

Caregiver Corner

Ideas and Information for People Caring for Others

March & April 2019 / 607-778-2411 / www.gobroomecounty.com/senior

Events for Caregivers

Learning How to Downsize and Declutter:

Tips for Caregivers and Their Loved Ones.

Date: Tuesday, March 19

Time: 1:00 - 2:00 PM

Location: Broome West Senior Center,
2801 Wayne Street, Endwell

Presenter: Joan Sprague, retired from the Broome County Office for Aging.



Do you have clutter? Many of us do - some of it's beautiful, some sentimental, some just plain unnecessary.

This presentation will get us motivated to start the process

of downsizing. Be aware that downsizing takes time and patience, as it took a lifetime to accumulate the things we have. We will also discuss possible reasons for why we hold on to things the way we do.

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

The TRAIID Center and Loan Closet: Greater Independence Through Technology – What Caregivers and Seniors Need to Know.

Date: Thursday, April 25

Time: 2:00 - 3:00 PM

Location: UHS Stay Healthy Center,
Oakdale Mall, Johnson City

Presenter: Decker Ayers, Assistive Technology Specialist with the Southern Tier Independence Center.

The TRAIID Center (Technology Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities) and Loan Closet makes it possible to try a piece of assistive technology equipment to decide if it's right for you or your loved one. This program is available to people of all ages with a disability, their family members, service providers and others who are interested in assistive technology. Come and learn what TRAIID has to offer with the goal of keeping a person as independent as possible.



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, March 4
Monday, April 1

Time: 1:00-2:30 PM

Place: Broome West Senior Center
2801 Wayne Street, Endwell

Date: Wednesday, March 20
Wednesday, April 17

Time: 9:30-11:00 AM



“Springtime is the land awakening. The March winds are the morning yawn.” – author Lewis Grizzard

Caregiver Corner Question & Answer

Question: I'm concerned about my mother. She doesn't see well anymore, but continues to drive. She has a bad back and arthritis, so cooking and cleaning are hard. Even keeping her house tidy and doing laundry is difficult. When I try to talk about my concerns, she walks away. I feel we need solutions before she hurts herself or someone else. How can I get through to my mom?



Answer: Your mother may feel overwhelmed by your concerns. Try prioritizing the issues and bring them up one at a time. Choose a time of day when she feels her best and choose a place where your mother feels comfortable, such as a favorite park, diner, or a room in her house.



When speaking, remain calm and phrase your concerns using "I" sentences instead of "you" to sound less judgmental. For example, "I worry, Mom, that you'll get in an accident someday and injure yourself and others if you continue driving" will be easier to hear than, "Mom, you need to stop driving because you can't see anymore and you're going to injure yourself and others someday". Additionally, phrasing your concerns in the form of a question because this shows you value your mother's opinion. You could say, "Mom, I'm concerned about your driving because I'm afraid you're going to get in an accident someday. I want to hear what you have to say; can we talk about this?"

These communication tips and more are addressed in the handout, "How to Have a Difficult Conversation with an Older Person". This handout also includes special considerations for caregivers who are trying to communicate with an older person who has memory loss. Contact Caregiver Services by calling 778-2411 for your copy.

Activities of Daily Living: Why This Measure Matters

Carol Bradley Bursack

When it becomes obvious to us that a loved one can't get through a day without assistance, the logical next

step is to begin looking into resources that can provide the added support they need. One of the first things a long-term care insurance company, home care company, adult day care center or assisted living facility will ask about is the person's ability to perform ADLs. But what exactly are ADLs?

Every field has its jargon, and the long-term care industry is no exception. In the business of providing care, the phrase "activities of daily living" is used often, and there's a good reason for this. Activities of daily living are basic self-care skills needed to properly care for oneself in the areas of eating, dressing, bathing, toileting, continence, and mobility. ADLs are one of the most important measurements used to determine the level of care an individual requires and what their care plan should entail.

To help us understand ADLs, I asked Aging Life Care Professional, Carmel Froemke, for some clarification. Carmel has spent 25 years providing direct care and program management for individuals with disabilities, specializing in mental health rehabilitation. Below, Carmel answers our questions regarding activities of daily living.

How are ADLs affected by Age and Health Condition?

A decline in the ability to perform ADLs is often due to a medical condition or general weakness that has increased with age. Most family members pick up on a loved one's decline through secondary signs of a problem, such as changes in their routines or appearance. These red flags typically indicate there is a more serious underlying issue that is interfering with their ability to perform self-care.

For instance, if the senior is wearing the same outfit each time you see them, it may be because they have lost the flexibility or dexterity needed to fasten zippers and buttons on other clothing items they own. Simply changing their clothing style to elastic waist pants, Velcro-closure shoes or front-closing shirts may solve the problem and allow for more independent dressing and increased clothing options.

Another common example is a significant change in personal hygiene practices. If a fear of falling in the shower or bath is the driving force behind their infrequent bathing, the solution could be as simple as

implementing appropriate safety measures, such as grab bars, non-slip floor mats or a shower chair.

How are ADLs Assessed?

Most seniors want to maintain their independence for as long as possible, so they are afraid to tell someone they are having increased difficulties. They may fear having to move away from their home and comfort zone. However, an honest evaluation of the ability to perform ADLs will allow for the development of a customized plan of care that will enable them to continue living as independently as possible and ensure their needs are still met.

It is best to have a complete needs assessment conducted by a specialist (geriatric care manager, nurse, occupational therapist or social worker) to fully identify all problems, their root causes and potential solutions. However, if modifications are put in place and there is still a need for support, it may be time for outside help.

Who Conducts Official Functional Assessments?

Assessments can be made by a family doctor or an occupational therapist, but most programs that provide or cover long-term care services have their own assessment process, assessors, rules and guidelines, and they may vary greatly from one program to another. For example, long-term care insurance agencies typically employ or hire private assessors to make eligibility determinations.

One of the best resources for beginning the assessment and application process is your local Area Agency on Aging. AAAs can let you know where you need to have an assessment done, and, in some cases, may actually be able to provide the assessment.

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Residents' Rights: Do you know them?

The role of the Long Term Care Ombudsman is critical and important to the safety and welfare of thousands of New York state residents of long term care facilities. Through the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, residents are empowered to self-advocate and/or have the Ombudsman act on

their behalf, protecting their basic rights to the services and care they deserve.

State and federal regulations require nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and adult care homes to have written policies covering the rights of residents. The facility must implement these policies and explain them to the resident. Any person in a long term care facility should receive appropriate care, be treated with courtesy and enjoy continued civil and legal rights. A brief list of residents' rights include the following:

- Dignity, respect and a comfortable living environment
- Quality of care and treatment without discrimination
- Freedom of choice to make their own independent decisions
- Privacy in communications
- Participation in organizations and activities of their choice
- Ability to freely exercise all rights without fear of reprisals

An Ombudsman can assist with communication needs between the facility and resident, and may help promote talking points and fact finding meetings. An Ombudsman will always work for the residents' rights.

If you or someone you know has questions about the Ombudsman program or would like to discuss any concerns, please contact the Broome, Chenango, Delaware and Tioga County Ombudsman Program Coordinator, Morgan White, at Action for Older Persons: (607) 722-1251. The service is free and confidential.

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
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Thank you!