



### Monthly Caregiver Support Group

1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of every month

**Date:** Starts August 7<sup>th</sup> Meets 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of every month

**Time:** 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

**Where:** Henry Dodge Office Building - 199 County Road DF - Juneau

**What will we do:** Share, learn, share, relax, share, read, share, projects, & more

**Questions or want to tell us you are coming?**

**Call the ADRC at 920-386-3580**

## Find Support in your Caregiving Role

Talk to someone who provides care for their aging loved one long enough and they will tell you what a difficult and stressful job caregiving can be. The American Medical Association states that the role of caregiving places demands on the caregiver which leaves them at risk for health problems including serious illness and depression. According to the American Journal of Public Health, middle-aged and older women caring for their spouses are six times more likely to suffer from depression or anxiety disorders than their non-caregiving counterparts. The result of this decline in health by the caregiver not only affects the person giving the care, but it may also compromise the care they are providing their loved one.

Reading information like this can make caregiving sound bleak and discouraging but we also know that caregiving can be a very rewarding job. **The key difference between a caregiver who is barely hanging on and one who is happy and at ease is having proper support in their role as a caregiver.** Healthy and content caregivers receive help with tasks like providing personal care and housekeeping and they take regular breaks from caregiving. Most importantly; however, they have found an emotional support network.

The American Medical Association suggests to physicians that “a referral to a support group should be recommended for all caregivers.” Oftentimes people hear the words “support group” and immediately tune out. They are uncomfortable with the idea of sharing their feelings or they think of a support group as a bunch of people sitting around whining about their lives. Support groups are much more than that and the benefits they offer are valuable.

The definition of a support group is a gathering of people in similar situations who provide each other moral support, practical information, and tips on coping with your unique situation. Here are some of the benefits of attending support group meetings:

- They provide valuable information that will increase your knowledge of caregiving. One of the best resources for caregivers is other caregivers!
- They teach coping skills. The information and advice that the group provides can assist in problem solving the many different challenging situations you may be experiencing.
- They are a place to share common concerns and joys. Others in similar situations can then offer encouragement and support.
- They provide emotional support and are a safe place to identify and express stressful feelings. Having this support can improve your mood and decrease feelings of distress.
- They provide affirmation and advocacy. The group serves as a source of validation and can offer avenues to local resources.

Attending support group meetings can help you feel less alone, give you new strategies to cope with day-to-day stressors, and help you feel affirmed in your work as a caregiver. The result will be a healthier, happier you which in turn means better care for your loved one. By taking time to care for your physical and emotional needs, you will discover you can feel more joy and contentment in your caregiving role.

# Summer Safety Tips

If you are a “senior”, the heat and sun can be dangerous if proper precautions aren't taken. Here are some great tips you can use to make sure you have a fun, safe summer.

## 1. Drink Water

Seniors are more susceptible to dehydration than younger people because they lose their ability to conserve water as they age. They can also become less aware of their thirst and have difficulty adjusting to temperature changes.

## 2. Stay in Touch

High temperatures can be life-threatening so communication plays an important role in ensuring safety. Let friends and family know if you'll be spending an extended period of time outdoors, even if only gardening.

## 3. Meet Your Neighbors

Get in touch with those who live in your neighborhood and learn a bit about them and their schedules. See if a younger neighbor, perhaps even one of their kids (hint – fresh baked cookies ☺), can come by and check on you occasionally to make sure everything is all right. The extra company and friendship that can result is a bonus!

## 4. Protect Yourself

When it's warm out, some people find natural fabrics (such as cotton) to be cooler than synthetic fibers. Stock your summer wardrobe with light-colored and loose-fitting clothes to help feel cooler and more comfortable. Wearing sunglasses can protect your eyes from harmful UV rays and preserve your vision.

Everyone, young and old, should wear sunscreen when outdoors. Hats are also a great idea, especially for those with light-colored hair and those with only distant memories of a full head of hair.

Seniors are particularly prone to West Nile Virus and encephalitis. Use mosquito repellent to help reduce the risk of getting bitten by a mosquito carrying this virus.

## 5. Know the Signs of Hyperthermia

Make sure to know the warning signs and get medical attention immediately if you or anyone you know is experiencing these symptoms:

- Body temperature greater than 104 degrees
- A change in behavior such as acting confused, agitated, or grouchy
- Dry, flushed skin
- Nausea and vomiting
- Headache
- Heavy breathing or a rapid pulse
- Not sweating, even if it's hot out
- Fainting

If you or an elderly loved one start to feel any of these symptoms, ask for medical help and get out of the heat, lie down, and place ice packs on your body. Hats are also a great idea, especially for those with light-colored hair and those with only distant memories of a full head of hair.

You can't really be strong until you see a funny side to things - Ken Kesey



## **Help for caregivers is available in many different ways:**

Proven effective, this 90 minute class runs for 6 weeks

and helps those who are caring for someone learn to:

- Reduce stress
- Improve self-confidence
- Better communicate feelings
- Locate helpful resources
- Increase their ability to make tough decisions

Powerful Tools  
FOR Caregivers

**\*\*For more information on Powerful Tools for Caregivers, including when the next class starts, call the ADRC\*\***

- \* 24 hour call in line - **Alzheimer's Association** (always answered by a person) 800-272-3900
- \* **Free telephone learning sessions.** (Register ahead by calling 866-390-6491) different subjects each time.  
<http://caregiversos.org/caregiver-teleconnection/> Also is starting a *Caregiver Telephone Support Group* that meets for 8 weeks at a time. Call 866-390-6491
- \* **Veterans Caregiver Support Line** 855-260-3274
- \* Visit **Caregiver Connection** on Facebook
- \* Find tools at <http://www.caregiverslibrary.org/caregivers-resources/grp-checklists-forms.aspx>
- \* Online help from **AARP** <http://www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving/>
- \* **Call the ADRC 920-386-3580**