

BAI BEACON

*The Newsletter from Family and Community Services
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Men as Caregivers

When most people hear the word “caregiver,” a woman usually comes to mind as the tasks of “caregiving” are often associated with the female gender. However, men are taking on caregiver roles in increasing numbers. About 45% of husbands provide care for wives with dementia while another 30% of sons are also involved in caregiving efforts. It is not uncommon to see brothers, in-laws and grandsons also providing care. However, most male caregivers say they feel unprepared to step into this role.

Bottom Line:

Men are more task oriented and seek to solve problems therefore will benefit from practical strategies. Since most caregiving takes place among families and friends, the following strategies can be used to support men in their expanding caregiver roles.

During the initial symptoms of Alzheimer's disease/dementia, men are less likely to notice changes in their wives or to act upon the changes that are seen. Often times it is other family members or friends that bring attention to these changes, thus leading to the diagnosis. In contrast, women are more likely to recognize cognitive changes in their husbands and pursue diagnosis earlier. The difference may be that women have been more proactive in managing the family's health concerns having scheduled and facilitated their children's care in previous years.

Bottom Line:

Men will benefit from input from family members and friends about changes they are observing in the person's memory and thinking abilities. They will also benefit from suggestions toward obtaining a diagnosis from a dementia specialist or your assistance in facilitating this important medical appointment.

In the mild stage of Alzheimer's disease/dementia, men will find themselves assisting in household tasks such as cooking, cleaning, laundry, and shopping. While these tasks may have been very familiar to women, for many men these are new tasks that must be learned. In addition men must balance the affected woman's desire to try to participate in these household chores that can still provide meaning to her. Men should allow their wives/moms to participate as they are able but must reset their own expectations as to how much she is able to assist in a given chore and not be critical if the outcome is less than expected. Most men report that cooking can be one of the hardest chores to master.

Bottom Line:

Men will benefit from some simple recipes from family and friends to put into a weekly schedule. A home cooked (and delivered) meal or a gift card is also a welcomed gift from family and friends. Men will also appreciate suggestions for an occasional cleaning service which can be an ideal way to introduce an eventual paid caregiver (companion) into the home.

Moderate Alzheimer's disease/dementia brings added challenges of having to assist with personal care that initially includes grooming tasks (hair and makeup), followed by assistance with dressing and bathing. When incontinence presents, purchasing and assisting with adult briefs adds another layer of complexity. Learning this type of “hands on” care is often much more difficult for male than female caregivers. Visiting the hairdresser weekly and getting a more manageable haircut or perm can assist with daily care. Simplifying make up products will also ease the daily routine while getting some basic hints from the woman's daughter(s), granddaughter(s) or friend(s) on how to apply makeup. Over time, the woman will have more difficulty coordinating

Our Mission

To end Alzheimer's disease without losing a generation, to set a new standard of care for patients and their families, and to forge a model of collaboration in biomedical research.

clothing and the male caregiver will need to assist in both selection and assistance with dressing. Cleaning out the closet to rid of clothing that does not fit or is no longer needed will help reduce confusion in daily dressing. Putting matching clothing together in the closet or drawer will also allow the person to select clothing a bit more independently. As new clothes are purchased, avoiding buttons and zippers will also ease the dressing process.

Bottom Line:

Men will benefit from other women in their lives helping them to learn how to assist the affected person in grooming and dressing. A daughter, granddaughter, or friend can help guide the man in learning these new tasks and assist in ridding the closet and drawers of unneeded clothing and footwear. They can also assist in purchasing new clothing and shoes that are comfortable and easy to put on.

Bathing can be a very frightening and overwhelming experience for many people with dementia, therefore simplifying the process is essential. Purchasing a combined body wash/shampoo and getting rid of other bathing products in the shower will minimize confusion. Some husbands do best in bathing their wives by showering with them. Hiring a “bath aide” through a home care company to provide a weekly bath/shower can be a huge relief. And, a “spit bath” at the sink is often enough to keep the woman clean during the week. It is essential that the bath/shower not be a battle and easing the old habit of a daily bath/shower may need to change if it brings discomfort/distress to the person and consequently the man who may need to give it.

Bottom Line:

Men will need suggestions from family and friends if they hear that bathing becomes an issue. Offer practical suggestions to simplify bathing from the frequency of bathing to the types of products used. (*Refer to the July 2010 Beacon – Bathing without a Battle for more detailed suggestions.*) Research getting a “bath aide” through a home care company and provide that information to the caregiver.

Incontinence is an embarrassing issue that most caregivers avoid talking about; but it is an inevitable part of a progressive dementia. Incontinence is often a primary reason that families will seek residential care. Keeping the person well hydrated and on a toileting routine (for example, toileting every 2 – 3 hours) will minimize incontinence episodes. Male caregivers should encourage as much fluid intake as possible. Since water is rarely the chosen fluid, encouraging juices, non-caffeinated beverages and ice cream shakes throughout the day can often provide enough fluid. Using smaller glasses (4-6 oz.) is generally more successful in getting the person to drink fluid as the larger size glass can be overwhelming. Finding an incontinence product that provides protection and is easy to use will also be important. A pull up brief is likely to be most successful and can be readily found in most

grocery stores, pharmacies and big box stores. For nighttime incontinence and minimizing laundry from soiled sheets, disposable or washable underpads will be very beneficial.

Bottom Line:

Men will benefit from using very basic strategies of offering frequent and small amounts of fluids throughout the day and taking the person to the toilet every couple of hours. Finding incontinence products that are easy to use and minimize additional laundry will greatly benefit the caregiver.



Men learn to become very competent in their caregiving roles. However, men typically don't have the same tight social networks as women and are less likely to ask for advice or help from family and friends. Husbands have often relied on their wives to create a social network beyond the home. So, when the wife's dementia progresses, the husband can become very isolated from both family and friends. While men don't report the same emotional burden as women, the role of caregiver can take its toll. Men are likely to experience high blood pressure, arthritis and high cholesterol and as many as 25% of men will report depression.

Bottom Line:

Men need emotional support as much as women do and can benefit from connecting with other caregivers in an online support group, all male support group, and through helplines, books and websites. Family and friends should encourage their male caregiver to share his feelings and acknowledge to them that stress, anger and frustration are common feelings among caregivers.

Finally, studies show that men don't get the help they need from family and friends – largely because they don't ask. Men often start looking for professional help after a trigger event such as a hospitalization, fall or injury whereas women usually look for help after experiencing “burnout.”

Bottom Line:

Men need need help in their caregiving roles and aren't likely to ask. Therefore, family and friends should ask for very practical suggestions as to how they can help. Getting the man to accept help through having the affected woman attend Adult Day Health Care or having a home companion can give the man the time needed to care for his own needs.

A task-oriented, problem-solving approach to caregiving can be very helpful for male caregivers. Family and friends can play a key role in assisting their men to find success in their roles as caregivers. Encouraging men to take part of a support group can also help them explore the emotions that arise during caregiving. "Men Who Care" is a men's only group that meets the first Wednesday of each month at Banner Alzheimer's Institute Community Library from 7:30 - 9:00a.m. We invite men to join in this dynamic discussion. For more on this topic, we invite you to register for the June 17 Dementia Dialogue Webinar and learn more about "Men as Caregivers" from a husband, son and son-in-law who are caring for the special people in their lives. To register, call 623-832-3248 or visit www.banneralz/dementiadialogues.



Ask The Expert

Heather Mulder
Outreach Program Manager

Dear Heather:

My wife and I have always enjoyed eating out several times per week. However, this once favorite activity is now becoming a challenge as my wife is struggling to read the menu or make a decision. When I order for her, she gets really angry with me. This seems to be one of the few things that we still enjoy to do together, so I hate to stop taking her out - but the anxiety of it all is killing me. What suggestions could you offer to make this easier for both of us?

Signed:
Jim

Dear Jim:

Eating out is a common topic during many of our support groups as many family members experience their person with dementia struggling to make a decision or to read the menu. I am going to provide you with the "sage" advice that I have received from many of our caregivers.

- Choose a restaurant early in the day and print out the menu for your wife to read over. Discuss items on the menu with her so that making a decision will be easier when you visit the restaurant.
- Choose a restaurant that has a menu with pictures on it. When she no longer remembers what an item means when she reads it, a picture might cue her to order that particular item.
- When you are at the restaurant, ask her if she would be willing to share some dishes with you or ask her if you might surprise her with your selections (knowing that you will order her favorite dishes).
- Order take out on the days that you expect she might be more argumentative.
- If she chooses the "daily special" and you don't think she will like it; order what you think she would enjoy and be prepared to eat the special (letting the wait staff know)!
- Frequent restaurants that she is most familiar with along with a waiter/waitress who knows her favorites.
- If she becomes more impatient waiting on her food, consider ordering the food before you go and when you arrive, have it served immediately.
- Make sure you are going out to eat during her best time of the day. Avoid excessively loud or cold places as this will decrease her tolerance even more. Ask for a booth in the back away from any commotion.

I hope that these suggestions will provide you with a few new ideas to incorporate so that you and your wife can continue to enjoy your meals away from home.

Have a Question?

To submit your question for future consideration email us at:
baiinfo@bannerhealth.com



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CLINICAL TRIALS ANNOUNCEMENT

Are you feeling more forgetful? Having a hard time recalling recent events? It could be more than simply forgetting. More than 35 million people worldwide have Alzheimer's disease. You may even know someone who has it and are worried that you could get it too. Prodromal Alzheimer's disease is the very early stage of the disease when minor symptoms first appear. A person in this early stage may have more memory problems than normal for their age, but are still able to carry out most daily activities. If you have noticed changes in you or your loved one's memory over the last year and are wondering if it is a normal part of aging or if it is something more serious, you or your loved one may be interested in the APECS study. The APECS Study is evaluating an oral investigational medication that may help slow down the progression of what could be very early Alzheimer's disease.

Why participate? You may find out if your forgetfulness is due to very early Alzheimer's disease. All study-related medication and medical tests will be provided at no cost. Your health will be monitored through the study by a team of medical experts. You may be compensated for time

and travel. You will help advance medical research for Alzheimer's disease.

To participate, you must be between 50 and 85 years of age; have had memory problems for at least one year; have someone in your life that can attend study visits with you and help you follow study requirements. To learn more call 602-839-6500 and talk with a clinical trials representative.

Did you know that a gift to Banner Alzheimer's Foundation will help us go further in achieving our mission than we ever could alone? To support the work of the Foundation, call 602-747-GIVE (4483) or visit www.banneralz.org/waystogive.



June 2015 Program Schedule

CAREGIVER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

MESA

Keeping the Person with Dementia Occupied

Learn how to adapt activities as the disease progresses and how to find a variety of stimulating and engaging activities that work in order for the person to have fun and feel success.

Tuesday, June 16; 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

*Mesa Library Red Mountain Branch
635 N. Power Road, Mesa*

Free but registration is required.

To register, call (602) 839-6850

PHOENIX

Keeping the Person with Dementia Occupied

Learn how to adapt activities as the disease progresses and how to find a variety of stimulating and engaging activities that work in order for the person to have fun and feel success.

Tuesday, June 2; 12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

*Banner Alzheimer's Institute
901 E. Willetta Street, Phoenix*

Free but registration is required.

To register, call (602) 839-6850

Planning Ahead Class for Caregivers

Learn how to plan for legal, financial and medical decisions for someone with Alzheimer's disease/related dementia.

Tuesday, June 9; 10:00 a.m. - Noon

*Banner Alzheimer's Institute
901 E. Willetta Street, Phoenix*

Free but registration is required.

To register, call 602-839-6850

PHOENIX (CON'T)

COMPASS: Directions for Caregivers after the Dementia Diagnosis

Learn the basics of Alzheimer's disease/related dementia and how to implement 8 practical strategies to avoid many of the common problems that arise.

Wednesday, June 10; 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

*Banner Alzheimer's Institute
901 E. Willetta Street, Phoenix*

Free but registration is required.

To register, call 602-839-6850

GPS Lecture for Caregiving: Try This, Not That: Solutions for Common Behaviors in Dementia

Learn strategies that are likely to minimize, if not eliminate, common behavior problems.

Friday, June 19, 10:30 a.m. – noon

*Musical Instrument Museum
4725 E. Mayo Blvd., Phoenix*

Free but registration is required.

To register, call (602) 230-CARE (2273)

Caregiver FOCUS: Aromatherapy

Join certified aromatherapist Beckie Rhodes, RN as she provides practical suggestions to use essential oils to manage stress and anxiety and promote better sleep in caregivers.

Thursday, June 18; 12:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

*Banner Alzheimer's Institute
901 E. Willetta Street, Phoenix*

Free but registration is required.

To register, call (602) 839-6850

Please turn over for more classes →

These programs are made possible by the generous support of the Banner Alzheimer's Foundation.

June 2015 Program Schedule

CAREGIVER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

SUN CITY

Brain G.Y.M. (Grow Your Mind)

Learn how lifestyle choices can minimize the risk of Alzheimer's disease and then "flex" your cognitive muscles as you determine how to exercise your brain.

Friday, June 5; 9:30 a.m. - noon

Banner Alzheimer's Institute

901 E. Willetta Street, Phoenix

Free but registration is required.

To register, call (602) 230-CARE (2273)

Brain G.Y.M. (Grow Your Mind)

Learn how lifestyle choices can minimize the risk of Alzheimer's disease and then "flex" your cognitive muscles as you determine how to exercise your brain.

Monday, June 8; 2:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Banner Boswell - Juniper Room

13180 North 103rd Drive, Sun City

Free but registration is required.

To register, call (602) 230-CARE (2273)

BSHRI Community Lecture Series

Legal Considerations for Long Term Care

This presentation covers capacity vs competency, when the agent under power of attorney has the right to "jump in" and the legal tools needed to make this process smoother.

Wednesday, June 10; 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Banner Sun Health Research Institute

10515 W. Santa Fe Drive, Sun City

Free but registration is required.

To register, call (623)832-3248

To learn about upcoming education and support programs dates at:

- Banner Alzheimer's Institute, visit www.banneralz.org and click on "Events Calendar" icon or call Deidra Colvin, Events Coordinator at 602-839-6850
- Banner Sun Health Research Institute, visit www.bannershri.org and click on "Events and Education" or call Veronica Flores, Events Coordinator at 623-832-3248

SUN CITY (CON'T)

BSHRI Community Lecture Series ***Life Enrichment and Respite***

This lecture will inform you on what life enrichment programs are available to you and how important it is for caregivers to utilize respite care.

Friday, June 26; 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Banner Sun Health Research Institute

10515 W. Santa Fe Drive, Sun City

Free but registration is required.

To register, call (623)832-3248

WEBINAR

Dementia Dialogues: Men as Caregivers

While 2/3 of Alzheimer's caregivers are women, that still leaves 1/3 who are men. Even though it is an unusual role for a male to take on, many men are finding themselves caring for their wife or mother with dementia. It turns out, some stereotypical male qualities can come in quite handy for caregivers of someone with dementia. Join this frank discussion to learn strategies from some successful male caregivers.

Wednesday, June 17; 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. MST

(AZ Time). Free webinar but registration is required online at www.bannershri.org under event/education and online education.

