

## Thanksgiving 2020

This day is for giving thanks for all the blessings in our lives.

Unfortunately, 2020 has been a challenging year and many blessings have been over-shadowed by the myriad of crisis we have faced and are facing in 2020. The Covid 19 pandemic has ravaged the U.S. and shows no signs of retreating in defeat. Red or Blue, Left or Right, our country is more divided than ever. Mother Nature, fueled by climate change, has unleashed fires, winds, floods and hurricanes across our country.

Maybe when gratitude is the hardest to find, is when it is needed the most. We can focus on what has been good in 2020. Our doctors, nurses, first responders and scientists have shown great courage and unwavering dedication to caring for the victims of Covid and weather catastrophes. A year ago few people had even heard of Zoom, but now we are very thankful to have Zoom to help us connect with our loved ones and work. We have learned to value our own company. The "fire" sky is horrible but beautiful. This month we have an election and we can exercise our constitutional right to vote and choose our president. We can even find cool masks to wear.

We are all in this together. Stay safe and well. Happy Thanksgiving!



## Caring for Caregivers

### What Time is It?

Many of us rely on digital time, but we can also read a clock. We can even draw a clock without much difficulty. The simple task of drawing a clock showing a specified time, often ten minutes after 11, has been used since 1953 to help diagnose dementia. The clock drawing test has been proven to offer reliable and revealing information and can identify cognitive deficits from executive functioning to visual-spatial difficulties. Results from the clock drawing test can even point towards what kind of dementia the person may have.

The size of the clock drawn is an important variable. Patients who tend to draw a smaller clock, even as small as 2 inches are more likely to have Parkinson's or Huntington's, while patients who tend to draw bigger clocks are more likely to have Alzheimer's.

Persons with Alzheimer's or Parkinsons often fixate on the time aspect and getting the hands pointed the right way. Fixation and perseverance are more common in these kinds of dementia. If the clock drawn is basically correct, but is very messy with wavy or broken lines etc. this is more common with Huntington's and Vascular Dementia.

What if the clock doesn't even look like a clock? Using letters or incorrect shapes is more common with those who have Alzheimer's. Spatial errors like big gaps between numbers, numbers outside the circle, or all on one side are more common in Parkinsons, Lewy Body and Vascular Dementia, and less common with Alzheimer's. Individuals with Frontotemporal dementia tend to do better overall than individuals with Alzheimer's.

The clock drawing test is easy and quick to administer and can be done at home. Results can then be shown to the doctor. The test is also suitable for non-English speaking populations.

## **Zoom Support Groups**

**Elderhaus offers two virtual caregiver support groups weekly. All community members are welcome. Every Monday 1-3 p.m. or Wednesday 9-11 a.m. Please send your email address to [caregivers@elderhaus.org](mailto:caregivers@elderhaus.org) and you will be sent an invitation with a link to join the meetings. Even though we can't meet in person we can still offer support to each other.**

### **Nature is Nurturing**

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Getting out to enjoy nature is a wonderful activity for everyone including those with dementia. If someone is limited by mobility issues they may only be able to enjoy what is close to their home or outside their window, but there is a way to enjoy nature from the comfort of home. The website: [explore.com](http://explore.com). has live camera feeds from all over the world. It is completely free. Tropical reefs and Pandas in China and many other nature phenomena are available on [explore.com](http://explore.com) and no account is needed. Just a simple click on a selection and the world of nature is available. The site also offers free documentaries and live chats on different nature topics. Help your loved one enjoy this site and take a look yourself.

### **Guilt-busters for Caregivers**

Myth #1: No matter how much I'm doing or how hard I'm trying, it's not enough.  
Reality: I am doing the best I can and I need to balance my needs with the needs of my loved one.

Myth #2: If my loved one continues to decline it's because I am not doing a good job.  
Reality: There are things that no amount of care can stop or reverse.

Myth#3: I should have known to make a different decision.  
Reality: I made the best decision based on what I knew at the time.

**NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL CAREGIVERS MONTH.  
THANK YOU TO ALL FAMILY CAREGIVERS. YOU ARE OUR HEROES.**

### **Funnies**

I grew up so poor I could only listen to Simon or Garfunkel.  
Smoking will kill you, bacon will kill you, but smoking bacon will cure it.  
I don't care what you think you're good at, there's a 7 year old on YouTube doing it better.

Elderhaus Day Program is open on a limited basis due to Covid 19. We plan to start another group in December. Please contact Tim at Elderhaus for information. Support services for caregivers are available virtually. Contacts: Tim or Danita @ 970-221-0406 or [caregivers@elderhaus.org](mailto:caregivers@elderhaus.org)