

Caregiver Corner

Ideas and Information for People Caring for Others

January & February 2020 / 607-778-2411 / www.gobroomecounty.com/senior

Events for Caregivers

IRS Recordkeeping and Recording: What Seniors and Caregivers Need to Know.

Date: Tuesday, January 7

Time: 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Location: Broome West Senior Center
2801 Wayne Street, Endwell

Presenter: Cameron Daniels, Esq., of Hogan,
Sarzynski, Lynch, DeWind & Gregory, LLP



With tax season just around the corner, join us for this informative presentation as we discuss the following topics:

What records and documentation are needed for income tax reporting, and how long should you keep those documents?

If you've hired an aide in the past year, learn what's deductible on your tax return, plus other information on paid aides and taxes.

Other helpful information pertaining to tax season and caregiving will also be discussed.

Please call (607) 778-2411 to reserve your seat.



Mediation and Conflict Resolution: What Caregivers Need to Know about Senior Communication

Date: Tuesday, February 18

Time: 2:00 – 3:00 PM

Location: Stay Healthy Center
Oakdale Mall, Johnson City

Presented by: ACCORD, A Center for Dispute
Resolution

Tensions can often develop between caregivers and the ones they care for. Instead of avoiding the problem, mediation is a process that allows for conversation around solutions. At this presentation we will discuss:

- How to discuss issues with a neutral mediator
- How to find solutions that are acceptable to both sides
- How to improve communication

Please call (607) 778-2411 with questions or 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, January 6
Monday, February 3

Time: 1:00-2:30 PM

Place: Broome West Senior Center
2801 Wayne Street, Endwell

Date: Wednesday, January 15
Wednesday, February 19

Time: 9:30-11:00 AM



“You don’t have to see the whole staircase – just take the first step.”
-Martin Luther King, Jr.

Q : I'm caring for my aging parents. I'm one of three children but the only one that lives locally. I love that I have a close relationship with my parents, but over the past few years they're constantly having a "crisis" that I'm expected to resolve immediately. I have my own very active and high-maintenance family. How do I keep everyone happy?



A : In the book, *Are Your Parents Driving You Crazy?*, authors Joseph A. Ilardo, PhD, LCSW and Carole R. Rothman, PhD

devote a chapter to how to meet your needs as well as the needs of your parents. In Chapter 4, the acronym "S.U.R.V.I.V.E" provides tips to help you manage the many dilemmas you are facing.



S—Stay calm. Most dilemmas are not life or death emergencies.

U—Utilize resources. Take advantage of friends and neighbors willing to help. It may be something as small as having a neighbor make sure the cans are to the curb on garbage day. Familiarize yourself with community resources for assistance with transportation, socialization or meals. Don't try to do everything yourself - it only wears you out and creates resentment.

R—Respect your own limits. Budget time for yourself and family and let your parents know, "I am available to stop over to help you from 3-5 on Tuesday and Thursday and 9-11 on Saturday mornings".

V—Verbalize honestly. If you have other obligations, be honest when you can't work their needs into your schedule. Don't say "I'll manage". Use community resources and friends to meet their needs. Setting up a good plan is as effective as doing it yourself.

I—Include your parents in your plan. Discuss what you can and can't do for your parents and offer them choices of services that are available. They may be more agreeable to outside help if they are given the option to choose what they are comfortable with.

V—Value your own feelings. It's natural to feel sad, angry and frustrated when caring for a loved one.

E—Expect difficulties and plan for them ahead of time. Always have a backup plan. If the cleaning lady or snow removal company happens to cancel, have a plan in place. This will reduce anxiety and stress for you and your parents.



13 New Year's Resolutions for Caregivers

By Carol Bradley Bursack

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<https://www.agingcare.com/articles/caregiver-new-years-resolutions-143643.htm>

It's human to want a fresh start. Even though I know that December 31 of one year is rarely that different from January 1 of the next, I greet each New Year's Day as a new beginning. I can't explain it, but the first day of January always gives me a psychological boost, be it ever so brief.

Like most caregivers, I always strove for perfection and I always wound up feeling like I fell short. There is no way that I know of to be a perfect caregiver. The needs of any care receiver can change in an instant. We can miss subtle signals. We are often so tired and stressed that we may absentmindedly forget to pick up a prescription, check an adult brief or do the laundry. All of these things can bring on a huge case of unearned caregiver guilt.

It is so easy to get wrapped up in the difficult feelings and the pressure. Every so often, caregivers need to remind themselves that they are doing their personal best. The New Year is a perfect time to take inventory of our lives and see what improvements we can make. My thought is that we can look at the coming year with fresh eyes, even though that freshness may only last a moment.

Let's make a list of New Year's resolutions and pretend we'll keep them all. Even if you only stick to one of them, remember that progress is good, no matter how small.

New Year's Resolutions to Consider

1. I give myself permission to not keep the following resolutions or to keep them only partway.
2. When I feel I am imperfect, I will remember that guilt is not an option as long as I know I did the best I could, given the circumstances.
3. I will find time alone for myself, even though that seems impossible. That may mean asking for help from people and sources I've never considered before.
4. Regardless of how deserving the source, I will say no to requests for my time when I know I can't add any more to my plate.
5. I will remember that family members and friends who are not care receivers deserve some of my time. This may mean a little less of my attention will go to my care receiver, and that is okay.
6. I will follow through with my own health care appointments and screenings, including dental cleanings and eye exams.
7. I will find a way to monitor my own energy levels so I can recharge my batteries before I hit the point of exhaustion and burnout.
8. I will remember that seeking advice from professionals, organizations and fellow caregivers is a sign of strength, not weakness.
9. I will remember that my care receiver didn't choose the illness or disability that he or she is living with.
10. I will remember that I didn't choose this life for my care receiver either, so I won't be a martyr to their illness.
11. I will remember that taking care of my own needs isn't selfish. Taking care of myself benefits everyone I love.
12. I will get appropriate help for myself if depression, anxiety or other mental health issues become apparent to me, my friends or my family.

13. I will be open to alternative ways of caring for myself. This can include massage, aroma therapy, some form of meditation, exercise, attending a support group, seeking out respite care, or meeting with a therapist.

This list is merely a starting point. What resolutions would you add for yourself? Which would you delete? If you print out this list and hang it in a prominent place, you can work toward these goals a little bit every day. Even looking at it once a month will help you view your situation with a fresh perspective.

Remember, happiness isn't about perfection—it's about having realistic expectations. We all have room to adjust our expectations to more closely match reality, and that change alone can help us have a happier and more productive year.

Editor's note: Caregiver Services at the Office for Aging has numerous ways to achieve some of the goals on this list, from respite options, caregiver chat/support groups, and information and assistance/referrals to other services in the community for caregivers and care receivers. Please call for more information: (607) 778-2411

“We spend January 1st walking through our lives, room by room, drawing up a list of work to be done, cracks to be patched. Maybe this year, to balance the list, we ought to walk through the rooms of our lives not looking for flaws, but for potential.”
– Ellen Goodman



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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Thank you!