



MASSACHUSETTS FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM

NEWSLETTER | DECEMBER 2020



These **acts of caregiving** can feel thankless, and it can be hard and sad and dark. There are **heroics packed into the mundane**.

Yet I've come to believe there is no more **powerful act of love** than to care for another human being.

- Adrienne Day

MFCSP DECEMBER 2020
NEWSLETTER

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SPOTLIGHT ON FAMILY CAREGIVER MONTH IN MASSACHUSETTS - NOVEMBER 2020

ASAP PROGRAMMING

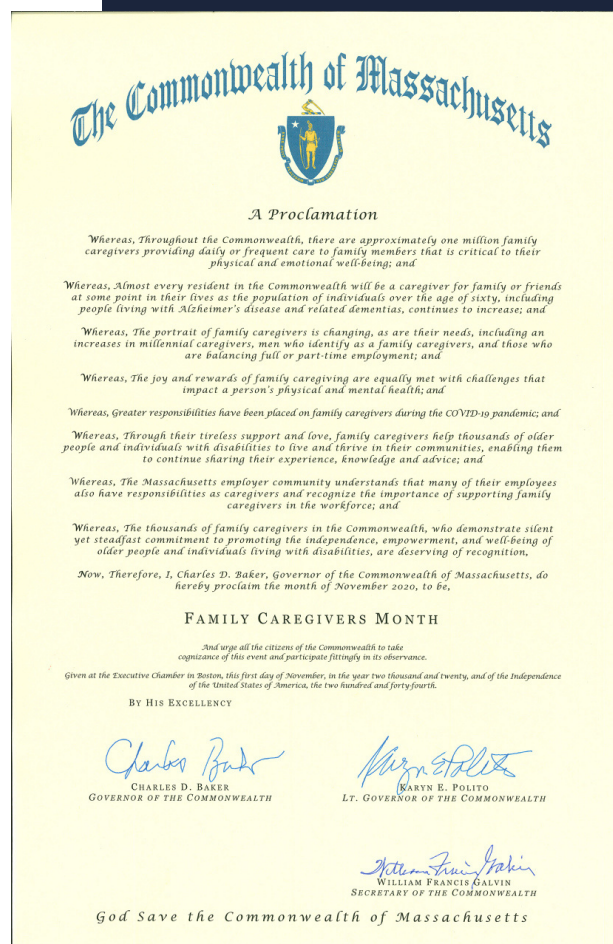
- Family Caregiver Burnout Prevention Workshop (Springwell)
- Caring in Community - Community Forum (LifePath)
- Caregiver Resources during COVID: You can feel safe with us (Minuteman)
- Conquering Caregiver Overload - Virtual Educational Forum (MHCC, Alzheimer's Association MA/NH)
- COVID-19 Tips for Alzheimer's Caregivers (TVES, ESWA & the S. Worcester County Alzheimer's Partnership)
- Assistive Technology & Apps for Family Caregivers (TVES, ESWA & the Greater Worcester Alzheimer's Partnership)
- The Impact of COVID-19 on Individuals and Families Living with Alzheimer's (ESMV & Alzheimer's Association Community Partnership of Northeast MA)

INFORMATION & RECOGNITION

- MVES article on National Family Caregiver Month (MVES)
- Social Media Family Caregiver Spotlights (MHCC)
- Springwell's new Caregiver COVID-19 Tip Sheet (Springwell)
- The Baker-Polito Administration once again proclaimed November Family Caregivers Month in the Commonwealth - See a snapshot of Governor Baker's signed 2020 Proclamation on the right!
- Updates to the Mass.Gov family caregiver landing page

CARING FOR THE CAREGIVER

- The Massachusetts Caregiver Coalition, a group that formed in November 2019 to represent the employer community in MA, hosted a webinar focused on how companies can support their employees who are serving in the caregiving role - "Caring for the Caregiver - Why Employers Should Care"



National Family Caregivers Month: Progress Despite Challenge

Excerpt from November 25, 2020 blog post by
Lance Robertson, ACL Administrator and Assistant Secretary for Aging

"As National Family Caregivers Month draws to a close, I cannot help but reflect on the many challenges this year has presented to caregivers, families, service programs, and the nation. The strength and resilience of the people we serve and the networks who support them are matched by ACL's resolve to recognize and support family caregivers.

As we celebrate Thanksgiving this week and look back on this challenging year, I am grateful for the more than 50 million family caregivers across this great country who give their all to support those they love and help them remain independent in their homes and communities... Please join me in giving thanks for these extraordinary people—this month and throughout the year."

SARAH'S STORY

Growing up I dreamed of becoming a mother someday. And what a beautiful scenario I had planned it to be! In my vision, my “perfect” child’s life would be everything you could want and hope for, and I, alongside my husband, would watch my baby grow into a healthy, “successful” adult. God, however, had something different in mind.

Fast forward: I am the single mother of a beloved daughter who was born with several disabilities and depends on me for full time care. And while it is not the life I had designed for either of us, it certainly has been one filled with love, strength and a beauty all its own.

To be honest, there have been many years of struggle, anger, fear and tears. I never could have anticipated the exhaustion and worry I would face in caring for this precious soul God had placed in my hands. So many times in my prayers I asked “Why?” “What is all of this for?”

My daughter is about to turn 21. And while she still requires my care, she has become a lovely young woman with a heart of GOLD. I am so proud of her I could burst!

As for me, 21 years of caregiving has given me an unimaginable gift: I have become a fierce advocate, a creative navigator of services and solutions and a living steward of empathy and understanding.

This experience is what led me to apply for the position of Manager of the Family Caregiver Support Program at Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands. I get what it means to be a caregiver and I want to be of service to others who give care.

Perhaps I have received an answer to my question after all.

Sarah Franey
Family Caregiver/Options Counseling Program Manager
Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands

RECOMMENDED READING

HARSH REALITIES

- Veteran and Military Caregivers Face New Challenges During the Pandemic
- Alone but Resilient: What We're Learning About Social Isolation Among Older Adults Amidst the Pandemic
- Opinion: Pandemic Shows Access to Broadband Internet, Telehealth a Must for Caregivers
- Caregiving in a Crisis: Caring for Parents During the Pandemic
- The Holidays and Alzheimer's During COVID-19

MEETING THE NEED

- Taking Care of Each Other, Taking Care of Ourselves
- Family Caregiving for Diverse Elders Resource Hub
- Caring for Those Who Care - Meeting the Needs of Diverse Family Caregivers
- How Adult Daycare Can Support the Family Caregiver
- It's Time to Meet the Needs of African American and Black Caregivers

FINDING MEANING

- Caregiving Is Like Running A Marathon: Looking After a Loved One With Dementia Is a Long Journey Which Can Be Meaningful And Fulfilling
- How A Widow Found New Meaning Through Poetry, Grief Support Groups, and Helping Others

7 THINGS CAREGIVERS SHOULD KEEP IN MIND AS COVID CASES RISE

1. Do your best to make sure you have access to critical prescribed medication.
2. Remember, the Medicare enrollment period ends Dec. 7th - make sure you enroll!
3. Update your emergency contact list and make a plan in case of emergency.
4. Have some reserved non-perishable food and water to limit trips outside.
5. Explore transportation options beyond public transit.
6. Practice social distancing, wear a mask, carry hand sanitizer, and wash your hands.
7. Pause, breathe and remember to have patience for yourself and others.



RESOURCES FOR CAREGIVERS

- Making Your Visits Count: Tips For Visiting Loved Ones Living with Dementia In Long-Term Care Communities
- Families with Aging Parents: Difficult Conversations Just Got Easier! (webinar recording)
- How To Be a Long-Distance Caregiver
- Staying Connected and Healthy During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Resources for Older Adults and Caregivers
- Resources for Caregivers from Caring Across Generations (image on left)

UPCOMING WEBINARS

AAPI Caregiving in a Pandemic: Accessing Services & Supports
December 7, 3:00 PM

Assistive Technology and Apps for Family Caregivers
December 8, 1:00 PM

FriendshipWorks Service of Remembrance
December 9, 3:00 PM

COVID-19 Caring Conversations: Coping with the Holidays
December 10, 10:00 AM

Safe use of Medication for Seniors and their Caregivers with
Lucy Barylak, MSW
December 10, 11:00 AM

Paid Family Leave: What Is It, and How You Can Use It
December 10, 3:00 PM

Ang Pangangalaga Sa Mahal sa Buhay Sa Panahon ng
Kapaskuhan (Taking Care During the Holidays)
December 11, 4:30 PM

Caregiving and the Holidays with Zanda Hilger
December 14, 1:00 PM

World Carers Conversation Virtual Summit – Caregiving in
the Americas
December 14, 3:00 PM

World Carers Conversation Virtual Summit – Caregiving in
Europe, Africa & the Middle East
December 15, 6:00 AM

Getting Through the Holidays with Tam Cummings, PhD
December 15, 12:00 PM

Journey of Caregiving Vietnamese
December 16, 2:00 PM

World Carers Conversation Virtual Summit – Caregiving in
Asia and the Pacific
December 16, 7:00 PM

Caring for Those Who Care: Meeting the Needs of LGBT
Caregivers
December 17, 2:00 PM

Grupo de Apoyo en Español Por Teléfono (Spanish
Telephone Support Group)
December 17, 5:00 PM

WAYS TO STAY ACTIVE & ENGAGED

- **Caregiver Resource Center's 50 Ways to Take a Break**

- **Virtual Fitness Resources**

- Online Fitness Options For Caregivers And Their Loved Ones
- Ageless Grace Classes
- Silver Sneakers Classes
- 80-Year-Old Creates Online Workout Videos For Seniors

- **Let's Get Away, Together: Winter Series**

- This series is comprised of interactive travel and culture activity sessions with each week focusing on a new part of the country or cultural activity, while incorporating storytelling, music, poetry writing, and/or a simple craft. Each session will include a follow-up message filled with tips, activities, and recipes for families to continue to enjoy after the virtual trip. The focus of each group is to explore a new world, experience a variety of engaging opportunities, and enjoy a sense of camaraderie and community. Register for one or more sessions
- Let's Get Away, Together! is intended to be an enjoyable activity for family caregivers and the person they care for. Those receiving care who are able to participate in the discussion and activities are encouraged to attend with their family caregiver
 - **December 8 - National Parks through the Seasons**
Let's adventure to see wondrous U.S. nature and wildlife on a tour of our greatest National Parks during their peak seasonal beauty!
 - **December 15 - Outdoors in Bavaria, Germany!**
Join us as we explore Christmas markets, Oktoberfest, hiking in the Alps, and personal travels with Katrina
 - **December. 22 - North Pole and Snowy travels**
Winter wonderlands are all around us! Embrace the surprising marvels and cultural traditions found in the Earth's coldest places
 - **December 29 - NYE Pre-Celebration Around the World!**
How do you ring in the New Year? Travel with us around the world in anticipation of 2021!

RESEARCH/POLICY

- Medicaid Supports for Family Caregivers
- Strengthening Family Caregiving Policies And Programs Through State Collaboration
- NASHP Expands Family Caregiving Work with Grants from RRF Foundation for Aging and the US Administration for Community Living
- FACING A PANDEMIC: Grandfamilies Living Together During COVID-19 And Thriving Beyond (graphic on right)
- Caregivers Facing COVID-Related Financial Hardships Are Particularly Impacted In Their Ability To Provide Care
- Biden's Plan for Seniors Is Not Just a Plan for Seniors
- A Framework for Integrating Family Caregivers into the Health Care Team

GRANDPARENTS RESPONSIBLE FOR GRANDCHILDREN



About 19 percent live in poverty



46 percent have raised grandchildren for at least five years



56 percent are in the labor force



25 percent have a disability



Over 48 percent are age 60 and older

Plan Ahead to Help Your Older Loved Ones Avoid Depression This Holiday Season

Tips for caregivers on creating new traditions during COVID-19

By Judy Stringer and Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging

NEW TRADITION IDEAS

- **Reimagine gatherings.** Consider ways, for instance, that homes might be used creatively to space out guests, letting go of the tradition of eating and celebrating in the same room. If guests are not able to gather physically, find alternatives to fulfill that togetherness need. On Thanksgiving Day, enjoy turkey meals at the same time, perhaps even with portions of the meal over Zoom, Weitzman said. Or provide home-bound relatives with a favorite holiday dish that other family members will be preparing as well.
- **Rethink gift-giving.** Buying gifts will be difficult this year for aging adults who don't feel safe shopping in stores. And, many older adults – like Americans of all ages – are increasingly worried about their finances due to the coronavirus' hit on the economy. Given that older people often think of gift-giving as an "act of love," Weitzman said, and will be saddened by not participating, why not come up with other meaningful ways for them to give? Have them write a special letter to each person or make something to give. Families also could pick names so that each person, the older generation included, is only responsible for one gift.
- **Return to the basics.** Some older adults are not comfortable using technology. Maybe they can't hear well, see well or type well. And while access to the internet has been increasing in recent years, 41% of older Americans still do not have home broadband. As the holidays approach, it's critical for all of us to engage those older adults who can't be reached over virtual platforms. That means low- or no-tech options like phone calls, cards and letters.
- **Remember yourself.** What are you, the caregiver, going to do for you this holiday season? Even in the best of times, it is challenging to find room for self-care, and the holidays – filled with expectations and obligations – make it only more so. But the holidays do not need to be a marathon; give yourself permission to prioritize finding joy for yourself as well.

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CAREGIVERS WILL HAVE TO THINK CREATIVELY TO COME UP WITH NEW TRADITIONS FOR THE HOLIDAYS.

NOT THINGS THAT ARE GOING TO REPLACE THE OLD TRADITIONS NECESSARILY, BUT NEW WAYS TO SET THIS TIME ASIDE AS A SPECIAL TIME – A TIME WHEN YOUR OLDER LOVED ONES CAN CONNECT WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS AND FEEL LIKE THEY ARE A PART OF SOMETHING.

-LISA WEITZMAN

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Caregiver Coping Groups

Extended through January 2021!



**MassSupport is offering a series of coping groups for Caregivers
December 16, 2020 through January 30, 2021**

What to Expect

- A virtual group of 10-12 of your fellow caregivers
- Guided discussion of your reactions to the pandemic
- Strategies on coping skills and ways to manage stress
- Participants highly encouraged to stay for the entire time (~90 minutes)

About Us

We provide emotional support, coping strategies, resources, and up-to-date information during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our program is anonymous, confidential, and free.

How to Sign Up

Groups are offered:

Wednesdays at 11 AM (by Zoom)	Wednesdays at 7 PM (by phone)	Saturdays at 10 AM (by Zoom)
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There are two ways to sign up for a Coping Group:

- 1) **Call the MassSupport toll free line at 888-215-4920.** Leave a message with your name, contact information (phone number and email address, if you have one), and the date and time of the group you want to attend; or
- 2) **Click the link on the second page of this flyer** for the group you want to attend. If the group you are trying to register for is full, you can register for another group or add your name to the waitlist at the bottom of the page

Instructions to join the group will be shared at least 24 hour prior to the scheduled group

Caregiver Coping Group Schedule and Sign-Up

Wednesday 12-16-2020 11 am <https://forms.gle/qPRwE9qPwnsEzYj66>

Wednesday 12-16-2020 7 pm <https://forms.gle/Vmv34JBaMpgZbPyZ7>

Saturday 12-19-2020 10 am <https://forms.gle/NZHBJ1HKoQHFzJ5TA>

Wednesday 12-23-2020 11 am <https://forms.gle/MmGqzR6x5Re4e2Gg7>

Wednesday 12-23-2020 7 pm <https://forms.gle/98ebyy5PxtmSNix8>

Saturday 12-26-2020 10 am <https://forms.gle/bmGtF75Ky5esbDPr8>

Wednesday 12-30-2020 11 am <https://forms.gle/PdSeMQs7ndbNVVuS9>

Wednesday 12-30-2020 7 pm <https://forms.gle/Cf1UmnkZwwYGSmZw9>

Saturday 1-2-2021 10 am <https://forms.gle/uiwUQbWxMDuWyRF87>

Wednesday 1-6-2021 11 am <https://forms.gle/8jXXteSzsLH4B9cH9>

Wednesday 1-6-2021 7 pm <https://forms.gle/WQQkaQitfCR6JEEu9>

Saturday 1-9-2021 10 am <https://forms.gle/X4vSHucr69a3Qtc7>

Wednesday 1-13-2021 11 am <https://forms.gle/5QLqkSnTh6f7zYRq5>

Wednesday 1-13-2021 7 pm <https://forms.gle/kjGpY4rKdFLMrWEE9>

Saturday 1-16-2021 10 am <https://forms.gle/JUWyiHCbXeuKcKas9>

Wednesday 1-20-2021 11 am <https://forms.gle/rAbffHStPxxy6FCd9>

Wednesday 1-20-2021 7 pm <https://forms.gle/uLGcbaxXyhpdp3P6e7>

Saturday 1-23-2021 10 am <https://forms.gle/ce3rg8iPRbJd1uA96>

Wednesday 1-27-2021 11 am <https://forms.gle/Jrnw95hgGV7Aey5CA>

Wednesday 1-27-2021 7 pm <https://forms.gle/xr4jVianqhTpY17k9>

Saturday 1-30-2021 10 am <https://forms.gle/qEA5GSQfqDVP5rAaA>

Coping Group Waiting List <https://forms.gle/sVPvx9Wmi7ZicuT36>