



Winter 2014

FAMILY CAREGIVER NEWSLETTER

Inside this issue:

Is it Safe to Leave Your Loved One Home Alone?

By Elizabeth Crawford, Family Caregiver Specialist

This is a common question from caregivers. At times, caregivers believe that if their loved one is sleeping, it would be ok to leave for a little while. Or, if the person is not “a wanderer”, he will be fine alone for a short period. Whether it is for a few hours or thinking about someone who is still living in his own home, ask yourself these questions:

- Does he/ she know how to get help in an emergency?
- Can he/ she use the telephone?
- Would he/ she let strangers into the house?
- Does he/ she smoke?
- Does he/ she become agitated or confused easily?
- Does he/she try to do things he did in the past such as cook or use power tools?
- Is he/ she likely to give money away to telemarketers, online scammers, or other solicitors?
- Does he/ she fall frequently?
- Is he/ she capable of handling medications, alcohol, household cleaners, and knowing the difference between them?

It's important to carefully assess for risk and to re-assess periodically. If it seems as though your loved may not be safe at home alone anymore, consider recruiting a volunteer, using our adult day care service or Bridges Home Care to spend time with him or her when you need to be away from the home. If you have questions about leaving a loved one home alone or would like more information on resources available to you, please contact the Spectrum Generations Family Caregiver program at 1-800-639-1553.

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If you can't change your fate, change your attitude.

Amy Tan



Keeping Your Loved One Content and Involved

By Elizabeth Crawford, Family Caregiver Specialist

Being occupied and stimulated can improve the quality of life for a person with dementia, as well as for their caregiver. Activities can be an opportunity for fun as well as promote independence, socialization, and communication.

Help your loved one feel needed and try some of the following activities:

- Play some favorite songs and sing or dance
- Fold clothes or towels (even if they don't need folding)
- Read aloud
- Water plants
- Look at pictures in a photo album or magazine
- Arrange silk flowers
- Sand a block of wood
- Sort cards or poker chips
- String Cheerios to feed the birds
- Finish nursery rhymes or famous sayings



Most importantly, be sure to fit activities to the person's likes and abilities. Be creative and have fun!



Give Yourself a Break — On Someone Else's Dime

By Kristin Overton, Bridges Home Care Director

Everyone needs a break for things big or small. These programs can help provide funds so you have some time to yourself and you know your loved one is safe:

- **Adult DayBreak: Scholarships** available at our 4 Adult DayBreak programs in Belfast, Hallowell, Waterville, and Skowhegan
- **Parkinson's Society Respite Program:** \$1000 per year for respite through Bridges Home Care. Call the Maine Parkinsons' Society at 1-800-812-4116 for more information.
- **Veterans Care Coordination:** partnered with Bridges, this program helps veterans & spouses access VA funds to pay for home care help.

Savvy Caregiver Program

Taking care of a person with dementia is specialized work that requires training. To do this work successfully, caregivers need special skills and knowledge and the awareness to practice self-care.

The Savvy Caregiver Program is a **6-session training program** for caregivers of people with dementia living in the community. The course helps family members understand their role as caregivers, provides knowledge of dementia and its impact, and teaches skills for effective caregiving. Strategies learned at this training will lead to an attitude that fosters confidence and a sense of mastery for successful caregiving.

"I have learned that I shouldn't feel guilty about doing things for myself from time to time. I'm also better at asking for help". *Topsham Caregiver*



Male Caregiver Facts

By Susan Garascia, Adult DayBreak Administrator

- Nationally there are 14.5 million male family caregivers and after age 50, only 32% are male.
- Many are hesitant to let their boss know of their role as caregiver
- Many are less likely to ask for help or seek support
- Male caregivers are less likely to provide personal care
- 40% use paid assistance for a loved one's personal care
- Among spousal caregivers 75+, both sexes provide equal amounts of care
- Male caregivers are more likely to help with finances and arranging care
- Men tend to live farther away and have to travel farther to provide care
- Men are more likely to use the internet as a resource
- 82% of male caregivers have full time jobs versus 70% of female caregivers leading to the need to make workplace adjustments

Facts from: (FAMILY CAREGIVER ALLIANCE National Center on Caregiving "Fact Sheet: Selected Caregiver Statistics" and National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP, Caregiving in the US November 1997, 2009)

Live independently and get connected to the help you need to age with dignity.

FAMILY CAREGIVER EDUCATION & SUPPORT GROUPS

DAMARISCOTTA:	Coastal Community Center~2nd Thursday~1-2:00pm
HALLOWELL:	Cohen Community Center~ 2nd Tuesday ~12-1:00pm
PITTSFIELD:	Sebasticook Valley Hospital ~ 1st Thursday ~1-2 pm
ROCKLAND:	Knox Community Center ~2nd Wednesday~12-1:00 pm
SKOWHEGAN:	Federated Church~ Tewksbury Hall~4th Tues.~12-1 pm
WATERVILLE:	Muskie Community Center ~3rd Wednesday ~12-1:00 pm

For more information about other support groups in your community call
Spectrum Generations Family Caregiver Program.

Family Caregiver Program

1-800-282-0764

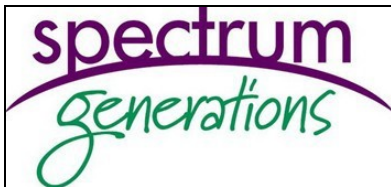
Liz Crawford: ext 1656

Tina DeRaps: ext 1657

Adult DayBreak: 1-800-639-1553

Bridges Home Care: 1-207-623-0761

Help Line: 1-800-639-1553



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