

# Caregiver Corner

Ideas and Information for People Caring for Others

January & February 2022 / 607-778-2411 / [www.gobroomecounty.com/senior](http://www.gobroomecounty.com/senior)

## Events for Caregivers

### The Memory Maker Project

**Date:** Wednesday, January 19<sup>th</sup>

**Time:** 10:30-11:30AM

**Location:** Virtual Zoom Meeting



Join Creative Aging Specialist Christina Muscatello to learn how simple creative practices can greatly improve the health, wellbeing, and quality of life of older adults, people living with memory loss, and their care partners.

**Pre-registration is requested.** Please call Caregiver Services at (607) 778- 2411 to register and receive the Zoom meeting invitation.

### The Ford Family Wellness Center for Seniors

**Date:** Wednesday, February 16<sup>th</sup>

**Time:** 1:00-2:30PM

**Location:** Virtual Zoom Meeting

**Presenter:** Rene Conklin LMSW, Elder Services Coordinator at Binghamton University

This presentation will cover the services that can be provided through the Elder Services Center at Binghamton University. The presenter will discuss what types of clinical services are available, community education services and how to assess caregiver stress.

**Pre-registration is requested.** Please call Caregiver Services at (607) 778- 2411 to register and receive the 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, January 3<sup>rd</sup> & February 7<sup>th</sup>

**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, January 19<sup>th</sup> & February 16<sup>th</sup>

**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@bromecounty.us](mailto:Machelle.spinelli@bromecounty.us)

## How to Keep the Promise We Make To Ourselves This Year

By: Sherri Snelling

Ahh the New Year is here – the hectic pace of the holidays is over, the frenzy over buying gifts and seeing friends and family is done. You can finally breathe. That is, unless you are one of the 65 million Americans who are caring for a loved one – that moment to put the world on “pause” and get a break never seems to happen. (*Cont'd on next page*)

When it comes to caring for an older parent, a chronically ill spouse or a child with special needs, we know that caregivers are at risk for adopting bad habits such as smoking or drinking, for not getting enough sleep, for not having the time to eat or exercise right and for not taking enough time to focus on themselves – whether it is a coffee date with a friend, a pedicure, a movie or other things that can bring a smile to our face.

This is why my wish for all caregivers this year is to make a promise to yourself that you can keep. Make it simple. Make it just about you. Here are some tips on how to get there:

### 3 Steps to Keep That Promise to Yourself

**1. First of all, you need to have an actual plan.** If you just have a desire to improve something, it is not enough. You will be more successful at achieving your goal if you have steps on how to get there. For instance, it is not about losing weight – it is about the changes you will take to reach that goal. Breaking a big goal into small increments is a key part of your plan.

**2. In addition, you need to track your progress.** This instills a sense of mini accomplishments on the path to your goal. It helps to talk to someone who is invested in seeing you be successful. Having a friend or other support person who can be your “cheerleader” – celebrating your milestones towards the goal can help keep you going.

**3. Lastly, be committed to your goal.** Keep it simple (one resolution is better than two or three) and treat occasional “slips” as temporary setbacks on the path to reaching your goal. You have to commit to change. This is a marathon, not a sprint. Be kind to yourself if you have a bad day that makes you reach for the chocolate.



“Self-care is giving the world the best of you, instead of what’s left of you.”

– Katie Reed

### My Answer: Me Time Monday

I had the luck of meeting with a non-profit organization that I thought had a brilliant idea. It is called Healthy Monday – based on scientific research and the support of prestigious institutions such as Johns Hopkins University, Syracuse University and Columbia University, they have found that starting a new routine on a Monday will make you more successful at whatever you want to achieve. Essentially the premise is simple – just as the New Year is a time when we resolve to do something, every Monday is an opportunity to renew that promise to ourselves.

Healthy Monday says their research shows that most Americans feel Monday is the day for a fresh start. For caregivers, I believe using the Monday point in time to remind you of “what have I done for me lately?” would make sense. Whether it is 5 minutes or 5 hours – it does not matter. Check in with yourself every Monday and take time for you.

Fifty-two weeks to reach your goal. Pick one thing that you would like to accomplish just for you this year. Check in with yourself every Monday. Good luck – 2022 is your year!

Adapted From:

[https://www.alz.org/blog/alz/january\\_2012/how\\_to\\_keep\\_the\\_promise\\_we\\_make\\_to\\_ourselves\\_this](https://www.alz.org/blog/alz/january_2012/how_to_keep_the_promise_we_make_to_ourselves_this)

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### 10 Steps To Approach Memory Concerns In Others

By: Alzheimer’s Association

If you notice changes in friends, family or others close to you and are concerned for their health – particularly when it involves changes in memory, thinking or behavior — it can be difficult to know what to do or say. Although it's natural to be uncertain or nervous about how to offer support, these changes could be a sign of a significant health concern.

Use the guide below to help you feel more confident and prepared as you assess the situation and take action. (*Cont'd on next page*)

## Assess the Situation

### 1. What changes in memory, thinking or behavior do you see?

What's the person doing — or not doing — that's out of the ordinary and causing concern?

### 2. What else is going on?

Various conditions can cause changes in memory, thinking and behavior. What health or lifestyle issues could be a factor? E.g., family stress or health issues

### 3. Learn about the signs of Alzheimer's and other dementias and the benefits of an early diagnosis.

Visit [alz.org/10signs](http://alz.org/10signs) to educate yourself on 10 common warning signs of Alzheimer's and why it's important to know if dementia is causing the changes. Do you notice any of the signs in the person you're concerned about?

### 4. Has anyone else noticed the change(s)?

Find out if friends and family have seen changes.

## Take Action Through Conversation



### 5. Who should have the conversation to discuss concerns?

It could be you, a trusted family member or friend, or a combination.

It's usually best to speak one-on-one so that the person doesn't feel threatened by a group, but use your best judgment to determine what will likely be most comfortable for the individual.

### 6. What is the best time and place to have the conversation?

Have the conversation as soon as possible. In addition to choosing a date and time, consider where the person will feel most comfortable.

### 7. What will you or the person having the conversation say?

Try the following:

» I've noticed [change] in you, and I'm concerned.

Have you noticed it? Are you worried?

» How have you been feeling lately? You haven't seemed like yourself.

» I noticed you [specific example] and it worried me. Has anything else like that happened?

### 8. Offer to go with the person to the doctor.

Ask the person if he or she will see a doctor and show your support by offering to go to the appointment.

Some words of encouragement may include:

» There are lots of things that could be causing this, and dementia may or may not be one of them. Let's see if the doctor can help us figure out what's going on.

» The sooner we know what's causing these problems, the sooner we can address it.

» I think it would give us both peace of mind if we talked with a doctor.

### 9. If needed, have multiple conversations.

The first conversation may not be successful. Write down some notes about the experience to help plan for the next conversation.

» Location:

» Date/time of day

» What worked well? What didn't?

» What was the result?

» What can be done differently next time?

## Reach Out for Help

**10. Turn to the Alzheimer's Association for information and support.** Visit the Alzheimer's Association website at <https://www.alz.org/> for more information. Or call their free 24/7 Helpline (800.272.3900) to speak with a master's-level clinician who can provide more information about how to discuss memory concerns with someone close to you.

**Adapted From:** <https://www.alz.org/alzheimers-dementia/10-steps>

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**

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**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**