Support Services for Family Caregivers of Dependent Elders

LINDSEY CARPENTER

Quick Statistic

More than 65 million people, 29% of the U.S. population, provide care for a chronically ill, disabled or aged family member or friend during any given year and spend an average of 20 hours per week providing care for their loved one.¹

Caregiving in the United States; National Alliance for Caregiving in collaboration with AARP; November 2009
Potential to Contribute to Optimal Aging

- Coping skills for family caregivers from support groups
- Outlet to discuss difficulties
- Educate family caregivers on specific disease processes
- Signs that more care is required beyond family caregiving

When to advocate for these services

- New role as a caregiver
- Family member may need a caregiver in the near future
- Any current caregiver

How to accomplish it?
- Have a conversion!
- Provide informational brochures/websites
Support Groups

- Groups for General Caregiver Support
- Disease Specific Groups
  - Cancer
  - Alzheimer’s
  - ALS
  - Dementia

Medicare

- Medicare.gov
  - [http://www.medicare.gov/campaigns/caregiver/caregiver.htm](http://www.medicare.gov/campaigns/caregiver/caregiver.htm)
    - When and why you would refer?
      - Can help transition for new caregivers or provide additional information for experienced caregivers

- Page of caregiver resources
  - Handouts
  - Tips
  - Websites of advocacy agencies and to get in contact with local support groups
Handouts for Patients or Waiting Room

* Strategy for advocating for the agency

Eligibility

• EVERYONE!
Agencies

- **Websites or Phone numbers**
  - **National Family Caregivers Association**
    - Website: [http://caregiveraction.org](http://caregiveraction.org)
    - Phone: 1-800-896-3650

- Tips for caregivers
- Caregiver online forum

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**National Family Caregivers Association:**

- **10 Tips for Family Caregivers**
  - Seek support from other caregivers. You are not alone!
  - Take care of your own health so that you can be strong enough to take care of your loved one.
  - Accept offers of help and suggest specific things people can do to help you.
  - Learn how to communicate effectively with doctors.
  - Caregiving is hard work so take respite breaks often.
10 Tips Continued

- Watch out for signs of depression and don't delay in getting professional help when you need it.
- Be open to new technologies that can help you care for your loved one.
- Organize medical information so it's up to date and easy to find.
- Make sure legal documents are in order.
- Give yourself credit for doing the best you can in one of the toughest jobs there is!

Eldercare.gov

- Resource recommended by Medicare
- Also reached by phone: 1.800.677.1116
- Provides database of support groups in your area!
- Brochures
- Online chat
  - Ask questions to eldercare representatives
Eldercare

- Arlington: AAA- Area Agency on Aging
- Address: 2100 Washington Boulevard, 4th Floor
- City: Arlington
- State: VA
- Zip: 22204
- County: Arlington
- Website: http://www.arlingtonva.us/aging
- Contact Email: arlaaa@arlingtonva.us
- Office Phone: (703) 228-1700
- Information Phone: (703) 228-1700
- TTY Phone: (703) 228-1788
- Languages: English, Spanish
- Special Notes: General information about any aging services or issues in Arlington County.
- Hours: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM - (M-F) Eastern Time
- Directions: Near the intersection of Washington Blvd. and Arlington Blvd. (Route 50)

Eligibility

- EVERYONE!
Eldercare hand outs

Disease Specific Example - ALS

- **Northern Virginia Resource Support Group**
  Fourth Sunday of each month
  Mason District Government Ctr
  6507 Columbia Pike,
  Annandale, VA 22003
  Phone 1: Ellen Cochrane
  Phone 2: 301-978-9855 ext. 310

Website:
http://webdc.alsa.org/site/PageNavigator/DC_8_SupportGroups.html
Information the PT Can Provide to Agencies

- **Posture positioning techniques**
  - Modifications to maintain alignment
  - Preventing pressure ulcers
- **Educate on HEP or walking program**
  - Assist at home
  - Maintain safety
- **Strategies for transfers**
  - Body mechanics to prevent injuries in caregivers
    - Safety

References