



MASSACHUSETTS FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM

NEWSLETTER | JULY 2021



Caregiving is not for the faint of heart or the selfish in nature. It involves sacrifice, hard work, emotional highs and lows, flexibility, and perseverance.

What we do is great and worthy and hard and overwhelming but most of all it's **love made visible.**

- Donna Steigleder

MFCSP JULY 2021
NEWSLETTER

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UPCOMING WEBINARS

Effective Communication Strategies

July 22, 12:00 PM

Explore communication changes due to dementia and the skills needed to successfully connect and communicate throughout the disease process.

Healthy Happy Hour with Comedian J Smiles

July 23, 8:00 PM

Comedian J Smiles expertly weaves her own experiences as a caregiver into her comedy act as she hosts a Healthy Happy Hour with Hilarity for Charity (HFC).

Understanding and Responding to Dementia-Related Behavior

July 27, 12:00 PM

Behaviors are a form of communication. Learn to identify, understand and respond to challenging behaviors.

Oral Health Techniques for Caregivers

July 27, 2:00 PM

Good oral health is synonymous with good overall health, and the ability to speak and eat remains relevant well into old age. Many caregivers are tasked with the responsibility of taking care of a loved one's teeth once they are no longer able to for themselves. In this webinar caregivers learn how to care for someone else's mouth as if it was their own.

Understanding Social Isolation and its Impact on Older Adults and Those Living with Disabilities

July 28, 2:00 PM

This webinar presentation is designed to help practitioners across sectors - as well as individuals and caregivers - better understand the similarities and important differences between loneliness and social isolation and the impact on health and well-being of older adults.



Caring for the Caregiver: A Monthly Webinar Series

Caregiver Webinar Series - July Webinar

July 28, 12:00 PM

The next event in the Caring for the Caregiver monthly webinar series will focus on providing caregivers with tools to prevent and address financial scams, abuse, and exploitation.

Younger Adult Family Caregivers - A Discussion with Aisha Adkins and Jenn Chan

August 4, 2:00 PM

Millennial caregivers Aisha Adkins, Co-Executive Director of Love Labor Project, and Jenn Chan, founder and CEO of Senior Shower Project, will share their experiences as current and former caregivers (respectively), discuss the obstacles they face, and explain how they cope during their caregiving journeys.

In Support of Caregivers: Keeping You Connected

August 12, 12:00 PM

In this virtual seminar, caregivers will learn about resources that AARP has available online, ongoing work to get a caregiver tax credit passed at the state level; how other caregivers are dealing with the challenges of caregiving and what works for them, and more upcoming programming aimed at supporting caregivers.

Safety & Memory Challenges

August 18, 12:00 PM

Dementia-related changes impact how to think about safety. This program teaches strategies to encourage a safe environment and lifestyle for those with memory challenges.

Getting to Yes: A Pragmatic Approach to Dementia Care with Teepa Snow

August 20, 8:30 AM

The focus of this teleconference from the Alzheimer's Family Support Center of Cape Cod is on pragmatic strategies for "getting to yes", moving from resistance to participation in dementia care.

SEEKING GRANDPARENT CAREGIVERS

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs and the Commission on the Status of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren are interested in learning about the experiences and needs of grandparents who are raising minor children in the absence of a birth parent. Focus groups will be held this summer to learn more about grandparent caregivers' experiences, such as:

- The benefits and challenges of assuming a parenting role
- Issues related to physical emotional, social, and financial wellbeing

Focus group participants will receive a \$75 gift card.

If you are interested in participating in a focus group, or know someone who might be, please call:

508-713-3153

RECOMMENDED READING

OVERCOMING

- [What Is Anticipatory Grief And How Does It Work?](#)

Anticipatory grief, also referred to as anticipatory loss or preparatory grief, is the distress a person may feel in the days, months or even years before the death of a loved one or other impending loss.

- [Detaching With Love: Setting Boundaries With Difficult Elderly Parents](#)

The importance of setting boundaries with toxic parents, arranging respite care while setting boundaries, and knowing when to seek counseling for past and present abuse or when to say “no” to caregiving.

- [5 Ways to Deal with Compassion Fatigue](#)

Compassion fatigue is the traumatic stress experienced by those who are spending significant time taking care of a loved one who is sick or in distress. When someone you know or love is going through a very hard time, that persistent empathy can cause compassion fatigue. Compassion fatigue can affect individuals who live with someone who is suffering. These feelings can even be triggered for people who regularly view content where people are in distress, like on social media or TV.

- [Caregiver Burnout: 8 Ways To Avoid It](#)

Ways to identify caregiver burnout and what caregivers can do about it.

- [Growing Around Grief](#)

Description of grief theories, such as Dr. Lois Tonkin’s theory that though grief remains and never feels smaller, one’s life grows larger over time and grows around one’s loss.

FINANCES

- [Financial Workbook for Family Caregivers: A Practical Guide Focused on Health, Housing, and Money Management](#)

Being a family caregiver is a labor of love that comes with a lot of responsibilities. While it’s hard to put a price on caring, it also comes with some real out-of-pocket costs for you. You may be picking up groceries, helping with housework, or making trips to the doctor or pharmacy: all the little things add up. Having a clear picture of what’s involved—whether it’s your care recipient’s health, housing, or finances—lets you plan ahead and make the juggling act a little easier.

- [How Family Caregivers Can Prevent and Manage Debt](#)

Advice for family caregivers on how to prevent and manage debt, such as review bills carefully and avoid taking on loved one’s financial liabilities.

RECOMMENDED READING

SELF-CARE

- [How Journaling Benefits Caregivers](#)

Incorporating journaling into your daily life can bring great benefits. It has a role in self nurture, as you carve out some time in the day for the process. Journaling has an ability to provide perspective and insight into patterns. It also has usefulness in managing conflict and strain and promoting a more mindful way of living. Ashley Halsey shares her perspectives and some techniques on how you can benefit from daily journaling.

- [Daily Acts of Self-Care Can Ease Caregiving Stress](#)

Light exercise, breathing techniques, even smiling can improve overall wellness

- [Starting an Indoor Garden Is Bringing Me Joy](#)

"The myth is that it only matters if you're a creative genius," she said. "The truth is, you get as much out of learning a new hobby as you would if you were expert at it. It's about creating mastery."

PERSONAL NARRATIVES

- [You Are Not Alone: On Being an LGBTQ+ Caregiver](#)

Dr. Cheryl Morris on caring for his father who he lost to the AIDS pandemic.

"Navigating caring for a parent is never easy. Add in age, a global pandemic or homo/transphobia (or all three) and it compounds the difficulties and trauma. I hope anyone navigating these issues knows that they are not alone."

- [One Family's Lessons Learned From a Decade of Caregiving](#)

A husband vowed to care for his wife at home after her diagnosis of Lewy body and Alzheimer's disease. Their daughters worried about them both.

- [The Pressure of Caregiving Makes Self-Care Difficult](#)

"Knowing that so much is riding on me creates a lot of pressure. I don't get sick days, vacation, or weekends off. Taking time off to attend to my health issues requires finding and paying for caregivers for my husband, Todd, who is paralyzed due to ALS."

"Were it not for the challenges she's faced during the coronavirus pandemic, [Rebecca] Elon might not have learned firsthand how exhausting end-of-life care can be, physically and emotionally...

And she might not have been struck by what she called the deepest lesson of this pandemic: that **caregiving is a manifestation of love** and that love means being present with someone even when suffering seems overwhelming."

RESEARCH

Mental Health Among Parents of Children Aged <18 Years and Unpaid Caregivers of Adults During the COVID-19 Pandemic – United States, December 2020 and February–March 2021

ARCHANGELS released a national study conducted as part of the COVID-19 Outbreak Public Evaluation (COPE) Initiative and co-authored by public health officials at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) revealing increased mental health symptoms and suicidal thoughts among unpaid caregivers during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this study, ARCHANGELS provided a critical tool for researchers—the Caregiver Intensity Index—which is an online tool that calculates the intensity of an individuals' mental health symptoms. This platform instantly connects caregivers with available resources in their community to improve their lives for the better.

Out of 10,000 surveyed participants:

- Overall, 70% of caregivers (parents, guardians, and unpaid caregivers of adults) reported at least one adverse mental health symptom during the pandemic such as anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts and COVID-19-induced stress and trauma
- 85% of adults who were both parents and unpaid caregivers for adults (sandwich caregivers) experienced adverse mental health symptoms during COVID-19 (or 85%), and 52% reported recent suicidal thoughts
- Parents, guardians, and unpaid caregivers of adults could benefit from increased access to mental health resources and support
- 54% of all caregivers are men

