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Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2016

Stress, a By-Product of Alzheimer's Disease

November is National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month. We are seeing lots of information on promoting awareness, raising funds for research and getting a good diagnosis both online and in the news. But the result of all this media coverage is an underlying stress – not just for those dealing with the illness (both patients and care providers), but those who wonder, “Will I be the next victim?” every time they forget a name.

That stress of the “what if I get it” worry is a valid one. Almost 50% of Americans who live to be 85 will be affected by Alzheimer's Disease. That stress is increased for people with a family history of this illness.

If you or a loved one receive a diagnosis of Alzheimer's Disease it may cause you to feel angry, and this anger can then turn to depression. The key is to reduce some of the stress of the diagnosis.

One of the ways you can reduce the adverse effects of this stress is by proactively making lifestyle changes. It has been proven that some of these changes can

reduce or slow some of the effects of the disease. It is recommended to get daily exercise, make changes to your diet (The Mind Diet), and stay connected to positive activities that were enjoyed before the diagnosis for as long as possible. Joining an early stage support group can help normalize feelings – contact your local Alzheimer's Association for meeting locations.

Another way to involve the person with the illness is to have them participate in making a care plan. Having them help create the legal documents that will be needed is a good first step. This allows them to make sure their wishes and values are accommodated and lets them participate in choosing an advocate who will oversee their wishes.

Research has also shown the benefit of engaging in artistic activities; you may even discover a new talent!

The stress of being a family caregiver is enormous, especially for spouses that have to assume all the



About Our Founder

Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC is a Licensed Family Therapist and Certified Care Manager. She has been practicing professional care management (now called aging life care) since 1984. Linda founded Eldercare Services, a full-service care management and home care company in 1989, which now employs over 200 caring people. Eldercare Services has been providing Bay Area families with care management, home care services (caregiving), advocacy, counseling, support groups and education for 27 years.

MONTHLY AFFIRMATION: *“I can enjoy the moment and let go of all worries.”*

responsibilities of running a household. But, it is also a burden for adult children who are time challenged with work and family obligations. Finding a balance, planning well for the future, becoming educated on behavioral challenges and an emphasis on self-care will be crucial for the family caregiver if they want to preserve their health and oversee the family member with Alzheimer's disease.

Eldercare Services provides a free monthly support group and a series of classes for family caregivers. If you have family out of the area, you can contact the VillagePlan. They can help you find a professional care manager to be your coach and mentor throughout this long journey.

For those of us who care for someone with this illness, we also need to be proactive with a preventive lifestyle to dodge the disease. That means a healthy diet, exercise, social support and "mindfulness activities". Just a little meditation a day can make a big difference in your overall health. At Eldercare Services we hold periodic classes on Brain Health for the community, look for them in our future newsletters.

Worry and stress take a toll on our health in a myriad of ways and stress as well as inflammation could be a precursor to illnesses like heart disease, cancer, and the dementias. If you find yourself becoming a "worry wart," ask your physician for a referral for counseling or call Eldercare Services and make an appointment to see one of our licensed therapists.

Never give up hope. New medications and changes in lifestyles can have positive impacts. "Joy in the Moment" should be the mantra for those with this illness. The ability to enjoy the moment - whether it is holding a newborn baby, smelling a rose or the pleasure of a walk in a pine forest - these unique or ordinary moments can last the entire disease process. You might not remember the joy of yesterday or have the pleasure of looking forward to a joyful event, but you will always have the moment!

Be well, reduce stress in every way you can, enjoy the moment, and let go of the "what if ____ happens." If you have done good legal planning and have chosen an advocate that can take over and assure life happens your way, you can let go of worry/stress!

Upcoming Events

Life-Enhancing Activities for those with Alzheimer's/Dementia Living at Home

FRIDAY NOV. 18th, 2016 • 2:00PM-3:30PM

Understanding the value and benefit of engaging in meaningful stimulating and social activities.

- Learn how to adapt activities when cognition and physical changes occur
- Hands on demonstrations of specific physical activities designed to help alleviate some behavior changes associated with dementia
- Creating moments of joy

**No fee, but advanced registration is required. Visit EldercareAnswers.com for registration information.*

Positive Aging

FRIDAY DEC. 16th, 2016 • 2:00PM-3:30PM

Aging is a journey. As we walk the path of aging, how can we inject new ideas for positive, hopeful, expansive and intriguing lives?

- Where does your joy come from?
- What are you grateful for?
- Would you like to impact the lives of others?
- Finding balance - learning to be more optimistic.

**No fee, but advanced registration is required. Visit EldercareAnswers.com for registration information.*

Location of Events:

Eldercare Services, 1808 Tice Valley Blvd.,
Walnut Creek, CA 94595

TO REGISTER

Call: **866.760.1808** or

Email: info@EldercareAnswers.com