



Partners In Care

News from the WPCOG Area Agency on Aging
Ombudsman and Family Care Programs

Volume I

Fall 2009

**Serving
Alexander,
Burke,
Caldwell,
And
Catawba
Counties**

Welcome to the new **Partners In Care** newsletter published by the Ombudsman and Family Caregiver programs of the Western Piedmont Council of Governments Area Agency on Aging Program.

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New Family Caregiver Support Specialist



Mary Mitchell has joined the staff of Western Piedmont Council of Governments as the new Family Caregiver Support Specialist. Since joining the Area Agency on Aging staff in July, she has been training, meeting service providers and beginning plans for future events and activities for caregivers in our area. She looks forward to providing valuable information and supporting caregivers in Alexander, Burke, Caldwell and Catawba counties. Feel free to contact Mary at (828) 485-4256.



The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program

- ◆ Is required by federal law to promote and protect the residents in licensed long-term care facilities.
- ◆ Advocates for Residents Rights
- ◆ Investigates Concerns
- ◆ Provides Technical Assistance
- ◆ Promotes Elder Abuse Awareness

REMINDER

The Ombudsman's office maintains several manuals and videos to help you create or maintain Family and Resident Councils in your facilities. Contact us for additional information.

CELEBRATING RESIDENTS' RIGHTS WEEK OCTOBER 4 - 10, 2009

The 2009 Theme is *Hear Our Voice - Residents' of Long-Term Care Facilities Speak Out About Residents' Rights.*

The Importance of Residents' Rights

In our busy lives, it is easy to overlook some of the fundamentals of quality of life for residents. For this reason, this brochure has been designed to encourage citizen advocates, facility staff, resident and family councils and others to focus on the individuality and dignity of each resident.

Respecting residents' rights is not difficult. It can be done effectively in many ways, each and every day. However in our hectic lives, we need to remind one another that honor, respect and being treated as an individual are essential to human dignity wherever a person lives. In their own home, in an assisted living facility, adult care home, a personal care home, or in a nursing home.

Residents' Rights Week is one way to emphasize rights and to enjoy celebrations with residents. This brochure will give you the information and ideas to help celebrate this special week. We also encourage you to think about how this important topic can be addressed throughout the year, as part of your day to day work with residents. Presentations, discussions, bulletin boards, newspapers, newsletters, training events, council meetings, and personal conversations all provide opportunities for education. If each of us does a few focused activities throughout the year, residents' rights will be increasingly understood and respected.

Designate the month of October to focus on a different Resident Right each day.

Fun and Games

Play Residents' Rights Bingo~ Bingo cards with rights printed on them. Participants can share examples along the way. Award winners with candy or other prizes.

Play a guessing game with props! Give your audience a list of the rights and place a prop at each table. Have them figure out which resident right each prop represents. Examples: A checkbook, a Do Not Disturb sign, a bundle of sealed letters, a Bible, etc. Let your imagination go.

Create posters! Provide your participants with poster board, markers and other art supplies and have them make posters depicting each of the residents' rights. Then hold an art exhibit for the posters with a forum where the artists can interpret their work to the rest of the group. Vote and give prizes for best poster.

Create a Residents' Rights checklist to be completed and returned anonymously.

Resident Rights Quiz and Staff Questionnaires are an excellent way to monitor and promote better understanding.

Share the "Airplane Analogy"~ a creative way to compare the experience of being a passenger on an airplane to the experience of living in a long-term care facility.

Designate a staff member to be a "Resident for a Day". A staff member will take a shift and spend that shift living as a resident would live within the facility. Rotate this activity so that over a period of time, each staff member will have an opportunity to be a resident.

Resources

Video Resources:

Residents' Rights Today: Respectful Care in Changing Times

Living in Long Term Care: The Resident's Perspective

Residents Have the Answers: Improving Quality of Life in Long Term Care

Preserving Residents' Dignity: For Staff Members in Long Term Care

What About Me? A Video Discussion Program on Nursing Home Residents Rights

Other Resources

Nursing Homes:
Getting Good Care
There (book)

What Everyone Should
Know About Residents'
Rights (booklet)

National Citizens'
Coalition for Nursing
Home Reform
(NCCNHR) - a non-
profit membership
organization founded to
protect the rights,
safety, and dignity of
America's long-term
care residents. Their
website is
www.nursinghomeaction.org

To obtain addition
information on any of
the topics or resources
shared please contact:
Roxanne Powell,
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(828) 485-4213

10 TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS

1. Caregiving is a job and respite is your earned right. **Reward yourself** with respite breaks often.
2. **Watch out** for signs of depression, and don't delay in getting professional help when you need it.
3. When people offer to help, **accept the offer** and suggest specific things that they can do.
4. **Educate yourself** about your loved one's condition and now to communicate effectively with doctors.
5. There's a difference between caring and doing. **Be open to**

Time Off Is Healthy

As caregivers, most of us would like to believe we are indispensable. Sometimes we even believe we are the *only* ones who can do things adequately. But there's a fine line between being a responsible, diligent caretaker and a control freak! Learning how to delegate is an important skill all caregivers should develop to protect their own health and well being.

Stress is Dangerous

In a study of spousal caregivers, (Schulz et al, 1999) caregivers who experienced mental or emotional strain had a 63% higher risk of death than non-caregivers. Other research by the National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP reports that 15% of caregivers admit to having physical or emotional health problems directly related to caregiving. Many caregivers have their own personal illnesses they are trying to manage. In every case where caregivers already had hypertension, coronary heart disease or cancer, their abilities to fight their own diseases were significantly less than non-caregivers.

The research over the last decade is crystal clear – caretakers who devote themselves to their loved ones to the exclusion of their own needs become ill. The bottom line is caregivers must take care of themselves.

Caretake Your Own Health

The best place to start is by taking time off from your caregiving responsibilities. You don't necessarily need to hop on a plane to a tropical island (although if this could be arranged, it's not a bad idea). You're not abandoning your responsibilities. You are simply looking at your time in a new light.

Spend this respite with activities that give you pleasure and are good for your health such as exercise, or time with friends and confidants. The health benefits of time off are profound.

Physical exercise improves your health. It enhances your immune system and decreases the risk of developing diseases such as cancer and heart disease, but it also benefits your psychological health. Exercise is a wonderful treatment for anxiety and mild depression. Even taking a walk can ease your stress levels and produce healthy benefits for you. And, sunlight on your skin helps your body produce vitamin D, which brings many added health benefits.

Plan Joy-Filled Activities

Other healthful ways to take some time out are:

- ◆ Movies
- ◆ Sporting Events
- ◆ Simple and fun activities such as making fudge, calling an old friend, or reading a great book.

LLuminari expert Alice Domar, PhD, recommends writing down a list of 20 things in your life that bring you joy or used to make you happy. The list can include favorite people, foods (think biting into a juicy peach or a perfect chocolate truffle), games you played as a child, or other activities.

Strategies for Getting Time Off

Seek respite care, the most common service provided by states to family caregivers-temporary or short-term services that enable you to take a break. Respite care can be in or out of your home, during the day or overnight. The Administration on Aging (AOA) has many programs within The Family Caregiver Support Program including transportation services, senior centers, and nutrition programs that may free some time for you.

- ◆ Enlist the support of family, friends, neighbors, and church/synagogue.
- ◆ Keep looking and you will find a network of people wanting to help.
- ◆ Consider hiring non-medical aides who can help with shopping, preparing meals, and daily chores. Look in the yellow pages under Home Health Care.
- ◆ Use your creativity and imagination to give you even a few minutes of personal time out.
- ◆ Buy a good book or tape to help you learn meditation.

Re-adjust your thinking about taking time off from caregiving responsibilities. Think of it as a necessity, not just a possibility. Keeping yourself physically and psychologically healthy will benefit you and all those who need you.

(From: Strengthforcaring.com – Just for caregivers)

10 TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS (continued)

technologies and ideas that promote your loved one's independence.

6. **Trust your instincts.** Most of the time they'll lead you in the right direction.
7. Caregivers often do a lot of listing, pushing, and pulling. **Be good to your back.**
8. Grieve for your losses, and then allow yourself **to dream new dreams.**
9. **Seek support** from other caregivers. There is great strength in knowing you are not alone.
10. **Stand up for your rights** as a caregiver and a citizen.

(From NFCA)

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Health Fairs

10-2-09 - Morganton/Burke Senior Center - 8:00 am - 11:00 am
10-22-09 - East Burke Senior Center - 8:30 am - 11:30 am
10-23-09 - Alexander Senior Center - 8:00 am - 11:00 am
10-31-09 - Quest4Life - 8:00 am- 12:00 pm

Candlelight Reflections

11-5-09 - at Abernethy Laurels - 6:30 pm

Centralina Area Agency on Aging 2009 Aging Conference

11-5-09 & 11-6-09 - Friendship Missionary Baptist Church
3400 Beatties Ford Road, Charlotte, NC
Go to www.agewisely2009.info to register online
or for more information

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