

# CareLINK

*A Newsletter For Caregivers*

**JUNE 2010/  
JULY 2010**

*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~**

## **Mental Health & Seniors**

Of the nearly 35 million Americans age 65 and older, an estimated 2 million have a depressive *illness* and another 5 million may have depressive *symptoms*. Depressive symptoms are *not* a normal part of aging.

Depression often occurs with other serious illnesses, such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer and Parkinson's disease. Because many older adults face these illnesses, as well as various other difficulties, health care professionals may mistakenly conclude that depression is a normal consequence of these problems. These factors contribute to the under-diagnosis and under-treatment of depressive disorders in older people. Depression *can* and *should* be treated when it occurs with other illnesses, since untreated depression can delay recovery from or worsen the outcome of these other illnesses.

Older Americans are disproportionately likely to die by suicide. Among those with the highest rates were white men age 85 and older. Older adults need opportunities to express feelings such as anxiety, frustration or grief, and receive recognition that these feelings are normal and valid.

In previous generations, mental illness was often seen as a sign of weakness, failure or shame. It was viewed as something to be hidden and not discussed. This negative attitude can stop an older person from realizing he has a mental illness, and not seek help or treatment for it. Or, seniors may believe that mental health problems are a natural part of aging and avoid seeking help they need.

If you are a caregiver you can help by providing information to your loved-one about:

- How to work with the medical system.
- How to describe what they are experiencing.
- What questions to ask their physicians.

Kenosha County Aging & Disability  
Resource Center  
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Kenosha, WI 53143



*When you need answers...*  
262-605-6646 or 1-800-472-8008  
TTY 262-605-6663  
and, [www.co.kenosha.wi.us/DHS](http://www.co.kenosha.wi.us/DHS)

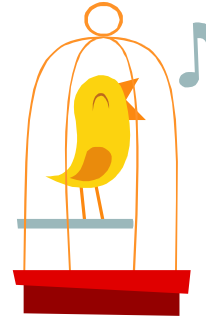
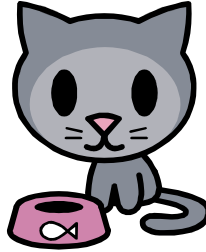
## Stress In Aging

Life as a senior can be very difficult. Elderly people often find themselves faced with many stresses coming at the same time. These may include:

- a major illness
- reduced mobility
- retirement
- deterioration or death of a spouse
- a shrinking circle of friends

Each of these stresses can increase the risk of a person becoming depressed. Deteriorating physical health can quickly change retirement into a period of confusion, fear and chronic pain.

*Source: National Institutes of Health, Department of Health and Human Services*



## Pets for Mental Health

Studies show four-legged friends can help improve our cardiovascular health. Dog owners may get more exercise and other health benefits than the rest of us. Older dog walkers also had greater mobility inside their homes than others in the study.

Walking with a dog leads to more conversations and helps people stay socially connected. People who have more social relationships tend to live longer and are less likely to show mental and physical declines as they age.

*Source: National Institutes of Health, Department of Health and Human Services, [newsin-health.nih.gov](http://newsin-health.nih.gov), February 2009*

## Taking Care of Yourself— Breathe Like a Baby

Ever watch a sleeping baby? Babies breathe “from their bellies,” **taking deep, lung-filling breaths** that make their tummies rise and fall. Adults under stress, on the other hand, tend to take short, shallow breaths that use only the upper chest muscles. This shallow breathing means less oxygen for the body and brain, and can leave you feeling tired and unfocused. Practice diaphragmatic breathing: When you breathe in using your diaphragm—a thin, plate-like muscle lying deep inside your abdomen—your belly should round and fill like a balloon; as you exhale, your belly should slowly deflate. It’s sometimes hard to remember to take deep, calming breaths when you’re stressed, so keep a visual reminder on hand, such as a picture of a peaceful place with the word “Breathe” written on it.



## Did You Know?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an older adult is treated in a hospital emergency room for a fall every 18 seconds, and every 35 minutes an older adult dies as a result of a fall-related injury. Among older adults, falls are the leading cause of injury deaths, and the most common cause of nonfatal injuries and hospital admissions for trauma.

To reduce falls in older adults, experts recommend a physical activity regimen with balance, strength training and flexibility components.

Consult a health professional about getting a fall risk assessment and making sure the home environment is safe and supportive. There are also two programs through the Kenosha County ADRC that focus on preventing falls:

**Stepping On** - a seven week workshop that provides knowledge and skills needed to help older adults prevent falls. The workshop focuses on how strength and balancing exercises, medication management, home safety, footwear, vision and mobility all play important roles in fall prevention.

**Sure Step** - a one-on-one meeting/assessment conducted by a Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist or Registered Nurse. The assessment for risk of falls is conducted in the person's home and includes written recommendations to the person and the person's primary care physician.

If you would like more information or participate in either of these programs, please call Renee Foy at 262-605-6650 or e-mail her at: [Rfoy@co.kenosha.wi.us](mailto:Rfoy@co.kenosha.wi.us)



### Helpful Resource



#### Adult Crisis

262-657-7188

A free and confidential, 24/7 hotline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.

#### Support Groups

For information on local support groups, please contact the ADRC at 262-605-6646 or 1-800-472-8008.

## ~Take Note~



### “Caregiver Stress” - Taking Care of the Caregiver

This informative workshop will show how to handle the stress of being a caregiver while caring for someone with Alzheimer’s or some type of memory loss. Kim Mason, Director of Operations at Harbor Senior Concepts will be presenting this workshop.

**Date/Time:** Monday, June 21st from 7pm - 8:pm.

**Location:** Westosha Community Center, 19200 93rd Street (Hwy C), Bristol, WI.

Please call Kathy Hinks at 262-605-6646 or 1-800-472-8008 by Friday, June 18th, if you are needing free on-site respite care while attending this presentation, or if you have any questions.



### Understanding Medicare:

The Benefit Specialist program will offer this workshop which covers a basic overview of the Original Medicare, as well as other health and prescription drug coverage options. You will learn how to read and understand a Medicare Summary notice and how to file an appeal. It also covers other helpful benefits you may be eligible for.

**Date/Time:** Thursday, June 24th, from 10am - 12pm.

**Location:** Westosha Community Center, 19200 93rd Street (Hwy C), Bristol, WI.

**OR**

**Date/Time:** Wednesday, July 28th, from 1pm - 3pm.

**Location:** Kenosha Senior Center, 2717 67th Street, Kenosha, WI.

Please call the ADRC at 262-605-6646 or 1-800-472-8008 for additional information and to register as space is limited at each workshop.



### Power-Of-Attorney for Health Care:

Help is available to complete a Power-of-Attorney for Health Care form through the Kenosha County ADRC. The forms are available at no cost and there is no fee for the assistance provided.

**Date/Time:** Every Wednesday from 9am - 12pm (no appointment is needed)

**Location:** Kenosha County ADRC, 8600 Sheridan Road, Suite 500, Kenosha, WI

## ~Just A Thought ~

The Constitution only gives people the right to pursue happiness.  
You have to catch it yourself.

~ Ben Franklin