to navigate the steep steps in my grandparents' old home and she eventually needed a wheelchair. At that point, she entered a nursing home. During the ten years she spent there she was a staff favorite. She always kept her warmth and good humor and enthusiastically joined in activities. She found herself living with some old high school friends there and continued to be socially engaged.

Eventually she needed more help with her physical cares. I always noticed how pleasant her interactions with the caregiving staff appeared—she accepted help with the most personal tasks with grace. Perhaps it helped that she had learned to accept her loss of mobility at a younger age than it comes for many of us. I just know she retained her dignity despite a loss of privacy and the ability to perform many daily tasks of living. I remember noting, when we lost her at age 94, one of the great lessons I could learn from her was the ability to accept care with grace, appreciation, and good humor. Of course, that was a long time before I could ever imagine what it might be like to be in her place one day.



A few years ago I found myself in need of some help and rehabilitation. I was coping with chronic pain and mobility challenges. Having spent my life until then as a strong, athletic person I found it difficult and discouraging. I heard that exercise in a warm water therapy pool could help so I signed up for a class that was tailored to people with arthritis pain and mobility issues.

When I walked into the locker room for my first class I saw most of the women were my mom's age and older. I felt my eyes sting with tears of frustration and a bit of self pity. Then I spotted the oldest woman in our class (she proudly announced she was 87) waiting patiently with her swimsuit halfway on. "Can you help me?" she asked. "Of course," I replied, and it took two seconds to help her get the straps of her swimsuit over her shoulders. She thanked me for my help and headed to the showers. As I looked around I noticed that for most of my classmates, getting ready for class and dressing afterward was going to be the hardest part. It was for me, too, at first—mostly keeping my balance and moving gingerly through the joint pain. It was an excellent lesson in how it feels to depend on others for simple tasks most of us take for granted. As someone who works supporting caregivers it provided me with some insight to share on how it feels to be a care recipient—coping with loss and reluctant to ask for needed help.

People in our class ranged in age from their 50s to late 80s. Most were there to retain as much mobility and fitness as possible while they aged. The younger class attendees, like me, were there to recover from injuries or because they had autoimmune illnesses that caused pain and seriously impacted their mobility. Some of us would recover much of what we'd lost but others never would. During one class, I spoke with one of the other younger women in the class. We talked about how hard it was to accept needed help and that the lesson before us was to keep at it but to learn to accept our limitations with grace, even as we worked to move beyond them.

(Accepting Care with Grace, continued from page 2)

We all age at different rates. Genetics, epigenetics, disease, injury—all play a part. Our lifestyles, careers, environment, and stress levels combine to exert their impact. Eventually, each of us experiences the losses illness and aging bring. If you, as a caregiver, struggle to convince the person you care for that it is time for them to accept more help or to stop doing activities they see as tied to their identity and independence, it may help if you can put yourself in that position.

Next, turn that same open and caring lens on yourself. Caregivers are being asked to do a lot. Needing to change your life in significant and unexpected ways takes a toll. While many caregivers are glad to do it, there is still a cost. Don't let additional demands on your energy, time and, perhaps, your finances, turn into illness, social isolation, depression, or depletion. Caregivers need support and the willingness to accept it, too.

The Dane County Caregiver Program offers support to caregivers through *Caring for Caregiver Grants* that can help with respite and supplemental services. We can also connect you with resources and provide support. Contact Jane De Broux, Caregiver Specialist at 608-381-5733 or debroux.jane@countyofdane.com.

—Jane De Broux, Caregiver Specialist



Stepping Up Your Nutrition



Did You Know? Malnutrition can cause muscle loss and dizziness and increase your risk of falls.

You may be at risk if you are: losing weight without dieting, not getting enough to eat, losing muscle strength, have two or more chronic conditions, or not drinking enough fluids.

Join us for a 2-hour workshop to learn:

- How nutrition affects falls
- Why muscle matters
- How to get enough protein and fluid
- What you can do to eat better and improve your health

Facilitator: Shannon Gabriel, RDN, CD
Registered Dietitian Nutritionist & Healthy Aging Coordinator
Area Agency on Aging of Dane County

Identifying malnutrition risk among older adults is important.

- 1-in-2 older adults may be at risk for Malnutrition
- Annual costs for disease-associated malnutrition are estimated at \$51.3 billion
- Although prevalent, malnutrition often goes unrecognized

Tuesday, September 19 at 9-11 AM
Online via Zoom
Cost: FREE (option to donate \$5 to cover class materials)

Register by September 8: 608-261-5678 or
Gabriel.Shannon@countyofdane.com



Senior Farmers' Market Voucher Program Distribution Continues Through September 30th

Starting in June, the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) of Dane County will distribute farmers' market vouchers to older adults for use in purchasing \$35 in fruit, vegetables, or herbs at farmers' markets and roadside farm stands in Wisconsin during the 2023 growing season (June 1—October 31).

The vouchers are distributed on a first come/first serve basis to those **age 60+**, who live in Dane County, and have gross incomes under \$26,973 per year (or \$2,248/month) for a one person household and \$36,482 per year (or \$3,041/month) for a two person household. New this year: One set of vouchers is available per person.

Distribution of farmers' market vouchers will be done by mail. If you wish to apply to the program, contact AAA Dietitian Shannon Gabriel at 608-261-5678 or Gabriel.Shannon@countyofdane.com

"This program is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."

Monthly MIPPA Moment: National Recovery 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 Alcohol & Drug Addiction Recovery Month** in the United States. Millions of Americans have a substance use disorder, and it remains an important health issue in our country. With effective treatment, recovery is possible.

Medicare can help. Screening and counseling may help identify, manage, and treat alcohol misuse. Medicare Part B covers an annual alcohol misuse screening. Medicare only covers counseling afterwards if your primary care provider (PCP) determines you are misusing alcohol, meaning you are:

- A woman under age 65 who has more than three drinks at a time or seven drinks per week
- A man under age 65 who has more than four drinks at a time or 14 drinks per week
- An individual age 65+ who has more than three drinks at a time or seven drinks per week
- If your PCP determines that you are eligible, Medicare will pay for up to four brief counseling sessions every year.

Costs: if you qualify, and meet certain criteria, Original Medicare covers annual alcohol/substance misuse screenings, as well as counseling at 100% of the Medicare-approved amount when you receive the service from a participating provider. Medicare Advantage Plans are required to cover alcohol misuse screening and counseling without applying deductibles, copayments, or coinsurance when you see an in-network provider and meet Medicare's eligibility requirements for the service.

To find more information about Medicaid and the various programs in Wisconsin you can look at the Wisconsin Department of Health Services website at <https://dhs.wisconsin.gov/medicaid/index.htm>.

To determine if you qualify for Medicaid coverage, apply at access.wisconsin.gov or call your local Medicaid Agency. In Dane County that is the Capitol Consortium 1-888-794-5556.

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.

Adapted from Medicareinteractive.org.




Date Time Topic A LEADING VOICE FOR CAREGIVERS

**All sessions will be available on Zoom and/or just the telephone. Your choice!
You may log in or call in to participate**

Tuesday September 5	11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific	Coping with Anticipatory Grief with Candance Ramos <i>Caregivers sometimes experience something called "anticipatory grief", which can begin well before a loved one passes away. We will discuss ways to recognize and cope with anticipatory grief.**Sponsored by VITAS Healthcare**</i>
Monday September 11	1:00 pm Eastern 12:00 pm Central 11:00 am Mountain 10:00 am Pacific	Self-Care for Real People with Carin Zeman, CPRP, CPT <i>Learn how to cultivate mindfulness and self-care through guided practices. You will learn skills to transfer to your real, day-to-day life to help you throughout those high-stressor days and ensure you enjoy all the moments of life.**Sponsored by the North Central Texas Caregiver Teleconnection**</i>
Tuesday September 12	11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific	Brain Health for Older Adults with Dr. Nestor H. Praderio <i>Nestor H. Praderio, MD will review the evolution of our brain and how significant changes in our lives impact its function. He will highlight how a number of factors relate to overall brain health. Dr. Praderio will discuss the importance of a neuro enhancing environment and techniques for maintaining good brain health.</i>
Tuesday September 12	2:00 pm Eastern 1:00 pm Central 12:00 pm Mountain 11:00 am Pacific	Ask Dr. Tam Questions with Tam Cummings, PhD <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. **Sponsored by VITAS Healthcare**</i>
Thursday September 14	11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific	Toileting, Incontinence and Dementia, and What You Need to Know with Lucy Barylak, MSW <i>Incontinence and accidents can cause problems, especially as the person's dementia progresses. This can be very challenging for caregivers to handle and manage. The session will focus on why this happens and tips for caregivers on how to deal with and manage this delicate matter</i>
Tuesday September 19	11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific	Disaster Preparedness for Caregivers: What to Know Now with Elliot M Sklar, PhD and Lucy Barylak, MSW <i>Planning is a key to making through all kinds of disasters which affect seniors, vulnerable populations, and caregivers uniquely. This session will outline key preparedness tips to maintain safety during natural disasters, weather events, and power outages.</i>
Thursday September 21	1:00 pm Eastern 12:00 pm Central 11:00 am Mountain 10:00 am Pacific	Healthy Brain and Healthy Aging with Dr. Natalee Oliver, DSW <i>Join Dr. Natalee Oliver, DSW as we dive deeper into our own brain, body & emotional health all while reducing our risk factors to develop different forms of dementia.</i>
Friday September 22	11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific	Conceptos básicos de Medicare con José Díaz <i>¿Ha oído hablar de la inscripción abierta de Medicare? Únase a José Díaz que explicará los conceptos básicos de Medicare para que haga un decisión informada para su ser querido.</i>
Tuesday September 26	1:00 pm Eastern 12:00 pm Central 11:00 am Mountain 10:00 am Pacific	Understanding and Managing Behavioral Symptoms with LBD with Brandi Hackett, LMSW, C-ASWCM <i>This presentation will provide a deeper dive into symptoms that can be experienced by those with LBD. Learn techniques of support for symptoms – as well as provide additional content to discuss with medical providers.</i>
Thursday September 28	2:00 pm Eastern 1:00 pm Central 12:00 pm Mountain 11:00 am Pacific	Giving Yourself Time to Heal with Dr. Jamie Huysman, PsyD, LCSW <i>Healing isn't all sunshine and roses. Sometimes it can be difficult and full of storms. It can certainly be overwhelming at times, but it is important to trust the process. Join Dr. Jamie as he shares how to navigate your healing journey, one day at a time. You are worth it!</i>



Only Leaves Should Fall

Falls Prevention Event

Tuesday, September 26, 2023

Covenant Lutheran Church

1525 N. Van Buren St., Stoughton

12:00pm - 2:45pm



Dr. Zorba Paster,
Keynote Speaker

To register or for questions,
contact:

Ashley Hillman,
Falls Prevention Program
Manager, Safe Communities
608-235-1957
ahillman@safercommunity.net

Please Join the Falls Free Dane Coalition of Safe Communities for
this FREE event! Registration is required.

SCHEDULE:

11:45 - 12:00pm	Registration
12:00pm - 1:00pm	Lunch & Keynote Address
1:00pm - 1:15pm	Break
1:15pm - 2:30pm	Screenings
2:30pm - 2:45pm	Wrap-Up/Goal Setting
2:45pm	Adjourn

September is Falls Prevention Month! Dr. Paster will speak about
strategies for maintaining independence and keeping upright by
preventing a fall. Learn about your own fall risk and leave with
resources to prevent a fall!



Covenant Lutheran Church, ELCA



Supported By:

- Falls Free Dane Coalition of Safe Communities
- Covenant Lutheran Church
- Madison College
- Stoughton Health
- Stoughton Senior Center
- United Way of Dane County
- University of Wisconsin-Madison



Sometimes asking
for help is the most
meaningful example
of self-reliance.

—Senator Cory Booker

