

Caregiver Corner

Ideas and Information for People Caring for Others

May & June 2019 / 607-778-2411 / www.gobroomecounty.com/senior

Events for Caregivers



If Only I Could Get a Good Night's Sleep!

Date: Thursday, May 16

Time: 2:00 - 3:30 PM

Location: Lourdes Youth Services Center
for Oral Health (Community Room)
219 Front Street, Binghamton

Presenter: Tracy Jewett, Registered
Polysomnographic Technologist, Lourdes Sleep Lab

Join us as we discuss tips for a better night's sleep. We will also go over various types of sleep disorders and how to manage symptoms.

Please call Caregiver Services to register: (607) 778-2411.

PLEASE NOTE: Park away from the building, as parking next to the door is reserved for dental clinic patients only.



Home Repair Options Through First Ward Action Council

Date: Thursday, June 6

Time:

Location:

Address:

Presenter:

Home

more



Exhibit Room)

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help seniors live
aking an older

adult's home safer and more accessible reduces fall risk, prevents accidents, and increases independence.

Attend this presentation to learn about the various home repair programs that First Ward Action Council has available to you and your loved one. The presenter will provide an overview of what each program offers along with income and eligibility guidelines.

Pre-registration is requested; please call (607) 778-2411 to reserve your seat.

Caregiver Chat Groups

These informal chats are open to caregivers of any age. No registration required.



Place: Stay Healthy Center
Oakdale Mall, Johnson City, NY

Date: Monday, May 6
Monday, June 3

Time: 1:00-2:30 PM

Place: Broome West Senior Center
2801 Wayne Street, Endwell

Date: Wednesday, May 15
No Chat in June due to the Senior Picnic

Time: 9:30-11:00 AM

“How far you go in life depends on you being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and the strong. Because someday you will have been all of these.” – George Washington Carver



Caregiver Corner Q & A

Question: My parents are in their 80s and still live in their own home. They both receive Social Security and my dad has a small pension. They have a little money in savings and checking but that's pretty much it. I see them struggling to make ends meet especially with the heating bills from last winter. Also, my father's recent stroke and ongoing complications from diabetes has made it difficult for them to keep up with the costs of medications and other expenses related to his care. I already know about Medicaid and I know that my parents aren't eligible for that program. Is there anything else available to help them with their medical or other expenses?



Answer: Yes, there are actually a number of programs that your parents may be eligible for. Your question mentioned heating bills and medical expenses specifically. There are programs that could help your parents with their heating bills as well as make their home more energy efficient. There are also the Medicare savings programs and the New York State Prescription program, known as EPIC, which could help reduce the cost of your father's medical related expenses.



Available through our office is a handout entitled "Financial Benefits Guide for Seniors". This comprehensive handout provides you a brief description and the eligibility guidelines for a variety of programs available to seniors. In addition to the programs that can help with heating and medical expenses, there are school and property tax reduction programs, the telephone discount program, benefit programs for veterans and more. Contact Caregiver Services (778-2411) to discuss your parents' situation further and to receive your copy of this very informative handout.

How Caregiver Support Groups Can Help

by Barry J. Jacobs, AARP, September 28, 2016

The shrug, the scrunched-up nose, the eye roll — these are a few of the negative reactions I've seen when I recommend support groups to family

caregivers. Some tell me outright that they don't like hearing others' sob stories. Others claim shyness and discomfort speaking in groups. Almost all tell me they don't have the time. As a result, many caregiver support groups — meeting periodically in church basements, hospital conference rooms, and nursing home dining areas with eager leaders and ample refreshments — have too few participants.

This is a shame. We know from decades of research and anecdotal evidence that finding social support is one of the best ways caregivers can cope better over time. It's the rare person who thrives in this arduous role when isolated from others. Those who feel misunderstood or underappreciated by family members may find special comfort among like-minded comrades.

In *AARP Meditations for Caregivers*, the new book I coauthored with psychologist Julia L. Mayer, we tell the stories of several caregivers who — to avoid further pestering from relatives and professionals — reluctantly attended local support groups and then happily became regular members. They ultimately realized what made the experience so beneficial.

Venting and validating: The core purpose of these meetings is to help caregivers feel heard, understood and cared for. That happens when the groups have clear ground rules for mutual courtesy, respect and acceptance, which allows caregivers to safely express whatever is in their minds and hearts about caregiving. You may find that having the chance to vent is what's most helpful to you. Or you may look to the group members' feedback to validate your emotional reactions — including through laughter, when your frustrations or anecdotes strike a chord (laughter is a wonderful tension reliever). Be prepared to listen attentively to others' stories and root for them, as well.

Sharing and comparing: At many group gatherings, caregivers talk shop, offering useful information and opinions about hospitals and physicians, medications and treatments, home health agencies and equipment manufacturers. You can ask for specific advice from the other group members, and consider telling them details about your caregiving story and practical knowledge that might be helpful.

Uniting and advocating: Caregivers become absorbed in daily routines and forget that others face

similar struggles. It can be a relief to hear your fellow caregivers' experiences and learn that you are not alone. You will also become more aware that many aspects of caregiving — such as underfunding for research and treatments, negligent family members, balky insurers — are patently unfair. Support group members can feel camaraderie and power when they work together to try to right these wrongs. Organize your group to walk to raise money for Alzheimer's, Parkinson's or other diseases; write letters to insurers urging them to pay for experimental drugs; or call legislative offices to advocate for more governmental support of basic research.

Finding community: We find support and identity through our affiliations with small groups — be they stamp-collecting clubs, bowling teams or church choirs. Caregivers, too, need a sense of belonging. This can come from family members who work shoulder-to-shoulder with you on your caregiving team. But it's also often helpful to speak with a more objective audience. The best groups — those that offer compassion, advice, humor and understanding — produce committed members. Embrace them.

Editor's Note: Broome County Office for Aging holds 2 monthly Caregiver Chat groups; the schedule for the groups can be found on the front page of this publication. Call (607) 778-2411 with any questions.

Reprinted from <https://www.aarp.org/caregiving/life-balance/info-2017/support-groups-bjj.html> Barry J. Jacobs, a clinical psychologist, family therapist and healthcare consultant, is the co-author of the book [AARP Meditations for Caregivers](#) (Da Capo, 2016).



Caregiver Self-Care: Caring for You

Keep these simple steps and strategies in mind to ensure that you as a caregiver find time and resources to take care of yourself.

- **Learn about the disease your loved one has.** Find out about what is happening now and what will happen in the future with this disease. The more you know, the more you will be able to plan.
- **Use community resources.** The more you let these services help you, the less you have to do. There are places to get help:
 - Your local Area Agency on Aging (Editor's note – Broome County Office for Aging is the AAA for Broome County)
 - Paratransit

- Meals on Wheels
- Day care programs
- Support groups

- **Take a break from caregiving.** Make a date to go to the movies, take a walk, meet a friend for lunch. Everyone needs to get out of the house once in a while. Do something not related to caregiving.
- **Get support.** Attend a support group, have a buddy you can call just to let off steam and complain. Depression is treatable. Talk to your doctor about it. Or seek counseling.
- **Practice communication and behavior management skills** if you are caring for someone with dementia. This will make your job easier. Learn how to do this by taking a class or researching online. The best communication strategies are often not intuitive.
- **Relax.** Read a book, meditate, pray, garden, knit, get a massage, take a long bath.
- **Take care of your health.** Go to the doctor, get routine exams and flu shots, get enough sleep, and eat your fruits and vegetables.
- **Ask for and accept help when offered.** No one can do this alone.
- **Change “guilt” to “regret.”** Guilt is you did something wrong, regret is that you are in a difficult situation and sometimes you have to make difficult decisions, but they are not wrong.
- **Forgive yourself—often.** You cannot be a perfect caregiver, all day, every day.
- **Laugh.** Find ways to keep your sense of humor on a daily basis. Watch comedies, practice laughter yoga, share jokes with friends.

Used with permission from Family Caregiver Alliance. For more information, visit www.caregiver.org or call (800) 445-8106.

The Caregiver Services Program is sponsored by a grant from the U.S. Administration on Aging, New York State Office for Aging, and Broome County.

Contributions are accepted to help support this program. No one is denied service because of an inability or unwillingness to contribute and all contributions are confidential.

To make a contribution, please send checks or money orders to: Broome County Office for Aging, PO Box 1766, Binghamton, NY 13902.

Caregiver Corner

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

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If you prefer to read the electronic version, we'd be glad to e-mail you a reminder when new issues are posted; we'll take you off the mailing list for the paper copies. Let us know by emailing:

ofa@co.broome.ny.us

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Thank you!