

On-Line Resources

Alzheimer's Association: www.alz.org

American Chronic Pain Association: www.theacpa.org

American Parkinson's Disease Association: www.apdaparkinson.org

Children of Aging Parents: www.caps4caregivers.org

Family Caregiver Alliance: www.caregiver.org

National Alliance for Caregiving: www.caregiving.org

Family Caregiver Support Program, Fairfax Area Agency on Aging

Visit us online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/aaa

Subscribe to our caregiver e-news at
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/email/lists

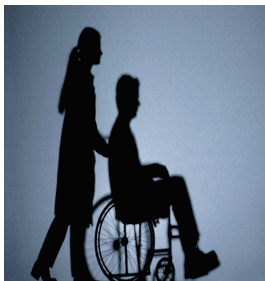
Written by Colleen Turner, LCSW, ElderLink, a partnership between the Inova Health System and the Area Agency on Aging.

Edited by The Rev. Sandi John, MDiv, MS, RN-CNS, BC, Senior Manager, Congregational Health Partnership.

Articles in this newsletter are not a substitute for the care and advice of medical professionals. When you have a question or need medical advice, diagnosis or treatment, consult your physician.

This newsletter is produced by Inova Health System in conjunction with your faith community. If you prefer not to receive this newsletter, please notify the appropriate personnel in your faith community.

Inova Health System is a not-for-profit health care system based in Northern Virginia that consists of hospitals and other health services including emergency and urgent care centers, home care, nursing homes, mental health, blood donor services, and wellness classes. Governed by a voluntary board of community members, Inova's mission is to improve the health of the diverse community we serve through excellence in patient care, education and research.



Congregational Health Partnership
8003 Forbes Place, Suite 102
Springfield, VA 22151

Phone: 703-321-2602
Fax: 703-321-1978

www.inova.org/chp
www.inova.org



June

2008

www.inova.org/chp



*Congregational
Health
Partnership
is a program of
Inova
Community
Affairs Division*



For Your Health

The Care Giving Journey: Don't Go There Alone!

Consider a Support Group

Attending a support group is an excellent way to reduce caregiver stress. In a support group members are able to share their thoughts, feelings, resources, and suggestions with other individuals who have the shared experience of providing care for a loved one. The monotony and isolation of providing care can often lead to frustration and even depression. In a support group, members are able to laugh at the tragic, cry openly in their grief, and provide much needed comfort to others. Often, a fresh perspective can be gained in a support group meeting that is affirming and inspiring.

Guides and Trekkers

A major benefit of attending a support group is having the chance to hear “stories” of other members who are in different stages of giving care. For caregivers with lots of experience, support groups provide a time to share some of the lessons they have learned. Ideas and suggestions are shared, such as how to get more cooperation from an unwilling loved one or how to lower frustration in providing care. For members who have only begun their role of caregiver, it can be very helpful to hear what they might expect in their future. Although it may seem like the “crystal ball” that is seen in support groups may give a view of a future that is scary or upsetting, knowing what to expect helps the caregiver to make changes and prepare emotionally, financially, and physically.

Growth from Conflict

Another benefit of attending a support group is the opportunity to gain group feedback and validation regarding family conflict. Caregivers often deal with other family members who are struggling with their own reaction to the loved one in need. Conflict is common, as each family member has his/her own ideas about what is best for the loved one who needs care. Having an opportunity to present ideas and hearing the honest and confidential feedback of objective support group members allows the caregiver to consider each situation without the interference of family history dynamics or bias.

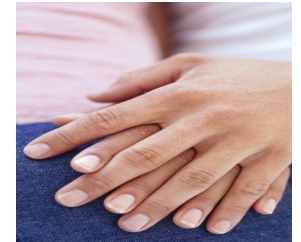
Find a Group for You

Most local support groups are free of charge, and are held at convenient times and locations. Although it is not always easy for caregivers to push themselves into making the time and the arrangements to attend, one of the best ways for caregivers to take care of themselves is by regularly attending the support group meeting that they come to call: “my group”.

A Spiritual Community

Faith communities teach us to:

- ♥ Bear one another’s burdens
- ♥ Rejoice with those who rejoice
- ♥ Weep with those who weep



Your support group may be part of your network of spiritual resources.

Recommended Reading

Alzheimer’s Care with Dignity by Frank Fuerst

Not just about Alzheimer’s but any care giving situation to “help you care for your loved one at home with dignity and respect and renew your hope and spirituality.”

carewithdignity@earthlink.net

www.dementiacaregiving.com