

Caregiver Corner

... Ideas and information for people caring for others 778-2411

I Can't Hear You! Caregiver Chat to Discuss Hearing Loss and Your Older Person



The April Caregiver Chat will host **David Glaser, MS, CCC-A, Audiologist at Southern Tier Hearing Services**. David will provide an overview of the various types of hearing loss as well as what's available and affordable when a hearing aid is recommended. David's talk will also include effective communication tips, as well as suggestions for helping your elder see the importance of obtaining a hearing evaluation. Handouts will be provided. A general caregiver discussion will follow the featured topic.

The Caregiver Chat will meet **Monday, April 7th from 1-3PM** at the Stay Healthy Center which is located in the Oakdale Mall near Sears. Chat is an informal discussion group for people who are concerned about an older friend or relative. The group is coordinated by Judy Bobinski, Caregiver Services Case Manager. You are welcome to bring your lunch and a beverage with you and enjoy the company of other caregivers. Call Judy with questions at 778-2411.

Contents

1. <i>I Can't Hear You!</i>	1
2. <i>First Aid and Preparedness</i>	1
3. <i>Talking With Your Doctor</i>	2
4. <i>Avoiding Caregiver Burnout</i>	2
5. <i>Caregivers to Benefit From New Cancer Care Programs at UHS</i>	3
6. <i>Men Making Meals to be Offered This Spring</i>	3
7. <i>The 10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's Disease</i>	3
8. <i>Is It Still Home Sweet Home?</i>	4
9. <i>Save The Date Alzheimer's Association Memory Walk</i>	4

Looking Ahead - Upcoming Chat Topics:

May 5th Say it With Music
Communicating With Your Older Person Through Music

Debra Broderick, RMT (Registered Music Therapist)
Willow Point Nursing Home

June 2nd The Eyes Have It
How to Live a Quality Life with Vision Loss

Ann Vanderwal, Social Worker/Vision Rehabilitation Therapist
AVRE (Association for Vision Rehabilitation and Employment)



First Aid and Preparedness

You know you would feel more comfortable if you had more knowledge about how to handle a first aid emergency or help someone who needed CPR: let us help you.

On **Wednesday April 9th from 6-7:45 PM**, the Broome County Office for Aging Caregiver Discussion Group will host Amber Ranger from the American Red Cross Southern Tier Chapter. Her presentation provides participants with the knowledge and skills needed for possible disasters and life-threatening emergencies including first aid and basic cardiac skills. Each participant will receive a First Aid booklet to

keep as a resource and will build a first aid kit to take home. Join us in the Decker Room at the Broome County Library on Court Street in Binghamton. Pre-Registration is requested. Call Andrea Wright in Caregiver Services at 778-2411 with questions and/or to register. There are not official certifications offered at this workshop.

Talking with your Doctor

(Adapted from the National Institute on Aging Booklet listed below).



Getting ready for an appointment - Remember to take your glasses and hearing aids. Alert the medical staff if you are having a problem. You may want to say something like, "My hearing makes it hard to understand everything you're saying. It helps a lot when you speak slowly."

Update your doctor - Let your doctor know what has happened in your life since your last visit. If you have been treated in the emergency room or by a specialist, tell the doctor right away.

Making Good Use of Your Time - Each patient is given a limited amount of time. Stick to the point you are trying to make. Think ahead of time about your symptoms, when they started, how often they happen etc.

Make a list of concerns: - If you have more than a few items to discuss, put them in order and ask about the most important ones first. Don't put off the things that are really on your mind until the end. Bring them up right away.

Ask how the office runs - Learn what days are not busy and when it is the best time to call. Especially if you are a new patient

To receive the booklet "A Guide for Older People: Talking with Your Doctor" published by the National Institute on Aging and the National

Institutes of Health call 778-2411 and ask to speak with someone from the Resource Center.

Avoiding Caregiver Burnout

(Adapted from the Elder Care Handbook)



People who provide care for older people are frequently under great pressure. They often have to pass on vacations and other things and even having free time can be difficult. As a result of the demands, caregivers can suffer from depression and exhaustion. They may feel resentment about all that is required. A caregiver can come to experience what is called "burnout".

"Burnout" can be described as being overworked and overwhelmed. There can be a sense of emptiness and sadness. There may also be a tendency to be frustrated and angry. There may even be physical symptoms including headaches, backaches, insomnia, and even heart problems. Caregivers need to learn coping skills and try to avoid "burnout".

- You may not be able to take a vacation. But try to plan ahead and pick one day a month when you schedule something fun - just for you.
- Ask friends and neighbors for help with spring cleaning and yard work. Many hands make light work.
- Plan a visit to check out Adult Day Care, respite programs, and even support groups.

In Broome County call the Senior Resource Line at 778-2411 to learn about services. If you live in another area then call your local Agency on Aging.



Caregivers to Benefit From New Cancer Care Program at UHS

When a patient receives a cancer diagnosis, their first reactions are usually fear and confusion. For United Health Services Hospitals

patients, Ruth Manzer, R.N., is there to help. As the new Cancer Nurse Coordinator, Ruth contacts patients several days after their diagnosis to answer questions and talk about treatment options. She continues to call them at least once a month throughout their treatment regimen to offer help and advice.

"Usually a few days after the initial conversation with the physician, people think of so many questions they wished they asked. Through my phone calls they can get the answers they need," Ruth said. "I want to guide them through the cancer journey and help them understand that they can live with this disease."

"In our phone calls I spend a lot of time educating people about cancer and discussing the services that are available in the area through the hospital, the American Cancer Society and other agencies," she said. "We talk about family issues and nutritional concerns. We determine what barriers they face and find ways to get around them."

There is no charge to the patient for the service Ruth provides. She works out of the Stay Healthy Center at the Oakdale Mall and patients are always welcome to drop by in person to talk with Ruth or to pick up booklets and other information about surviving cancer. Patients and their family members can also call Ruth any time between her scheduled monthly calls. For more information call Stay Healthy Center at 763-5151.

Men Making Meals to be Offered This Spring

Men! Have you learned to cook yet? More than 100 men in Broome County have taken Men Making Meals. How about you?



The next session will be offered on **Thursdays at the Northminster Presbyterian Church** on Farm-to-Market Road in Endwell. Classes will be held on **May 15, 22, 29, June 12 and June 19**. Classes begin at 10:30am and run until 12:30pm with lunch being served as part of each session.

Men who have taken the course, which is taught by Cornell Cooperative Extension staff, often comment how much more confident that are about cooking. They also love the company of other men. To register call Andrea at 778-2411.

Coping with Sundown Syndrome

Individuals with dementia can become worried, demanding, disoriented, restless and suspicious in the late afternoon and early evening. This is called sundown syndrome. To minimize the behaviors associated with sundown syndrome.

- Turn the lights on in the house before it gets dark outside.
- Be sure the person spends some time outdoors every day to get some natural light. Taking a short walk before the behaviors occurs may decrease restlessness.
- Schedule outings for the early part of the day.
- Reduce the intake of food and beverage with caffeine.

(adapted from *Gene-Seniors* a publication of the Genesee Co. OFA)

Is it Still Home Sweet Home?

- Is someone you live with makes you feel uneasy?
- Do they use more of your money than you think they should?
- Do they drink or use drugs?
- Are you afraid to tell anyone what is going on?

You don't have to put up with it! Help is available! Call Social Services at 778-2635 or the Office for Aging at 778-2411 right now and get help.

Save the Date - Alzheimer's Association Memory Walk

The Alzheimer's Association Southern Tier Chapter will host their Memory Walk on September 21, 2008. Please plan to be a part of it. Walk if you can or sponsor a walker if you can do that instead.

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Your April 2008 "Caregiver Corner"

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Broome County Office for Aging

...bringing seniors and services together