



A Caregivers Newsletter that is published every other month for those who care for a loved-one, no matter the health situation. Enclosed we hope you find helpful information that you can use!

CareLINK can also be found at:

<http://www.co.kenosha.wi.us/DHS/Divisions/Aging>

~Sponsored & Published By The Kenosha County Aging & Disability Resource Center~

Loss, Grief and Depression - *The Emotions of Long-Term Illness*

No one feels joy when diagnosed with a long-term illness. About the best emotion may be relief that there's finally an explanation for symptoms. More typically, people feel anger, denial and depression at learning of such a diagnosis. Heart patients may bemoan their restricted activity level; stroke survivors may feel depressed over the loss of speech or the use of a limb; Alzheimer's patients may fear what the future holds.

Depression is a common response to any loss of ability or independence. It may range from feeling down for a few hours to severe clinical depression that may last for months. Depression does not mean a person has a weak character, and it should not be considered shameful. It is not something the person in your care can control or prevent through sheer willpower. It is a serious affliction that not only compromises a person's quality of life, but jeopardizes recovery. For example, typically rehab therapists will not work with a person diagnosed with depression until it is treated because they have learned that depressed people don't make progress in rehab.

Grieving is an essential step in recovering from losses. Grief is not an illness; it can't be cured, but caregivers can help the person in their care grieve their losses. Here are a few suggestions:

Allow the person in your care to feel their feelings: Everyone grieves differently: some cry, some withdraw, some express anger.

Learn to listen: Talking and processing feelings out loud can help the patient understand what has happened. The grieving person's agenda should drive the conversation. Listen without judgment.

Forge a spiritual connection: Religious faith can be a powerful resource, and prayers can lessen the intensity of sadness. Your place of worship may have a grief or illness mission.

Understand there's no right way to grieve: Some people grieve and cry on the outside; others on the inside. Whether someone cries or not doesn't determine their level of grief. Many people prefer to grieve in private.

Do something active: Being physically active changes a person's mood. Getting outside prevents the person from feeling limited.

Let go with a ritual: When the person is ready, perform a ritual of some sort, such as meditation, lighting a candle or planting a tree, taking a ritual bath or playing meaningful music.

Plan for the future: As feelings of loss lessen, think about what is to come. Both caregiver and patient need to look to the future and redefine who they are and how they will relate. What can the patient do for herself? What can *you* do to make that easier and more fulfilling?

For caregivers, deal with your own emotions: Your life has been changed, and you may feel guilt, fear, shame or anger. Allow yourself to feel those feelings, then forgive yourself.

Source: Helping Grieving People: When Tears Are Not Enough by psychologist J. Shep Jeffreys

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When you need answers...
262-605-6646 or 1-800-472-8008
TTY 262-605-6663
and, www.co.kenosha.wi.us/DHS



Laughter Is Good Medicine

In his book Anatomy of Illness, author and medical school professor Norman Cousins claims that laughter is good medicine. He used laughter to cure himself of a serious and painful collagen disease that had defied medical treatment. He found that 10 minutes of genuine belly laughter would give him at least two hours of pain-free sleep. He describes laughter as “inner jogging,” because it gives every system in the body a workout. Our cardiovascular and respiratory systems benefit more from 20 seconds of laughter than three minutes on a rowing machine. Muscles relax and hormones that make you feel good (endorphins) are released into the bloodstream. Laughter also activates the immune system. So, if you want to feel better immediately, find a way to tickle your funny bone.



Music Can Help



Singing, playing instruments, and moving or dancing to music can improve communication, motor skills—and perhaps most importantly—mood. What is the favorite music of the person in your care? Which songs were comforting? Ask her if she would like to listen to music and play it softly. Find music that lifts the spirits and play it for everyone's benefit.

Symptoms of Depression



You or the person in your care may feel—

- long-lasting sad, anxious or “empty” mood
- feelings of hopelessness, pessimism
- feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness
- loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities that were once enjoyed, including sex decreased energy, always feeling tired, being “slowed down”
- difficulty concentrating, remembering, making decisions
- insomnia, early-morning awakening or oversleeping
- appetite and/or weight changes
- thoughts of death or suicide, or suicidal attempts
- restlessness, irritability

If five or more of these symptoms last for longer than two weeks, *depression* may be the cause.

The good news is that depression is treatable. Talk to your physician or psychiatrist about treatment options. Anti-depressants can be prescribed by the primary care physician. The most effective treatment combines medication with talking therapy.

Home Safety - Quick Check

Bedroom

- Place a lamp, telephone and flashlight by the bed.
- Do not use satiny sheets and comforters.
- Keep clutter off all floors.

Kitchen

- Do not use mats or rugs.
- Clean up spills immediately.
- Store food, dishes and cooking equipment within easy reach.
- Don't stand on chairs or boxes to reach upper cabinets.

Bathroom

- Place a rubber mat in shower and tub.

Source: *The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS)*. For more information on "Prevent Injuries America!," call AAOS public services at 1-800-824-BONES (2663).





Falls & Home Safety



Falls can occur any time, any place and to anyone while doing everyday activities such as climbing stairs or getting out of the bathtub. Simple safety modifications at home—where 60 percent of seniors' falls occur—can substantially cut the risk of falling. Protect the person in your care *and* yourself from falls with simple changes in furniture arrangement, housekeeping and lighting. The number of falls and the severity of injury increase with age. Here are a few tips to reduce the risk of falling:

- Exercise regularly.
- Ask a doctor or pharmacist to review medications.
- Have vision checked by an eye doctor at least once a year.
- Get up slowly after eating, sitting or lying flat.
- Wear properly fitting shoes with nonskid soles.
- Tie your shoe laces.
- Replace loose, shapeless slippers.
- Use a long-handled shoehorn if you have trouble putting on your shoes.
- Avoid high heels and shoes with smooth, slick soles.
- If unsteady, use a cane or walker.
- Never walk in your stocking feet.

Source: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Unintentional Injury Prevention <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/adultfalls.htm>



Local Support Groups

Here are a few of the local area support groups. For information on other support groups, please contact the Aging & Disability Resource Center at 262-605-6646 or 1-800-472-8008.

Cancer Support Group –

When: 3rd Thursday of each month
Time: 12:00pm
Where: United Hospital – St. Catherine’s Campus
Joseph F. Andrea Regional Cancer Center
9555 76th Street, Pleasant Prairie
Contact: Krin Kramer - 262-577-8543

Epilepsy Support Group –

When: 2nd Thursday of every month
Time: 6:00pm - 7:00pm
Where: Kenosha YMCA- Callahan Branch
7101 53rd Street, Kenosha
Contact: 262-995-0016 or 1-800-693-2287

MS Support Group –

When: 1st Thursday of each month
Time: 6:30pm
Where: St. Mary’s Lutheran Church
2001 80th Street, Kenosha
Contact: Alice Schwalbe - 262-496-8592

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill

When: 2nd & 4th Thursday of each month
Time: 6:30pm
Where: St. Paul’s Lutheran Church
39th Avenue & 88th Street, Kenosha
**Use East Entrance.
Contact: 262-652-3606, leave a message

~Take Note~



Tai Chi—Free Exercise Classes

This class is specifically designed to help an older and middle aged population become stronger. Kathy Segerstrom, PTA, will guide participants through simple tai chi exercises to increase strength safely.

Day/Time: Every Friday from 12:30pm - 1:15pm

Location: The Balance and Wellness Center, 3921 30th Avenue, Suite A, Kenosha, WI.
Space is limited, so please call and reserve a seat: 262-925-0311.



Gardening with Arthritis

Barbara Larson with UW Extension will present this informative workshop.

Date/Time: Wednesday, June 10th from 1pm - 2pm.

Location: Westosha Community Center, 19200 93rd Street (Hwy. C) Bristol, WI.
Reservations are required, please call the ADRC at 262-605-6646 or 1-800-472-8008.



Understanding Medicare 2009

This workshop offers a basic overview of original Medicare, as well as other health insurance and prescription drug coverage options.

Dates/Times & Locations: Wednesday, June 24th, from 5:30pm - 7:30pm, at the Southwest Library, 7979 38th Avenue, Kenosha.

OR

Tuesday, July 28th, from 2pm - 4pm, at Kenosha Area Family & Aging Services, Inc., 7730 Sheridan Road, Kenosha.

Reservations are required, please call the ADRC at 262-605-6646 or 1-800-472-8008.



Helpful Websites

Mental Health America

www.nmha.org

Offers a variety of materials and local referrals for treatment and support on its website or by calling 800-969-6642.

National Institute on Aging

www.nia.nih.gov

Provides a number of publications containing valuable information related to a variety of health issues of older Americans. For help you may also call 1-800-222-2225.

~Just A Thought ~

*Your worst enemy cannot harm you as much as your own mind, unguarded.
But once mastered, no one can help you as much.*

~Buddha