



Caregiver Network News

*A newsletter for
caregivers of loved ones
with memory disorders*



**announces two new sessions of Caregiver College starting soon
and
a new location for the North Asheville MemoryCaregivers
Network meetings!**

See below for details!

CAREGIVER RESOLUTIONS

(Reprinted from the Jan-Feb 2013 issue of CNN)



The holidays are over, so now is typically a time for making New Year's Resolutions. Many of us find ourselves saying the same "This year I'm going to..." year after year: lose weight, start exercising, clean out the garage, finish that quilt I started six years ago. As often as not, these declarations involve either giving up something that we like, or adding yet another item to our growing list of "shoulds."

Is it any wonder that 88% of New Year's Resolutions fail?

Those of us who are caring for someone with memory loss tend to have a different set of resolutions - things like, "I will be more patient with my husband's moods" or "I will not snap at my mother when she asks me the same question over and over again" or "I won't complain when my wife loses things." If you've been doing this job for a while, you know how hard it is to keep those resolutions.

It's no wonder. Our time and energy are maxed out. We have all we can do just to get through a typical day. We are the last person on our list to get taken care of. We are struggling with constant change and emotional loss. So the last thing we need is to take on more responsibility, to add yet another job to our "To Do" list. One caregiver says, "I use up the energy of two people, not just one." What we need to do is to find ways to bank our energy, not deplete it. We need to move ourselves higher up along the care chain.

**Maybe we don't need any more resolutions.
Maybe what we need are just solutions.**

Caregivers seldom see the forest for the trees. We think we can simply go on doing what we've been doing indefinitely. But that kind of thinking will catch up with us sooner or later, and when it does, the resulting situation is worse than before. It's much like a farmer and his plowhorse. An overworked horse eventually can't work. A well-cared-for horse, however, one that is frequently given time in the pasture to roll on his back in the clover, does a much better job.

We as caregivers tend to think of ourselves as Superman. We subscribe to the foolish idea that we can Do It All Ourselves. But the first rule of caregiving is simply this:

If we don't care for ourselves, we can't care for our loved ones.

So as you read through the following list of Caregiver ReSolutions, keep this thought in mind: *Every time I do something good for myself, I'm also doing something good for the person I'm caring for.*





I will make a ME list.

This will be all the things that bring you joy, that feed your soul, that refuel your energy. These can be big things (a trip to the beach) or small things (an uninterrupted two hours to watch Netflix). They can be once-in-a-while things (going to the movies with a friend) or everyday things (reading or gardening). Write them down - write them ALL down - and add to the list whenever something else occurs to you. You can

start it with "If I had time, I would love to _____." We'll discuss later how to use your ME list.

I will talk to somebody I like every day.

It could be your best friend, your sister, another caregiver - anybody who loves you and encourages you and just makes you feel good. Don't wait for them to call you, pick up the phone now and call them, and make a daily habit of it.



LET IT GO

I will let go of something negative.

You've heard it before, but now that you're a caregiver, you really need to do it. Pick just one job (I hate balancing the checkbook) or one loss (I wish we still traveled) or one thing your loved one does that really aggravates you (If he asks me that same thing again I think I'll scream). Pick whatever it is that brings you down. Write it down, read it out loud, then tear it up and throw it away. Literally and figuratively. It is sucking up your energy. If you can't fix it, or change it, or eliminate it, or give it to someone else, then let it go. You won't believe how much better you'll feel.

I will get outside at least once a day.

This can mean going for a 30-minute walk, or just standing out in the yard in the sunshine for a few minutes. Gardening counts. So does leaning on a fence and talking to a neighbor, or walking down to the mailbox. You can't believe what a little fresh air will do for you. Even driving around the block in the car is acceptable. Note: it's OK if it's raining. That's what raincoats and umbrellas are for.

I will admit when I'm having a hard day.

You can't expect to be up all the time. It's OK to admit to feeling frustrated or sad or discouraged. This works best if you can talk with a trusted friend or family member, preferably over a cup of coffee and a piece of pie, but it's also effective to write it down or go somewhere out of earshot of anyone else and say it out loud. Don't pull any punches, call it like it is. You'll feel better for having said it, and it'll get you through until you can vent to someone else.



I will start a HELP list.

Not to be confused with your ME list, this is a list of things that maybe would ease your life a little. For instance, someone to wash your windows. Someone to get the car inspected or get new tires. Someone to bring you a meal from time to time. Someone to stay with your loved one while you go out for lunch or run errands or attend a meeting. Someone to haul



away the empty flowerpots in the back yard. Don't forget those everyday things that need repair or replacement: the leaky faucet in the kitchen, the TV remote or cell phone that needs reprogramming, the vacuum cleaner that doesn't vacuum, the light fixture you can't reach that needs a new bulb. Don't worry about WHO or WHEN or HOW these jobs will get done, just identify them for now. Like you do with your ME list, add to your HELP list every time something else occurs to you.

I will look for ways to laugh.

This one pays big dividends. Read all those email jokes people send you. Print out the good ones to re-read later. Put funny magnets and funny photos on the refrigerator where you see them every day. Watch comedy TV shows or movies. Laugh at yourself whenever possible, and find things to laugh about with your loved one. If necessary, put a big sign up somewhere with BANG HEAD HERE on it. Readers Digest was right - laughter really is the best medicine, and for a dementia caregiver, it is a very present help in time of need.

And perhaps the most important Caregiver ReSolution for this year is:



I WILL ALLOW someone else to help!

This one is the biggie, the Grand Prize Winner, the gold medal of ReSolutions. This one incorporates most of the rest of them: it gives you the opportunity to use your HELP list, it allows you to let go of something negative (I could never let someone else do this), it's admitting to having a tough time of it and boy, would you like to share the burden, and it's a great way to do some of those things you put on your ME list! Besides, it's a boon to those people who are always asking if there's something they can do, and you always say no! So here's how you get started:

Step One: review your HELP list, and imagine who could do each item. For instance, your nice neighbor who's always offering to do something could come over for an hour or two while you run errands. Or your Sunday School class could bring you dinner once a week. Or your son or brother could take the car to be serviced.

Step Two: Ask. Or, if that's too hard at first, wait for someone to offer to help. Then be ready to tell them how.

Step Three: Pick something from your ME list and go do it.

Step Four: Repeat often, at least weekly. For some people, this would mean a one-time request. Others prefer to have something regularly scheduled ("ME Mondays," for example). Do it however it works best - but do it. And remember, it doesn't have to be someone you know. Hiring someone to do a job (cleaning, shopping, yard work, sitting with your loved one) definitely counts as Help, and is a great option if you just can't quite bring yourself to asking a friend or family member yet.

You may be reluctant, you may think it won't work, but don't knock it 'til you've tried it. If it wasn't a good idea, there wouldn't be so many caregivers out there doing it.

You are doing a difficult but vital job, and like the plowhorse, you need some R&R. Even Superman didn't work 24/7. In the words of the airline safety instructions, "Put on your own oxygen mask before assisting others."



**Take a Break before you Break!
Pick something from the list above and get started looking after yourself today!**

CAREGIVER WISDOM

WHAT I'VE LEARNED FROM MY SUPPORT GROUP:

- *I learn something new every time I come. Sometimes it may not be something I want to hear!*
- *Short sentences, no details, shut up - it really helps!*
- *All the advice I got here helped and it worked. Everything you said had value. You got me through.*
- *I didn't as much change what I did as what I expected, and we had the best month we've had in 2 years. It feels good to be nicer.*
- *I've learned how to respond differently. I tell him what he wants to hear and it makes my day.*



SUPPORT GROUP ANNOUNCES CHANGE



Effective Tuesday, February 26
THE MEMORYCAREGIVERS NETWORK'S
NORTH ASHEVILLE GROUP

will now be meeting at
Newbridge Baptist Church
199 Elkwood Avenue and Merrimon Avenue
(just past Beaver Lake)
1:00-3:00pm

(Please enter at the glass doors adjacent to the gym)

Our thanks to Newbridge Baptist Church for being our newest Network partner!
...and hats off to the Woodfin YMCA for hosting this group the last 3 years!



IS GRATEFUL FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

**Your gift helps us continue to help families in
Western North Carolina who are living with
dementia.**

[Click Here to make a donation!](#)

Notable Quotable



"There are three ways to ultimate success:

**The first way is to be kind.
The second way is to be kind.
The third way is to be kind. "**

- Mr. Rogers



ONGOING PROGRAMS

Open to the Public

MEMORYCAREGIVERS NETWORK PEER SUPPORT & EDUCATION GROUPS

FLETCHER GROUP

First Tuesdays, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Fletcher 7th Day Adventist Church

Howard Gap Road and Naples Road, Fletcher, N.C.
(just past Park Ridge Hospital)

NEW HOPE GROUP

Third Tuesdays, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

New Hope Presbyterian Church

3070 Sweeten Creek Road, Asheville, N.C. 28803
(across from Givens Estates)

NORTH ASHEVILLE GROUP

Fourth Tuesdays, 1:00-3:00pm

NEW LOCATION!

Newbridge Baptist Church

199 Elkwood Avenue and Merrimon Avenue, Asheville NC, 28804
(enter at glass doors adjacent to the gym)

Network meetings are open to the public.

*The Network relies on charitable support to keep its program going.
To make a donation, [CLICK HERE](#)*

For more information about the MemoryCaregivers Network, contact:

Mary Donnelly

Pat Hilgendorf

"CAREGIVER COLLEGE"



MemoryCare's ongoing educational series for caregivers

A series of six lectures will be provided for anyone caring for a person with a memory disorder. The program is taught by one of the MemoryCare physicians, and is designed to improve caregiver understanding of different aspects of dementia care. Related presentation materials will be provided.

There is no cost for families who are enrolled in MemoryCare. For those not enrolled, the cost is \$180 for the 6-part series. Scholarship funds are available, contact MemoryCare for more information on fee waivers.

Course Content:

What Is Dementia?

Transitioning from Independence to Interdependence

Functional and Behavioral Changes of Dementia

Dementia Treatment Options & Risk Reduction

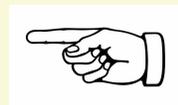
Caring for the Caregiver

Dementia and Legal Planning Issues



***The next ASHEVILLE session of Caregiver College
begins on Thursday, March 14, 2019
and continues on consecutive Thursdays through April 18
2:00 - 5:00pm
at the SECU Center for MemoryCare
on the campus of Givens Estates***

***The next WAYNESVILLE session begins on
Monday, April 1, 2019
and continues on consecutive Mondays through May 6
3:30 - 6:00pm
at Maple Leaf Adult Care Center
63 Elmwood Way, Waynesville***



Do you need a program for a group event?

The MemoryCaregivers Network staff presents on a variety of subjects, including Recognizing Early Warning Signs of Memory Loss, Facts and Fiction about Dementia, Better Communication Techniques, and more.

We are happy to speak at your event to raise awareness and knowledge about Dementia.

Contact Mary Donnelly at network@memorycare.org

To see a list of
OTHER COMMUNITY RESOURCES
for those living with dementia and their care partners,
[CLICK HERE](#)

Caregiver Network News and *The MemoryCaregivers Network* are auxiliary programs of



We rely on charitable donations to continue these programs!

*Please consider donating...
perhaps in honor of a loved one's birthday...
or a memorial...
or a sustaining gift to support families like yours
who depend on the services that MemoryCare provides!*

Make a difference. Make a donation.

[Click here to donate.](#)

For more information about MemoryCare, click this link to visit our website:
www.MemoryCare.org

Thank you for your interest and support!

MemoryCare is a charitable non-profit organization whose mission is three-fold:
To provide specialized medical care to older adults with cognitive impairment;
to support caregivers with education, counseling, and improved access to services; and to provide community
education.

Caregiver Network News is written and edited by Mary Donnelly.
Contact network@memorycare.org for more information.

[Click Here](#) to subscribe to *Caregiver Network News*.

[Click Here](#)
to access our archives and read previous issues.

*MemoryCare is a 501(c)3 public charity as determined by the Internal Revenue Service,
Federal Tax ID: 56-2178294.
Financial information about this organization and a copy of its license are available from the
Charitable Solicitation Licensing Section at 919-814-5400.
The license is not an endorsement by the State.*

