Caregivers Have Rights, Too!

It happens gradually. She needs a little help balancing the checkbook and there are bills on the counter not getting paid. The layer of ice on roads and sidewalks leaves you nervous about a fall so you stop for her groceries and accompany her to appointments. You notice that her floors are dirty and there is a laundry basket of clothes waiting to be washed. You do more and more for her and soon find yourself making daily phone calls or visits to help. You have become a caregiver. Your mother could not live at home alone without your help.

When is the last time I had lunch with my friends? When did I start eating fast food so often? I used to love going for walks, but how long has it been? And why do I feel so grumpy, angry, and frustrated? The answers are enmeshed with your new “job” that you didn’t realize you had.

Caregiving is like another job. You choose to do it and truly want to do it, but when you put your own life and needs on the backburner, you can run into trouble. Caregiving can consume your time, thoughts, and energy and it can chip away at your physical and emotional health but you CAN BE a healthy caregiver! You have rights as a caregiver and following these rights will keep you healthy and help you give better care to your loved one, too.

If you are a caregiver, please know that you have the right to:

- Take care of yourself without any feelings of guilt. By maintaining your own health, you will be happier, healthier, and a better caregiver for your loved one!
- Continue having a life of your own – one that does not include your role as a caregiver. Make it a priority to keep doing the things you love, knowing that you are also doing all you can for your loved one.
- Feel and express the strong emotions that caregiving produces. It is normal to feel anger, fear, loss, and depression. Acknowledge these feelings and find someone to talk to about them.
- Refuse feelings of guilt that may be put upon you by your loved one or others. Do not allow yourself to be manipulated by guilt or other negative feelings.
- Accept the positive feelings - appreciation, love, forgiveness, gratitude – bestowed on you by your loved one and others who see your difficult task. Caregiving is hard work and you should feel happy and proud to be a caregiver.
- Seek help from others, whether from friends and relatives or paid help. No one can do it all. Accept help in order to maintain your own life and individuality. You will need this life to return to when your days of being a caregiver end.

Helping Someone? You Can Help Us Help You

We are pleased to announce that in 2019 we here at the ADRC were part of starting a coalition of people who want to help caregivers. We are all people who are involved in caregiving in some way. We are the Community Caregiver Alliance of Dodge County.

Our Vision: To be the resource for providing solutions to educate, empower, and embrace caregivers in our community.

Our Mission: To recognize, educate, support, and provide resources for family and community caregivers.

How you can help:
- Join us if you are able! (3rd Weds of every month at 1:00 pm here at the Dodge County Health and Human Services building)
- Watch for our survey and honestly tell us about your needs
- Call and let us know what we can do to help 920-386-3259
- Tell others about us
Random Facts about Winter in Wisconsin

* Wisconsin has 1.4 million licensed anglers with about one-third reporting they ice fish.
* Ice anglers catch 14 million fish during the ice fishing season.
* Nearly half of all fish caught during ice fishing season are kept, compared to about one-third during the open water season.
* The top species caught while ice fishing are 11.7 million panfish, 866,000 northern pike, and 750,000 walleyes.
* Yes, cold weather can kill people in WI. According to the National Weather Service, "The common factor was they went outside and did not have enough layers of clothes on".
* On Feb. 2, 1996, and again two days later, the thermometer plunged to 55 below zero in the Sawyer County village of Couderay.
* The deepest accumulation of snow on record in the Badger State was the 83 inches – that’s nearly 7 feet! – measured on April 3, 1933, in the Flambeau Reservoir of far northern Wisconsin.
* It’s a myth that no two snowflakes are exactly the same. In 1988, a scientist found two identical snow crystals. They came from a storm in Wisconsin.

DID YOU KNOW?

You can access help in many different ways:

* Call the ADRC 386-3580
* 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://caregiverteleconnection.org
* Veterans Caregiver Support Line 855-260-3274
* Visit Caregiver Connection on Facebook
* Online help from AARP http://www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving/
* Alz. Assoc. phone in caregiver support group last Tuesday of each month 10am-11am Call 715-861-6174 to register.

Watch for more information about our Caregivers Spring Break – April 30th 2020 @ Horicon Hills Golf Club