

Caregiver Corner

Ideas and Information for People Caring for Others

July & August 2021 / 607-778-2411 / www.gobroomecounty.com/senior

Events for Caregivers

Quick and Healthy Meals and Snacks for Caregivers

Date: Wednesday, July 14

Time: 1:00 – 2:30 PM

Location: By Zoom or Phone Call

Presenter: Kathleen Cook, SNAP Nutrition Educator



Caregiving can come with many stressors, but cooking doesn't have to be one!

This presentation will cover ideas for quick and healthy meals to help make mealtime less stressful and more fun. **Everyone who attends will receive free, quick & healthy recipes!**

Pre-registration is required; please call Caregiver Services at (607) 778-2411.

Veterans' Benefits: What You Need to Know as a Caregiver

Date: Wednesday, August 18

Time: 1:00 – 2:30 PM

Location: By Zoom or Phone Call

Presented by: Len Sas, Veterans' Benefits Advisor



As a veteran or a person caring for a veteran, there may be benefits and services that you or the person you are caring for may be eligible to receive.

Attend this presentation to learn more about the possible opportunities available to you.

Pre-registration is required; please call Caregiver Services at (607) 778-2411.

Caregiver Chat Groups

Let's chat! These informal discussions are open to caregivers of any age.



The Stay Healthy Caregiver Chat: participants call in using a landline or cell phone.

Date: Monday, July 12 & Monday, Aug. 2

Time: 1:00-2:30 PM

Dial: (607) 778-6547

Meeting Code: 2187 #

Attendee Access Code: 123456#

The Wayne Street Caregiver Chat: participants use the Zoom platform or can call in

Date: Wednesday, July 21 & Wednesday, Aug. 18

Time: Time: 9:30-11:00AM

Zoom address:

<https://broome.zoom.us/j/97041617223?pwd=aHU1ZlhFL1VQSDhybjIDSGxenRkZz09>

ID: 98867802737

Password: 037464



“Kindness is loaning someone your strength instead of reminding them of their weakness”

Time Management Techniques for Minimizing Caregiver Stress

by Ken Takeya

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<https://www.agingcare.com/articles/time-management-techniques-can-minimize-stress-211707.htm>

There have been many systems devised and suggestions made to help caregivers manage the stress they feel while taking care of their loved ones. Many of them are useful and work; it is just a matter of finding one that works for you.

Rule Your Time, Rule Your Stress

In addition to the organizational benefits, let's think about how time management plays an integral part in minimizing caregiver burden. On the surface, one would think that organizing your time would only add another task to your to-do list. As with any other type of management, it requires effort, attention to detail, planning and forethought. Yes, this takes time and energy, but over the long term it actually conserves these resources and prevents unnecessary strain.

For example, without proper time management, we are constantly late for appointments. If and when we finally show up, we are frazzled, ill-prepared, and unlikely to contribute anything valuable or remember much after the fact. A follow-up phone call or additional appointment may be necessary to clarify information or address concerns you forgot to bring up, which takes even more time out of your busy schedule.

As caregivers, we have so much on our plates that, without proper organization, we also forget what we were going to do until it is too late. A simple oversight or distraction can lead to missed medications, a soiled bed or a burnt dinner. We are human and these things do happen to the best of us, but staying on top of our tasks minimizes our total work because we aren't wasting additional time playing catch-up or re-doing things. Setting up a system that works for you can help to prevent trips to the emergency room, messy accidents and more.

Devising a System

I am not suggesting that caregivers must constantly look at the clock to ensure every minute of our time is accounted for. That would certainly add stress to our

lives. Instead, we need to take a more sensible approach.

1. **Plan for Planning.** Set aside just 10 minutes each day to make a daily to-do list. Making this part of your morning or evening routine can help you start each day with a focused set of objectives. Write out your list at the same time every day.
2. **Create a Guide.** Use a master calendar to list all of your household's appointments as well as your family members' birthdays, anniversaries, etc. Whenever you get a new calendar, try to transfer permanent dates and events in one sitting so that nothing slips through the cracks. This will be a useful reference point for when you make your daily to-do list and will help keep you aware of any upcoming obligations that have a tendency to sneak up on you.
3. **Be Realistic About Your Tasks.** It will be almost impossible to finish the entire list every single day. Do your best and don't worry about it. The to-do list is your guide, not a rule to follow. List even the simplest things, such as "feed the dog," "get the morning meds," "cook dinner," and "water the yard." If it helps you prioritize, label your tasks as "must do" and "want to do." Tend to the "musts" first and then the "wants" as you have the time and energy.
4. **Mark As Complete.** Each time you finish a task, scratch it off the list. As simple as this may seem, the feeling of accomplishment is very gratifying. You will likely feel as if a small weight has been lifted every time you cross off an item, and there is no second-guessing whether you forgot to do something.
5. **Don't Get Sidetracked.** Once you become more proficient, you will notice that you'll have time for a nap, an extra cup of coffee or a chapter of that book you've been trying to finish. One caveat is getting distracted by something that is not important. Don't let it happen. Obviously, unexpected things will come up. Try to manage these unanticipated tasks, but don't lose sight of the big picture in all the details. If something is a "must-do" that needs to be addressed immediately, then see to

it. If it can wait, quickly add it to tomorrow's list.

6. **Add Some Padding to Your**

Schedule. Generously account for prep time and mishaps. What trips up a caregiver most is getting a loved one ready for an outing. Since you probably know how long it will take to get to your destination, allow yourself at least 30 minutes of extra time just for "getting ready." This will help to compensate for spilled juice or food, bathroom time, clothing changes, dealing with "I don't want to go" protests, getting into the car, and all of the other excuses and last-minute challenges we experience. Since you have allocated extra time for your tasks, you will have a tendency to be less frantic before and during your time out. Increased calmness will, in turn, make dealing with a loved one's objections and complaints easier to handle. If you find 30 minutes is not enough time, then make it 45 minutes. If dressing is an issue, then lay out their clothing the night before or earlier in the day. Every hang-up has a solution.

7. **Make Me-Time a Priority.** Even if it is only 15 minutes before bed, use any extra time in the day to do something you truly enjoy that will recharge your batteries. Watch a favorite television program, chat with a friend on the phone, give yourself a massage, exercise or meditate. If you are doing better at managing your schedule, but still can't seem to find time for yourself during the day, make it a high-priority task on every to-do list.

8. **Ask for Back-Up.** If you're still having trouble managing, as many sole caregivers do, seek out help. One person cannot complete an entire to-do list every day while providing 24/7 supervision and assistance with activities of daily living (ADLs). Add a few hours of home care or adult day care to the routine, or ask a family member or friend to lend a hand. Our loved ones and their ever-changing needs can be our greatest distractions. If their needs are seen to, you will be free to tackle other items on your list, including time for yourself!

Remember, you cannot control time, but you can

control how you use it. Instead of constantly working against the clock, turn it into something that works for you. Being spread too thin means that we cannot give 100 percent to anyone or anything, and half-done tasks can quickly snowball and leave us feeling defeated. Find a system that works for you and your loved one and stick to it. Your mind and body will thank you.

Q: I don't consider myself a caregiver as I don't do much for my uncle besides occasional shopping trips and taking him to doctor appointments. I wish my other family members would help out more but I'm happy to do these things for him. My wife says I am a caregiver because I'm helping him do the things he can no longer do. Can you tell me – who is considered a 'caregiver'?



A: A caregiver is a person who provides some assistance to an older relative or friend. If you take someone to the doctor, shopping, assist with bill-paying, provide emotional support, and/or assist with bathing or dressing you are a caregiver. You don't have to be living with the person or providing 24-hr. care to be considered a caregiver.

The two most important aspects of healthy and successful caregiving are seeking out respite for your loved one and seeking out education and support for yourself. The Office for Aging offers respite services, Adult Day Programs, Personal Care/Housekeeper Chore Aides, and a variety of other services. You mentioned your family could be more helpful - this is a feeling shared by many caregivers. Consider attending a monthly Caregiver Chat group to discuss situations with those who understand and maybe pick up a few tips and hints for getting family members more involved. Call Caregiver Services at OFA for information on these opportunities and more: (607) 778-2411.



The Caregiver Services Program is sponsored by a grant from the Administration for Community Living, 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@BroomeCounty.US

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If you no longer want a paper copy of Caregiver Corner mailed to you, please contact the Office for Aging by phone: (607) 778-2411 or by email: OFA@BroomeCounty.US and ask to be taken off the mailing list.

Thank you!