

Caring For Caregivers



Elderhaus Cares for Caregivers



MARCH 2020

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is an excellent class on caregiver's self care and caregiving. This class will be at Elderhaus from March 18 - April 22 on Wednesdays 1-3 p.m. Elderhaus can provide care for your loved one during the class, but please notify Elderhaus when you register for the class. 970-221-0406

Elderhaus Caregiver Groups

Life Transitions Group

Every Monday 1-3 p.m.
or Every Wednesday 9-11 a.m.
At Elderhaus

FTD Caregivers Group
2nd Tuesday 2:30-4 p.m.
Daz Bog @ Cherry and Mason

Indecision may or may not be my problem.

Dementia and Wandering

There are few things that panic a caregiver more than discovering that their loved one has wandered. We can step away for just a moment and return to find the front door wide open and our loved one out of sight. Taking steps to ensure that our loved one can be identified and located are critical steps to take before wandering happens.

In *Today's Caregiver*, Freena Gray-Davidson stresses the importance of having your loved one paired with a GPS and wearing a medical alert bracelet which identifies them as being memory impaired. Police should be notified immediately, and have a current photo to help with issuing a Silver Alert. Enlist your "village" of family, neighbors and friends who have already agreed to help in the search. She also recommends that you call out the persons first name and not "mom" or Dad".

There are steps caregivers can take to prevent wandering. Practically, there are door alarms, bells on doors, warning chimes, ankle bracelets set to perimeters and doors locked and dead-bolted with the key in the caregiver's possession. Why do dementia patients wander? They do it because they perceive walking as a way to get a desired result.

Caregiver Squeeze

As the population ages and life expectancy increases, many caregivers may find themselves caring for both their children and their aging parent. In fact, one in eight Americans between 40-60 care for both their children and an aging parent. A “sandwich” caregiver is figuratively burning the candle at both ends. And holding a full time job too. So who cares for the sandwich caregiver? Often the answer is no one, which makes self care critical. Don't be a hero. Ask for help! Have a list of people who are willing to help and call them. The help could be running an errand for you, or making a meal for your family. Getting these chores off your plate may be just enough to keep you going. Respite care is so important. Don't hesitate to seek counseling for yourself or find a support group. Talk to your employer about your caregiving duties and seek mutual solutions.



Investigating what is happening for the individual can reveal some clues. Are they bored, restless, with nothing to do or looking for a loved one? They want to go somewhere, anywhere but where they are. So what can be done to help dementia patients want to be where they are at? An activity plan recognizes their need to be involved in doing things that makes them feel useful and appeals to their interests. Household or yard work can help a dementia patient feel involved and needed. A container of items to sort or what they used for work could be also be stimulating. Go for a walk with them and make it part of their daily life. Go for a drive, a good way to go “somewhere” safely. A very effective antidote to wandering is enrolling your loved one in an adult day program that gets the dementia patient out in the community, active and exploring. Remember your loved one is not wandering to anger you or frighten you.

Caregiving for your Parent

Adult children who are caring for their parents face unique challenges in caregiving. The change in roles is difficult. Be proactive. When your parents are still able, have the important conversation about financial, legal and medical decisions that need to be made. Consider for yourself how much care you can realistically provide without harming your own health or financial needs. How much care is needed? Do you need help?

Enroll your parent in an adult day program which can provide positive socialization and activities for them, and much needed respite for you. Get in-home caregiving to allow you to take regular breaks. Seek out volunteer companions. Don't forget that siblings who live far away can still provide financial help or respite care.

Elderhaus Adult Day Program, Inc.
6813 S. College Ave. Fort Collins, CO
For info, call Tim or Danita @ 970-221-0406

