



# Caregiver Network News

A newsletter for caregivers of loved ones with dementia

## The Problem of Alzheimer's



Friday, September 24 2:00  
- 3:30 pm

[Register Now!](#)

Join us for a special discussion with author of "The Problem of Alzheimer's," Dr. Jason Karlawish as interviewed by MemoryCare Founder, Dr. Margaret Noel.

"The Problem of Alzheimer's" is a definitive and compelling book that traces the disease from its beginnings to its recognition as a crisis. Dr. Karlawish is an internationally recognized speaker, dementia expert, geriatrician, bioethicist, researcher, writer, and professor at the University of Pennsylvania.

*"The Problem of Alzheimer's" may be purchased from local bookseller, **Malaprop's**, for a 10% discount! Either enter the coupon code "MEMORYCARE" when purchasing online or request the Book Club discount in-store.*

## Caregiver Anger

By Corkie Morrill

You know it's a problem when you answer through clenched teeth a question that's been asked for the 5th time in the past hour...and the day is just beginning! Whether the person with dementia is your spouse, someone you took an oath to care for "in sickness and in health", or a parent who took care of you in childhood, the roles are basically the same. The behaviors causing the anger are basically the same. Anger is anger. Try as you may to distract your loved one onto another focus of attention, your loved one is bulldog locked in, or, as we say, clinically "fixated" on this one



question and won't let it go. It is like a needle being stuck on a record, playing over and over again. What to do? Your anger is rising. It is becoming difficult to contain or divert. A common expression pretty well covers it: it's "getting on your last nerve."



What is anger when experienced in the context of being the caretaker of a dementia patient? It is the consequence of accumulated, pent up frustrations, annoyances, irritations, resentments, and strong feelings of displeasure, even rage. Anger is a feeling that in a normal life situation you deal with in a healthy way. In the case of normal interpersonal anger, one has a discussion with the other person and with hope comes to a positive conclusion. However, in the case of

copied with a loved one with dementia, logical dialogue may not be possible. You know it is the disease that is causing the behavior and that you shouldn't take your rage out on the person. Sometimes, especially when you are tired, it is difficult to contain/divert the rage. You explode and then you feel guilty. It can be a vicious circle.

In a recent caregivers' support group meeting, several members expressed how they experience anger with regard to dealing with their loved one's short-term memory decay. They talked about a number of facets to their own anger as caregivers. The following are excerpts from that discussion:

- Anger is a knee jerk reaction to a repetitive behavior by the loved one who can't let it go. It is a spontaneous reaction on top of relentless frustration and disappointment that is always there. Feelings of guilt often follow this form of anger.
- Anger is experienced as a part of frustration over the situation, knowing that the caregiver is slowly losing their loved one.
- Anger is an expression of exasperation secondary to 24/7 care which often is without help. It arises more easily as a result of sleep deprivation. This was especially true during COVID 19 pre-vaccines when helpers were reluctant to come into the home.
- Anger is an expression of grieving in a situation that is only getting worse.
- Anger is experienced as a disappointment over not being able to realize long-held dreams and plans for the future as a couple. (Dementia is not what we signed up for. It's just not fair!)
- Anger results from knowing what the patient was capable of doing in prior years. It is the realization that the patient no longer can do those things. This anger is directed at the disease and may be mixed with feelings of helplessness and frustration over one's inability to "fix the problem."
- Anger may be the acceptance that one cannot say about a situation, as in a more normal life, "this too shall pass." It will not pass. It is a constant in a disease that is on a progressive path downward.
- Anger is experienced by the loss of being able to share, in a meaningful way, the common interests the couple or parent/adult child had formerly. Finally, it results from the inability to even have a meaningful dialogue.



### Coping Strategies to Prevent Caregiver Burnout

"Caregiver Burnout" is real and must be avoided at all costs. We often say that, if you don't take care of yourself, the result will be two patients, not one. It is imperative for the

caregiver to take care of himself/herself first. This sounds unrealistic when you are in the midst of 24/7 care with no one to help. It also sounds selfish but isn't. One of the oft repeated stories in the aforementioned group meeting was that anger is more difficult to contain/redirect when one is tired. With being tired comes reduced patience. What to do? The following are suggestions, good suggestions, that can be adapted to your situation and needs:

1. Join a caregivers' support group!
2. Develop patience. If you don't have it, you will need it! It takes practice.
3. Hire in-home assistance to allow you the time to do the things you enjoy doing.
4. "Think twice, say nothing."
5. Take advantage of adult day programs 1-5 days a week.
6. Appeal to friends who have offered help. Examples of things they might do: going on a drive, taking a picnic to a nearby lake, going for a walk at the Arboretum, or taking your loved one out to lunch or to get ice cream.
7. In a situation where you find your anger is rising, leave the room and take deep, slow breaths while counting backward slowly from 10.
8. Get as much sleep as you can. You could even use the time while your loved one is being cared for by someone else to take a nap.
9. Try meditation in a quiet space--even 5 minutes helps.
10. Everyone needs a break. Take advantage of respite care or have a family member, friend, professional home aide, or all three, come for a few days to enable you to get away.
11. Listen to your favorite music.
12. Work on Sudoku or a crossword puzzle or do whatever activity relaxes you.



Elizabeth Kubler-Ross lists anger as the second of her five stages of grief. She talks about the fact that, when caring for a loved one who is diagnosed with an Alzheimer's or other dementia, it is important to realize that you, the caregiver, are grieving the slow, progressive loss of your loved one. She or he, through no fault of her/his own, is leaving you slowly while being stripped of all of the qualities that made them the person you love. She or he is still here in body, but they are not fully here. How cruel! It is perfectly normal to be angry. Your life's companion or parent is leaving you. So as not to be consumed by or angered by this fact or the behaviors caused by your loved one's disease, it is important to release it - not, as a group member said, "stuff it." Stuffing it only leads to further stress and possibly to depression.



Perhaps most important, it is imperative that you take care of yourself as caregiver. You cannot deal with anger in a healthy way or have the required patience if you don't take care of yourself first!

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*Guest author Florence M. "Corkie" Morrill, PsyD, is a psychologist with a focus on geropsychology and health psychology. Before retiring in 2014, Corkie worked with adults of all ages, in particular with caregivers of people diagnosed with dementia.*



Ongoing Programs  
and Events

**MEMORYCAREGIVERS NETWORK**

Peer Support & Education Groups

During the COVID-19 pandemic, all MemoryCaregiver Network support groups are being held online only (via Zoom) every 1st, 3rd, and 4th Tuesday from 1:00-3:00pm.

Participants will receive a link via email the day before each meeting.

If you are not currently attending a MemoryCaregivers support group, please email [network@memorycare.org](mailto:network@memorycare.org) to join the mailing list. If you do not use email but would like to talk with a support facilitator, please call Mary Donnelly at 828.230.4143.

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  
828.230.4143  
[network@memorycare.org](mailto:network@memorycare.org)

Pat Hilgendorf  
828.301.0740  
[patricia.hilgendorf@gmail.com](mailto:patricia.hilgendorf@gmail.com)

*(Mary and Pat are available on the 2nd Tuesday of every month as well.*

*Contact Mary for additional information if interested in participating)*



## Caregiver College

### 2021 Course Schedule

*Thursdays from 2:00-5:00 pm*

#### Fall

Oct 7 to Nov 11

#### Winter

Jan 13 to Feb 17 (2022)

A series of six lectures will be provided for caregivers of persons with memory disorders. Sessions are designed to improve caregiver understanding of different aspects of dementia care. The course is led by MemoryCare staff members and attorney Caroline Knox.

Until further notice, Caregiver College will be provided as a **live-broadcast for online attendance only**. The ability to access Zoom through a computer, tablet or smartphone with a reliable internet connection is necessary to attend. *If you are unable to attend virtually, please contact us to be placed on a communications list for the next in-person attendance opportunity. Related course materials will be provided via email.*

## MemoryCare Educational Series

Join us to learn more about caring for your loved one and yourself. Courses are free and open to the public and will be presented as a [live online broadcast via Zoom](#). **Click on the corresponding course date for more information and to register.** *You must register for each individual session you would like to attend.*

September 9

2-3:30 pm

**Book Club: My Dad My Dog**

*Presented by  
Rebecca Warner*

Her Alzheimer's-afflicted dad, her elderly dog...as their caregiver, Rachel knows they need her. But do they need each other, too? Join us for a discussion with Asheville author, Rebecca Warner, on her newest novel.

September 16

2-3:30 pm

**Community Resources for Caregivers**

*Speakers TBD*

Join us for a discussion with several community-based (Buncombe County) programs to learn about the invaluable resources they offer caregivers of those who have a loved one affected by dementia

September 24

2-3:30 pm

**The Problem of Alzheimer's**

*Presented by  
Dr. Jason Karlawish*

A discussion with Dr. Jason Karlawish, internationally recognized speaker and author of "The Problem of Alzheimer's," a definitive and compelling book that traces the disease from its beginnings to its recognition as a crisis, as interviewed by Dr. Margaret Noel, MemoryCare Founder



## Move for Memory

**Now EXTENDED through December 16th!!!**

Join us for MemoryCare's Adult Exercise Program, led by Dr. Tiffany Salido! **Classes have been extended through October!** (if you were previously registered, you must re-register to attend these new sessions)

**Classes are free and open to the public and will be provided weekly through Zoom for online attendance** (choose which day(s) of the week to attend below).

This class is intended for people with memory impairment to participate *with* their caregiver in fun and simple exercises. The exercises incorporate movements that can improve daily activities and general mobility. Group exercise will be approximately 40 minutes, followed by a time to answer questions. Exercises can be performed standing or

seated.

***"Whether sitting or standing, my wife and I get exercise, have fun, sing along and drink our water. Tiffany is a Godsend!"***

- Move for Memory Participant



**Tiffany Salido,  
Olive, and Angus**

***Please note you will be required read and acknowledge a disclaimer when registering to join. The ability to access Zoom through a computer, tablet or smartphone with a reliable internet connection is necessary to attend. Email [education@memorycare.org](mailto:education@memorycare.org) or call 828-771-2219 with questions.***

**Mondays**  
9:30 - 10:30 am  
through December 13

**Register for Mondays**

**Thursdays**  
9:30 - 10:30 am  
through December 16

**Register for Thursdays**



## 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](mailto:network@memorycare.org)

To see a list of  
**OTHER COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

**CLICK HERE**

Caregiver Network News and The MemoryCaregivers Network are auxiliary programs of



Caregiver Network News is written and compiled by Mary Donnelly.  
Contact [network@memorycare.org](mailto:network@memorycare.org) for more information.



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.

**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.**  
Thank you for your interest and support!

[Donate Now](#)

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