
❖ Home Care Network News ❖

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Winter 2010

Another year has come and gone. My kids are now adults. My 20 year old has been invited to study at Oxford, England for 4 weeks this coming summer. He will be studying International Economics. What a great opportunity for him. My eldest continues to work as a critical care RN and loves it. He is beginning to think of graduate school in the very near future. Where did the time go?? I hope you enjoy your newsletter. It is a cornucopia of whatever was on my mind.

Warmly, Sally

4 Ways To Communicate With A Person With Dementia

Many people are caring for a person who can no longer easily communicate their feelings or needs. This can be the byproduct of medical conditions such as [Alzheimer's disease](#) or other dementia's, [Parkinson's disease](#) or a stroke.

An elderly person with dementia may be trying to interpret a world that no longer makes sense to them because their brain is interpreting information incorrectly. Sometimes the person with dementia and those around them will misinterpret each other's attempts at communication. These misunderstandings can be difficult, and may require support from outsiders such as the [Alzheimer's Association](#).

Difficulties with communication can be upsetting and frustrating for all involved, but there are several ways to help make sure that you understand each other. This can be accomplished through speech, reading, music and touch.

Reading - Most people struggle to fill the time when they are visiting a person with dementia. They often talk & talk & talk hoping that something will ignite a flame behind the dead stare of their loved ones eyes. Author, [Laura Bramly](#) faced this issue with her mother who was suffering with vascular dementia and living in a nursing

home. One day, out of sheer desperation she picked up a coffee table book and started showing her mom the pictures. At the end of the book her mom said, "again".

Based on that singular experience and the inability to find a picture book that would be appropriate for a person with dementia she wrote [Elder Care Read: Life Scenes 1](#). This wonderful celebration of life provides photos, words and exercises to help stimulate and encourage interaction between the reader and the older person.

Music - Another powerful communication tool is music. [Music can be soothing](#) and provide comfort for an agitated Alzheimer's patient. Most dementia care communities incorporate a music program as an activity for their resident's. Many folks in these communities have difficulty holding a conversation but they sure can sing! If you are using music as a means of communication, watch the person's body language carefully to see if they enjoying it, or should adjustments be made such as volume or style of music.

Touch - [Physical forms of communication such as touching](#), hugging and hand holding can convey a strong message of affection. No matter what stage of life we are in a gentle touch or a loving hug can brighten our day. However, people with dementia can find touching and hugging overwhelming. If you loved one appears frightened or pulls back, respect that.

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Speech – Speak clearly and ask simple questions. Try not to ask direct questions, this can cause frustration if the person can't find the "right" answer. Use a quiet and calm tone and if the person does not understand the question try visual cues instead of repeating the question over and over. Remember they can hear you they just can't interpret the words you are saying!

If you are getting little response from the person, it can be very tempting to speak about them as if they weren't there. But disregarding them in this way can make them feel very cut off, frustrated and sad.

Make sure you do not speak down to the person or treat them like a child...no one likes to be patronized!

Ten Commandments for Caregivers

1. Assist the older person to retain their autonomy and self respect.
2. Respect the older person - they got this far on their own.
3. Be generous with love and loving touch.
4. Communicate your level of capability not as a complaint; share decision-making.
5. Be empathetic to growing older and the losses involved with that process.
6. Be prepared-know your options for situations you anticipate.
7. Be informed about the older person's challenges.
8. Know your limits-identify your support system.
9. Maintain a healthy sense of humor-some things can be laughed about together.
10. Don't feel guilty - no one person is expected to do it all!

Safe Cooking in a Wheelchair

One of the daily challenges for people who use wheelchairs is cooking. Few kitchens are designed for wheelchair accessible cooking.

Here are some ways to make wheelchair cooking easier:

- Use electrical appliances that can be set on a lower table at chest level. Portable microwave carts are often the right height and they usually have a shelf under the cart.
- Options for the stove are electric skillets, woks, rice cookers steamers, and crock-pots (my fav).
- Try oven-rack grabbers with a notch on the end for pushing the rack into the oven and a hook notch for pulling the rack out.
- The size, shape, and weight of cookware must be tailored to individuals abilities and preferences. Look for skillets with handles on both sides for easier lifting.
- Gadgets can make many chores easier for people with mobility problems.
- Prepared and prepackaged foods have improved greatly. Check out the home delivered frozen meals through the Council on Aging. 408-296-8290. They deliver 7 frozen entrees and breakfast items for a nominal contribution.
- Look for user friendly packaging such as squeeze bottles for mayo and lighter bottles for juices. Buying in bulk sizes may be too difficult to handle.
- Put rarely used items in the top cabinets and frequently used, such as dishes in the lower cabinets.
- Using storage bins can create additional reachable space.
- Open lower cabinet doors to rest a cutting board over the tops of doors to create a work-space.



When It's Time to Stop Driving

As people age, they become very sensitive about the loss of abilities related to their autonomy. Driving is a big issue for many seniors, which makes things difficult when it comes time to tell a father or mother it is time to stop driving.

Raising the topic of driving with a senior parent is a very difficult task. Driving is something that carries a lot of weight in all our lives. How do we get food, run errands or do most of the things we do in a day? We drive. Imagine how stressed you would be if you could not drive anymore, starting today.

For seniors, the decision to stop driving is doubly difficult. As you get into your later years, you lose things ranging from friends to physical abilities. For most people, driving stands out as a key symbol of their independence. Agreeing to forgo driving is in many ways also an agreement to give up one's independence. It is very tough.

As an adult, you have to evaluate whether a parent should continue to drive. Remember, the issues is safety - both theirs and other people. If your parent cannot make decisions quickly enough or has difficulty seeing, then it is time to stop driving.

What about driver's licenses? Many seniors will argue they can still drive because the DMV is still giving them a license. The DMV, however, only sees them for a short period of time and often there is no road test. There is little basis for determining whether they are adequate drivers in a real world environment, so a license doesn't really mean that much.

Importantly, study after study has showed that the mere fact a person is older is not an indicator as to whether they can drive. Just because someone is 65 does not mean they should lose their license automatically. The only exception to this is once a person reaches the age of 80. People older than 80 get into as many accidents as teenagers and should be watched closely.

So, how do you determine if a parent is having problems driving? Well, give their car a once over. If you see dents and such, then there is a problem. If you don't, ask them to give you a ride to the store or somewhere. You can then get a first hand account of their skill level. If possible, try to do it at night when vision issues can arise.

Asking a parent to give up driving is very difficult, but it needs to be done. If you know your parent has become a bad driver, you have to think of the risk to innocent third parties.

Dwayne Gibson writes about senior issues for OrangeCountyCareplacement.com - an [assisted living](#) placement service placing seniors throughout Southern California for free.

Caregivers Holiday

With the following holidays, Caregivers are to receive time and one-half for working that day. If you choose not to have the Caregiver that day, please tell them in advance.

2010

New Years Day	January 1
Martin Luther King	January 18
Presidents' Day	February 15
Memorial Day	May 31
4th of July	July 4
Labor Day	September 6
Veterans Day	November 11
Thanksgiving	November 25
Christmas	December 25

Some Funnies

Grandma is eighty-eight years old and still drives her own car. She writes:

Dear Grand-daughter,

The other day I went up to our local Christian book store and saw a "Honk if you love Jesus" bumper sticker.

I was feeling particularly sassy that day because I had just come from a thrilling choir performance, followed by a thunderous prayer meeting.

So, I bought the sticker and put it on my bumper. Boy, am I glad I did; what an uplifting experience that followed.

I was stopped at a red light at a busy intersection, just lost in thought about the Lord and how good he is, and I didn't notice that the light had changed.

It is a good thing someone else loves Jesus because if he hadn't honked, I'd never have noticed. I found that lots of people love Jesus!

While I was sitting there, the guy behind started honking like crazy, and then he leaned out of his window and screamed, 'For the love of God!'

'Go! Go! Go! Jesus Christ, GO!'

What an exuberant cheerleader he was for Jesus! Everyone started honking!

I just leaned out my window and started waving and smiling at all those loving people. I even honked my horn a few times to share in the love!

I saw another guy waving in a funny way with only his middle finger stuck up in the air.

I asked my young teenage grandson in the back seat what that meant. He said it was probably a Hawaiian good luck sign or something.

Well, I have never met anyone from Hawaii, so I leaned out the window and gave him the good luck sign right back.

My grandson burst out laughing.

A couple of the people were so caught up in the joy of the moment that they got out of their cars and started walking towards me. I bet they wanted to pray or ask what

church I attended, but this is when I noticed the light had changed.

So, grinning, I waved at all my brothers and sisters, and drove on through the intersection.

I noticed that I was the only car that got through the intersection before the light changed again and felt kind of sad that I had to leave them after all the love we had shared.

So I slowed the car down, leaned out the window and gave them all the Hawaiian good luck sign one last time as I drove away. Praise the Lord for such wonderful folks!!

Will write again soon,

Love, Grandma



DRIVING

Two elderly women were out driving in a large car - both could barely see over the dashboard. As they were cruising along, they came to an intersection. The stoplight was red, but they just went on through.

The woman in the passenger seat thought to herself "I must be losing it. I could have sworn we just went through a red light." After a few more minutes, they came to another intersection and the light was red again.

Again, they went right through. The woman in the passenger seat was almost sure that the light had been red but was really concerned that she was losing it. She was getting nervous. At the next intersection, sure enough, the light was red and they went on through. So, she turned to the other woman and said, "Mildred, did you know that we just ran through three red lights in a row? You could have killed us both!"

Mildred turned to her and said, "Oh! Am I driving?"

CAREGIVERS PAGE AND INFORMATION

Mileage Rate 2010

Mileage for doing errands or other activities using your own care is now \$0.50 per mile effective January 1. An example on how to calculate it is:

20 miles X \$0.50 = \$10.00.

Holidays 2010

With the following holidays, you are to receive time and one-half for working that day. Please remind the client in advance of the holiday because a family member may not need you on the holiday.

New Years Day	January 1
Martin Luther King	January 18
Presidents' Day	February 15
Memorial Day	May 31
4th of July	July 4
Labor Day	September 6
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Correct Phone Etiquette

Proper phone etiquette is so very important when providing services. It is very important to always identify yourself when calling a client. The proper format, taken from the HCN Caregiver's Manual is: , " **Hello, I am (your name) and I've been referred by HOME CARE NETWORK**" or "**I am from Home Care Network**". Get right to the point. Don't ask what kind of day they are having, or how they like the weather. If they didn't need your help, the client would be having a great day. Speak clearly and slowly so that you are understandable. Remember, many of our clients have hearing deficits and can't always understand someone who is speaking at a fast clip.

Also, when calling the HCN office please identify yourself. I don't always know everyone by their voice, and when an officemate answers the phone, they don't know you at all.

CPR & First Aid

Nurses Workshop

408-269-3715
1777 Hamilton Ave. # 207
San Jose, CA 95125

American Red Cross

408-577-1000

CPR renew every 2 years
First Aid renew every 3 years.

TB and Chest X-Ray Testing

US Health Works

408-288-3800
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday
7AM-7PM
\$36.00

Santa Clara County

Park Alameda
976 Lenzen Ave San Jose 95126
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday
8AM-11:30AM and 1-4PM
Approx. \$20.00 Check or cash

Great Inventions

Spinning Wheel 1325 — For several millennia the spinning of thread to weave cloth was done by using a hand –help spindle. It is probable that the idea first developed in China with the rimless *charka* spinning wheel. From then it took hundreds of years to cross first to India then to Western Europe.

Spectacles 1451 — Although precious stones and minerals ground to the shape of lenses are known from the ancient world, the earliest definite references to glass lenses being made to improve vision date from the 13th-century in Italy. The first spectacles were used to correct far-sightedness in order to improve reading and other close work.

Toothbrush 1498 — Chew sticks with one end frayed into bristles have been found in Egyptian tombs dating back to around 3000 B.C. but the first mention of a toothbrush at right angles to the handle is in a Chinese encyclopedia of 1498.

False Limbs 1530 — Until the 16th-century, little was done to improve the life of those born without limbs or who lost them in accidents or wars. Then a French doctor showed that medics just hadn't been trying. Ambroise Pare began work as a military surgeon in 1536 and began designing artificial limbs. One of his hand designs had fingers that could be moved individually via a set of gears and levers.

Flushing Toilet 1597 —Incorrectly attributed to the 19th-century plumber Thomas Crapper, the flush toilet was actually invented by Sir John Harington in 1597, a godson of Elizabeth I, maintained the fine English tradition of toilet humor by naming his creation the Ajax—Jacks or Jakes being a popular 16th-century term for convenience.

Condom 1640 —The oldest surviving remains of one condom came from the foundation of Dudley castle in England. The condom was not used in the prevention of pregnancy but in the prevention of syphilis.

Home Care Network News

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Rain, Rain Go
Way, Come
Again Next
Year.

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