

Caregiver Corner

Ideas and information for people caring for others 778-2411

Events of interest to Caregivers

IRS Recordkeeping and Recording: What Seniors and Caregivers Need to Know

Date: Monday, January 9, 2012
 Time: 1:00-3:00 PM
 Place: Broome County Library, Exhibit Rm.
 185 Court St, Binghamton, NY
 Presenter: Al Kukol, Esq., of Levene, Gouldin
 and Thompson, LLP

Tax season is just around the corner. Al Kukol will help you answer the following questions:

- What records and documentation are needed for income tax reporting and how long should you keep those documents?
- If you hire an aide, what is deducted on your tax return?
- How do you compensate aides and when are aides considered your employee?
- What documentation do you need to report to the IRS if you have an aide?
- Is a contract with an aide needed?

Call Caregiver Services at 778-2411 to register.

The Importance of Good Hearing

Date: Thursday, February 16, 2012
 Time: 1:00-3:00 PM
 Place: Stay Healthy Center, Oakdale Mall
 Johnson City, NY
 Presenter: David Glaser, Doctor of Audiology,
 Southern Tier Hearing Services

Communicating with others is what connects us to the world around us. David's presentation will discuss how our hearing abilities, or lack of, can greatly affect our daily lives. His talk will also include:

- An overview of the different parts of the ear
- How the ear works
- How our hearing is evaluated—the role of the Audiologist
- Communication strategies for the hard of hearing
- Psychosocial effects of untreated hearing loss and how it affects quality of life
- Basics of hearing instrument technology and how it has improved over the past ten to twenty years.

Call Caregiver Services at 778-2411 to register.

Caregiver Chat Groups



These informal chat groups are open to caregivers of any age.

Place: **Northern Broome Senior Center**
 Whitney Point, NY
 Date: Monday, January 9 & February 13, 2012
 Time: 10:00-11:30 AM

Place: **Stay Healthy Center, Oakdale Mall**
 Johnson City, NY
 Date: Monday, February 6, 2012
 Time: 1:00-3:00 PM

Place: **Yesteryears Day Program**
 Wayne Street, Endwell, NY
 Date: Wednesday, January 18 &
 February 15, 2012
 Time: 9:30-11:00 AM

Limited on-site respite care may be available during the Wayne Street and Northern Broome chats. Please call ahead to make arrangements.

Medication Reconciliation *Next Step in Care Can Help*

Many hospital readmissions are preventable. They are the result of medication errors after seriously or chronically ill patients are discharged. Many patients do not know all their medications or are unwilling to tell providers exactly what they do, or do not, take at home. Family caregivers are often the best source of this information, but all too often caregivers are not included in the clinical medication review called “reconciliation”.



What is medication reconciliation? Here is an example that may help both providers and family caregivers understand what happens in medication reconciliation and why it is so important.

Some people keep meticulous records of their financial transactions—checks, ATM withdrawals, deposits, interest, other charges, etc. At the end of the month all they have to do is check off the items on the bank statement and compare the balance with the check record. No surprises. They match.

Most of us, however, are not quite so diligent. Still, if you have been reasonably careful, reconciliation just means inserting the overlooked check or deleting the duplicate ATM withdrawal and recalculating. Your financial health is (hopefully) not affected.

Medication reconciliation is essentially the same process, but omissions or duplications of prescription or over-the-counter drugs and supplements can have serious implications for physical health and are not so easily detected or fixed. The basic information must be absolutely accurate and all changes recorded in real time, not at the end of the month.

In the same way that a check register can help reconcile money, using a medication list can help reconcile all prescriptions, vitamins, supplements, and other medications and prevent a health crisis. The *Next Step In Care* family caregiver guide to Medication Management plus the Medication

Management Form can be those tools. The Medication Management Form is an easy-to-use form that can be updated right on your computer and printed out—no more cramped handwriting! Both tools are free and available at www.NextStepInCare.org in English, Spanish, Russian, and Chinese. Once in this website, to locate these forms, click on “for family caregivers” and then scroll down to Medication Management and Medication Management form.

This article is printed with permission from Carol Levine, Director of Families and Health Care Project at the United Hospital Fund and from Shelia Berman, editor of the Rockland County AAA newsletter, “Looking Forward,” Volume 36, July/August 2011.

Caregivers -- Take Care of Yourselves While Having Fun!

According to the World Health Organization, older adults who are physically active have lower rates of coronary heart disease, diabetes, colon and breast cancer, higher levels of cardio, respiratory and muscular fitness, lower risk of falling, and better cognitive function.

Beginning in January 2012, Broome County Office for Aging will offer Mission Meltaway in eleven senior centers to support adults in their pursuit of a healthy diet and more exercise. Participants will work with a partner to “Lose 12 in 2012” by making small lifestyle changes throughout the year. All participants will receive a diary and pedometer. There is no cost to participate.

Call 778-2411 for more information.



To receive automatic updates about other events and activities offered through the Broome County Office for Aging, log on to Facebook, search Broome County Senior Centers and “like” our page. There are even Facebook pages for some of our senior centers!

Question & Answer



I have been a caregiver to my mother for about five years. Things were going well until her recent stroke. Now mom's personality has completely changed and she has become very negative and angers easily. Nothing I do seems to please her and she's calling constantly expecting me to drop everything to do what she asks. I'm beginning to resent her. I feel guilty for feeling this resentment because I know it isn't easy for her since the stroke. I am starting to feel like I can't take it much longer. I need help; do you have any suggestions?

Setting limits as a caregiver is hard to do, especially when you haven't felt the need to do this until now. One suggestion would be to talk with your mother about how the changes in her personality are wearing you down. Discuss counseling or, if possible, locate a support group for stroke survivors where your mom can meet others who can help her to cope. Also, develop a schedule that shows your mom when you're available to help her and stick to it. Involve others who can "share the care" so that you'll have some important time away for yourself. And speaking of support, consider a group for yourself with people who can relate to you! For more information, call Caregiver Services at 788-2411 to talk to a caregiver specialist.



Adapted from article, "Setting Limits As A Caregiver," by Vicki Rackner, MD from the Johnson & Johnson, Strength for Caring web site.



Telephone-Based Caregiver Support Group

The Broome County Office for Aging always seeks opportunities to provide caregivers with the best resources available. We are currently exploring an exciting new program geared toward easing the strain of caring for a loved one.

The Telephone Support Group is a unique way to connect caregivers from the comfort of their own homes.

The group will be held once a month in the evening. Group members will be able to share their experiences, learn problem-solving techniques, and connect with others experiencing the aging of a loved one. Group members can participate from anywhere they have a telephone. There is no need to "dress up," to leave your loved one alone at home or to travel in inclement weather. If you are away from home you can still join in.

The Telephone Support Group comes to caregivers at no charge. The conference call only requires that participants have a standard telephone. Cell phones are allowed but your cell phone charges will apply.

Presently the Broome County Office for Aging is seeking caregivers that might be interested in participating in this opportunity. If you would be interested in this type of program, please call (607) 778-2411 or email Mnunes@co.broome.ny.us.

Tip From a Fellow Caregiver - Help with Mobility

Some people have found this product useful when getting in and out of a vehicle. The *Handybar Mobility Handle* is a tool designed to provide extra support when entering and exiting your vehicle. This handle inserts into the striker plate (the square ring) on the car door panel and makes a secure handle to help you lift and lower yourself. It gives extra support. Visit the website for product information: www.activeforever.com.

The Office for Aging does not endorse this or any other product or company.

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Caregiver Corner
Broome County Office for Aging
60 Hawley Street
PO Box 1766
Binghamton, NY 13902-1766

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Thank you!