

Caregiver Corner

Ideas and Information for People Caring for Others

November & December 2021 / 607-778-2411 / www.gobroomecounty.com/senior

Caregiver Event

In celebration of National Caregiver Month, Broome County Office for Aging invites you to a special event:

Supportive Options for Caregivers: An Educational Program for Caregivers

Date: Tuesday, November 16
Time: 1:00 – 3:00 PM
Location: Broome West Senior Center
2801 Wayne Street
Endwell, NY 13760

Caregiving can be stressful in regular times, but we haven't quite gotten back to "regular" life just yet. With the many challenges that caregivers face, knowledge and support can be your best allies. We have a variety of speakers to discuss supportive options for caregivers during this educational event.

Presentation Topics and Speakers Include:

Overview of Caregiver Services

By Danielle Schaeffer, Office for Aging

The Yellow Dot Program

By Deputy Stapleton, BC Sheriff's Office

Safe and Affordable Medications

By Binghamton Univ. Pharmacy Students

2022 Medicare Updates

By Jane Talbot, Action for Older Persons

Yesteryears Social Day Program

By Shellie Spinelli, Office for Aging

A medication drop-off will be available at this event, so please bring any expired and unused medications that you would like to dispose of.

Please maintain social distancing - at least 6 feet apart - and masks will be required.

Pre-registration required. Call Caregiver Services at (607) 778-2411 to register.

Senior Scams Presentation

What Caregivers Need to Know

Date: Wed, December 15
Time: 1:00 – 2:00 PM
Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting
Presenter: Mike Danaher, Asst. Atty. General
This presentation will review the various types of scams that can target older adults, and what caregivers need to know to protect themselves and the people in their care.

Pre-registration required. Call Caregiver Services at (607) 778-2411 to register and receive Zoom meeting invitation.

Caregiver Chat Groups

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



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

Date: Mondays, November 1 & December 6

Time: 1:00-2:30 PM

Dial-In: (607) 778-6547

Meeting Code: 2187#

Attendee Access Code: 123456#

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

Date: Wednesdays, November 17 & December 15

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

Zoom address:

<https://broome.zoom.us/j/97041617223?pwd=aHU1ZlhFL1VQSDhybjlDSGxenRkZz09>

ID: 98867802737

Password: 037464

For questions on the Wayne Street Caregiver Chat, call (607) 778-2946 or email

Machelle.spinelli@broomecounty.us

Preparing for Emergencies

Caregivers want the best for their loved one, but their busy lives prevent them from preparing for unforeseen circumstances. Chemical spills, fires, power outages, tornadoes, and snowstorms are just a few examples of situations that may affect you and your loved one's daily activities. By having a plan in advance and supplies on hand, you will feel safer knowing that your loved one is prepared for an emergency.

Decide how you will prepare and respond to an emergency. Choose a local and out-of-area emergency contact for your loved one. Write down this information and post it on the refrigerator or other conspicuous place that your loved one or emergency responders can easily see. Other information to include is their date of birth, medications they take and medical information. Also, make sure that they have filled out health care proxy and advance directives paperwork.

Next, make sure your loved one's home is ready for an emergency. Install smoke detectors, change the batteries two times each year, and purchase a fire extinguisher. Install a hard-lined phone; keep in mind that during a power outage cordless phone will not work. Make a kit that includes supplies needed if it is unsafe to leave the house. The kit should include a radio, flashlight, batteries, non-perishable food, paper products, can opener, important phone numbers, an extra pair of glasses, extra medications, and other items you think are necessary. Keep a small amount of cash or traveler's checks in the kit just in case your loved one does need to evacuate. When it is not safe to stay home, radio stations will alert you to shelter locations. Some shelters are specifically set up for those with medical needs or those with pets. If your loved one lives in a facility, be sure to know the facilities emergency preparedness plan.



This is basic information to get you started preparing for an emergency. It is up to you and your loved one to be ready for the unexpected. For more information contact the American Red Cross or go to www.redcross.org.

Recognizing the Need for Outside Help in Caregiving

Caregivers often don't recognize when they are in over their heads, and often get to a breaking point. After a prolonged period of time, caregiving can become too difficult to endure any longer. Short-term the caregiver can handle it. Long-term, help is needed. Outside help at this point is needed.

A typical pattern with an overloaded caregiver may unfold as follows:

- 1 to 18 months – the caregiver is confident, has everything under control and is coping well. Other friends and family are lending support.
- 20 to 36 months –Outside help dwindles away except for trips to the store or doctor. The caregiver may feel alone and helpless.
- 38 to 50 months –Lack of focus and fatigue may cloud judgment and the caregiver is often unable to make decisions or ask for help. It is often at this stage that family or friends intercede and find other solutions for care. This may include respite care, hiring home health aides or putting the disabled loved one in a facility. Without intervention, the caregiver may become a candidate for long term care as well.

With the holiday season upon us, caregivers feel even more stress — with planning, shopping, and participating in holiday activities. This is a perfect time for family and friends to step up and provide some respite time and caregiving help. Whether it is provided personally or arranged as a gift of services to be provided by a professional respite company or home care provider, it is a welcome gift.

An article in "Today's Caregiver" states: "Nearly one in four caregivers of people with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias provide 40 hours a week or more of care. Seventy-one percent sustain this commitment for more than a year, and 32 percent do so for five years or more. One of the best gifts you can give someone caring for Alzheimer's is something that relieves the stress or provides a bit of respite for the caregiver." (*cont'd on next page*)

The Gift of Time: “Cost-effective and truly meaningful gifts are self-made coupons for cleaning the house, preparing a meal, moving lawn/shoveling driveway, respite times that allow the caregiver time off to focus on what he/she needs.”

It is also important to note that hiring professional care provider services can provide valuable ongoing support to an overloaded caregiver. A financial planner, care funding specialist or a reverse mortgage specialist may find the funds to pay for professional help to keep a loved one at home. A care manager can guide the family and the caregiver through the maze of long-term care issues. The care manager has been there many times — the family is experiencing it for the first time.

An elder law attorney can help iron out legal problems. An elder mediator can help solve disputes between family members. There are also cash benefits for Veterans, who served during a period of war, that pay for home care or assisted living.

If you are the one providing daily care for a loved one, you owe it to yourself to seek help.

Take care of yourself and your needs, both physically and mentally. Seek out professional help that will ease your burden and look for community service organizations that offer respite help.

Adapted from: <https://care-givers.com/articles/recognizing-the-need-for-outside-help-in-caregiving/>

Holiday Gift Ideas for People with Alzheimer’s



Early Stage: During this stage, individuals are still able to live healthy, active, & fulfilling lives. But it is also during this time that they may begin to notice subtle changes in their memory and processing. Here are some gift ideas for people in this stage of the disease.

- **Items for Memory:** prefilled calendars with important dates like birthdays and anniversaries, erasable whiteboards to write daily to-do lists and other important reminders, labeled baskets for drawers and cabinets to help with organization, a pocket-sized notebook to keep track of important information on the go, or medication dispensers for pills.
- **Entertainment:** Plan events for you and your loved one to do together or with family. These could include going to see a play or concert, attending a sporting event, having a movie night, or even a scrapbooking night at home. Put your loved one’s favorite songs on a CD, or make a DVD with their movies or shows.

Moderate/Late Stage: During these stages, individuals have an increasing need for assistance with everyday tasks, while their memory continues to decline. Here are some gift ideas for them:

- **Items to Stimulate the Senses:** As Alzheimer’s progresses, people lose touch with their senses. By providing your loved one with a gift that will stimulate one or many of their senses, you may bring back pleasant memories as well as ease their day-to-day stresses. Ideas include:
 - **Clothes:** Giving soft, comfortable, and easy to remove clothing.
 - **Music:** By gathering music from their youth, you can increase the likelihood of being able to interact with your loved one in a meaningful way by grabbing hold of the limited memories they still retain.
 - **Framed Photographs/Photo Collage:** Give your loved one an album with all of your family members’ photos as well as their names. Adapted from: alz.org

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.

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