

The Family Caregiver

Newsletter of the Lewis-Mason-Thurston Family Caregiver Support Program

Spring, 2017

Spring greetings, caregivers!

After that long and cold winter we sure are happy to see spring! We don't know about you, but we will take these rainy days over the snow and ice any day. Per the usual, we have a calendar full of good stuff to offer in the coming months. One event we are particularly excited about is the South Sound Alzheimer's Council conference in May. Why are we so excited about it? Well, Megan Carnarius will be the presenter! As you may recall, Megan presented for us at our November, 2016 workshop and we cannot wait to learn even more from her. If you missed the November workshop you'll definitely want to attend in May. Megan provides great perspective on caregiving, both as a professional and as a person who has "been there, done that."

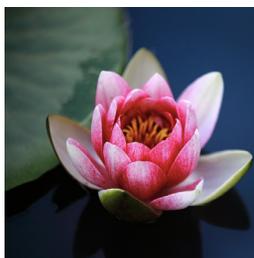
As always, we would encourage you to reach out to our staff whenever caregiving questions and concerns arise. They are always there to help!

We hope to see you around,

-the Family Caregiver Support Program staff

MINDFULNESS

Something we have noticed about the caregivers who attended Megan's workshop, is that they incorporated "mindfulness" into their daily lives. Mindfulness is simply being fully present in each moment. We aren't worried about what happened yesterday or about the five loads of laundry that need to be done. Our attention is only focused on the present moment. The next time you find yourself loathing that load of laundry, or pile of dishes, focus on each step of the task at hand. Notice how the chore becomes a meaningful activity. That is mindfulness.

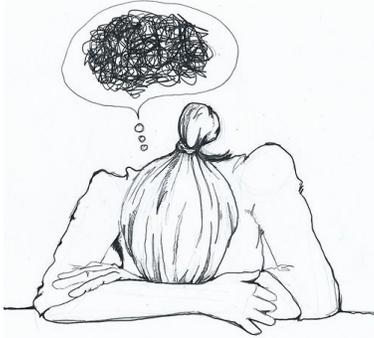


*Caregiving often calls us
to lean into LOVE
we didn't know possible*

-Tia Walker, author

DEPRESSION & BURNOUT

Depression



More than sad, bigger than the blues. Depression has many causes. But when you have it, you can feel its weight. If you feel like you are losing your energy, sense of fun or social life, contact your health care provider.

As part of a visit with your doctor, the following are some ways you may give your body and mind a boost out of the blues.

1. **Just move.** Walk with a friend. Walk a dog. Walk by yourself.
2. **Do one thing you used to enjoy.** Choose something easy to do and perhaps repeatable.
3. **Visit with a friend.** Make a friend. Call your family.

Burnout

You may have it and not know it. Caregivers who are "burned out" may experience fatigue, anxiety and poor concentration and recall. Sounds a lot like depression, and they can overlap. You can have bits of both. Usually depression comes in the later stages of burnout. Burnout is mostly defined by **Exhaustion** and **Expectations**.

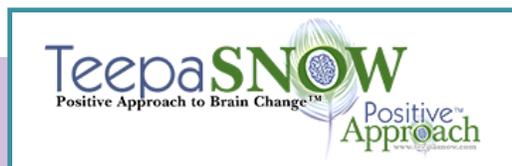
Exhaustion is that voice in your head that says, "not another day of this. My arms are weak, my adrenals are over-worked and I feel like I am coming down with something." Everyone has their own physical markers and symptoms when they reach the point of exhaustion. Not everyone catches them before they become ill.

Expectations are important to acknowledge. What are my thoughts? Do I think in terms of what *should* I be doing, what they *should* be doing and how I *should* be feeling?

Some ideas to help what you expect of yourself:

1. **Connect.** Turn on your hand-held-world-wide-communication-device (aka telephone) and talk to someone. Let them know what is going on in your life. Learn about their challenges. Break your isolation.
2. **Tell someone how you are feeling.** Acknowledge what you are feeling. Just saying the words, such as "I feel so frustrated when..." actually lessens those feelings and changes your body's chemistry.
3. **Create a routine.** Stick to it. Take back some control.
4. **Be ruthless with your to-do list.** Remember, it is about what you expect of yourself.

UPCOMING CLASSES & EVENTS



Dementia Skills Class featuring videos edited from Teepa Snow's presentation at our annual Fall Workshop in 2015

April 18 & 25, 1-3pm in the Olympia LMTAAA office.
Call (360) 664-3162 x102 to reserve your seat.

South Sound Alzheimer's Council

Register now for the SSAC 2017 Caregiver Conference
Friday, May 12, 2017 from 9:00am - 4:00pm

You may register by phone at (360) 456-3477 or at the door. A \$25 suggested donation will be accepted at the door via cash, check or debit/credit card. A catered box lunch is included. The conference will be held at the South Puget Sound Community College, 4220 6th Ave SE Lacey 98503



"Come with questions, leave with answers."

If you have joined us in the past, thank you for your questions. If you are attending now, glad to have you. If you are thinking of attending, just come. It is the place to better understand the brain and how to be a more skilled caregiver. Our motto is still the same, "come with questions, leave with answers."

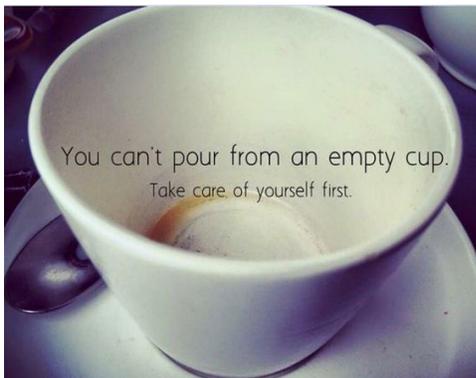
In SHELTON: Second Wednesday of the month from 1 PM-3 PM (360) 427-2226 x102
In CHEHALIS: Second Thursday of the month from 1 PM-3 PM (360) 748-2524 x102
In OLYMPIA: Third Thursday of the month from 1 PM-3 PM (360) 664-3162 x102



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For an online copy of this newsletter please visit our website at www.LMTAAA.org
