



**Alzheimer's &  
Dementia Services**  
of Memphis, Inc.

# CareLines

WWW.ADSMEMPHIS.ORG

OCTOBER 2020

## ADS ONLINE SUPPORT GROUPS FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER

General Support Group  
**Tuesday, Oct. 6, 10:30**

Spousal Support Group  
**Wednesday, Oct. 14, 2:30**

General Support Group  
**Thursday, Oct. 22, 12:30**

General Support Group  
**Tuesday, Oct. 27, 4:30**

**Join meetings from your  
computer, tablet or  
smartphone.**

[https://global.gotomeeting.com/  
join/303620541](https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/303620541)

**You can also dial in using  
your phone.**

US: +1 (872) 240-3212  
Access Code: 303-620-541

For questions, please call Adina  
**901-372-4585**

or email:

[asamberg@adsmemphis.org](mailto:asamberg@adsmemphis.org)

CareLines is partially supported by  
the Aging Commission  
of the Mid-South.

The Aging Commission  
of the Mid-South  
and Alzheimer's &  
Dementia Services  
are thrilled to present a



### Free Live Webinar with Teepa Snow

*A Caregiver's Journey: Creative and  
Practical Tips for Getting Through the Day*

Tuesday, November 10, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Teepa Snow is a world renowned dementia care expert. She teaches about the value of connection when verbal communication and interaction abilities are altered. Her teaching style is extraordinarily unique. She demonstrates and models for her audience the struggle and challenges dementia creates for all parties involved. Teepa and her company, Positive Approach to Care®, focus on person-centered care and support of those living with changing abilities. She is enlightening, witty, entertaining and energetic!

We hope you will grab the opportunity to join Teepa as she provides knowledge, compassion and action steps for people living with dementia and those who walk with them in their journey. If you have seen Teepa before you will definitely want to see and learn from her again! If you have not seen her yet, here's your chance... **DON'T MISS IT!**

Please see the enclosed forms to complete  
and submit for registration.

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## How to Tell If You Have Early Stage Dementia

If you are a caregiver for someone with dementia, it's natural to ask yourself sometimes whether you yourself may have some dementia. This worry is compounded in people who have early onset Alzheimer's in their families. After all, who hasn't forgotten keys, messed up a checkbook or even neglected to pay a bill?

Don't panic. Stress can be a huge cause of memory problems, as can medications, infections and sleep deprivation. So it's important to take a realistic look at your situation.

### Check for changes in behavior

If you always mess up when you balance your checkbook, you probably shouldn't be too concerned if you do it again. However, if you are an accountant and the numbers no longer make sense, then it's time to consider a checkup.

The same thing goes for activities like cooking. If you are a casual cook but your meals aren't as tasty as usual, it's probably just because you are rushing and not paying attention. Maybe you're tired or distracted by your care receiver's health. But if cooking is your major form of relaxation, and you find creative joy in making meals, yet are habitually messing them up, you may want to question why. Getting lost driving home from a familiar place? Not good.

But if you just flake out and make a wrong turn because you are preoccupied, it's probably okay. However, if you are driving home from a familiar store and can't remember how to get from point A to point B, it's probably time to see a doctor.

If you do have symptoms that bother you, see a doctor, for your care receiver's sake as well as your own. If your mother has Alzheimer's, you can't properly care for her if you can't keep her medications straight.

But make sure your doctor is aware of your stress level as a caregiver, **since stress could be behind your feeling that you may be "losing it."**

Other possible causes may be:

--**New medications.** These can cause confusion in your mind as well as your body.

--**Medication interactions.** Even if you have taken the same medications for years, your body changes over time.

--**Emotional and physical stress.** The stress could be from caregiving or something else that is bothering you.

--**Infections.** You may not be aware that you have developed a new infection that is distracting you.

(continued on page 3)

## How to Tell if You Have Early Stage Dementia (continued from Page 2)

--**Sleep deprivation.** Sleep deprivation can cause a host of problems, and many caregivers – especially those who have elders with Alzheimer's – find that they get no more than an hour or two of uninterrupted sleep at a time.

### After the doctor's visit.

Maybe your doctor will discover a treatable situation and you can stop worrying. However, if you do have early signs of dementia, the sooner it's discovered the better, so you can take steps to live the best quality of life possible. That, of course, includes getting more help for your care receiver.

You shouldn't neglect your own care either. Getting a dementia diagnosis is devastating, so ask your doctor for the name of a therapist who can help you cope, and also for advice on how to break the news to your family. Take time to investigate facilities that might handle your care as your disease progresses.

*Adapted from newsletter@agingcare.com, July 30, 2011 by Carol Bradley Bursack.*



Alzheimer's &  
Dementia Services  
of Memphis, Inc.

*Be sure to see the insert with the registration for the  
ADS Teepa Snow Webinar  
to be held Tuesday, November 10, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
You won't want to miss it!*



## Medicare Open Enrollment Oct. 15th - Dec. 7th

Medicare beneficiaries can sign up, or make changes to their plans.

For more information please contact the  
Aging Commission of the Mid South **222-4100**,  
or go to [www.medicare.gov/find-a-plan](http://www.medicare.gov/find-a-plan).

*Dear Allison (I Listen),*

*I am not able to join the ADS Online Support Group meeting while I am at work. I have a couple of questions if you are able to assist. I have started having problems getting my mom to bathe, and sometimes change her clothes — she gets defensive and a bit angry when asked.*

*Signed, Frustrated Caregiver*

*Dear Frustrated Caregiver,*

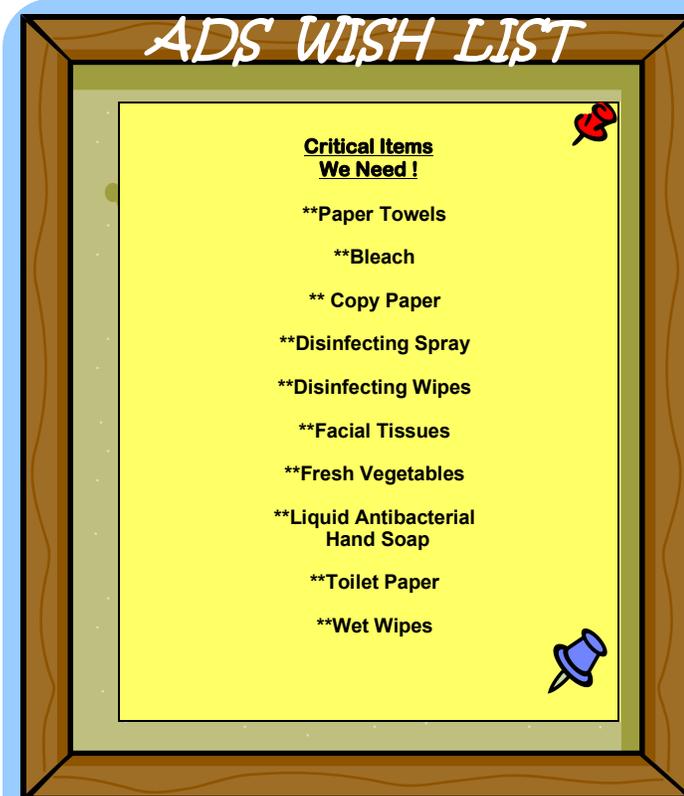
*Bathing and getting someone with dementia to change clothes are both very common and challenging issues for caregivers.*

*One of the main reasons that these are likely struggles is because it deals with a person's privacy and dignity. It helps to be mindful and sensitive to her dignity as much as possible. Also, keep in mind that she is an adult, and she is your mother — you are not supposed to be the one to tell her what to do. I will share a few brief tips here.*

- ♦ *“Pick your battles.” Although bathing can be very important for cleanliness and health, it does not necessarily have to be done daily if it's a battle. It may also be ok for her to wear her clothes two days in a row, if that's what she wants (not worth an argument).*
- ♦ *Do your best to approach bathing and changing clothes very matter of factly. “C'mon, Mom, let's go freshen up so we can go out shopping.” (It's ok to use therapeutic fibs in order to do what's best for your loved one — and for you.) Try to make bathing part of a routine, make the bathroom comfortable and inviting. It is often helpful to use a shower chair and hand held shower.*
- ♦ *Re: changing clothes, you may need to try to wash them when she is sleeping. To try to encourage her to wear something different, you may say, “Oh, look at this nice shirt; I bet it will look perfect on you!”*
- ♦ *Just a reminder that it is key not to argue with her, to do your best to agree with her and give her a sense of control and independence as much as possible.*
- ♦ *Look out for articles we share in the CareLines about bathing and changing clothing of a person with dementia. (Contact us if you would like help finding helpful articles; or to discuss further.)*

*Signed,  
Allison*

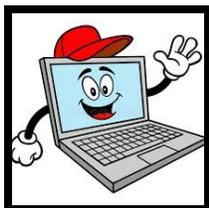
*(Please email letters to “Dear Allison” at [info@adsmemphis.org](mailto:info@adsmemphis.org).)*



## Online and Telephone Support Options for Caregivers.

*For virtual community events and support:*

- ◆ See front page for info about ADS online Support Groups
- ◆ Call 901-372-4585 to talk to an ADS Social Worker on the phone
- ◆ alzfdn.org
- ◆ alztennessee.org  
or call 24/7 Helpline: 800-259-4283



## Tips for the Month of October



- A telephone answering machine can have many advantages. Keep it on even when you are at home. You don't have to answer if you are busy.
  - It's best to have the food prepared and ready to serve before you ask your loved one to sit down to eat.
  - When your loved one seems to forget names and faces, you might want to print the names of family members under the pictures and display them.
  - When you and your loved one leave the house, always take a sweater or jacket for her - especially in the evening or when going to a restaurant.
  - If your loved one won't sit still long enough for a complete meal, consider handing him soft finger foods and sandwiches. He can eat and pace at the same time. Mashed potatoes hold sandwiches together better than slippery mayonnaise. Most liquids can be frozen into popsicles. Use your imagination.
  - Clothes with lots of pockets are great for people with dementia who hoard special possessions or worry about having items such as keys and wallets in a safe place. Pockets can provide a sense of security.
  - Updating wills, getting accounts and credit in your name, and many other financial considerations are in order. Don't delay. Make sure you have good financial counsel and an attorney well versed in elder law.

Adapted from: Lyn Roche, *Coping with Caring*, Elder Books, 1996.

## Dementia and Exercise

A person with Alzheimer's disease gains the same kind of benefits from regular exercise as anyone else, including improved cardiovascular fitness, strength and endurance.



**Exercise can give many health benefits including:**



- improved mood
- better sleep
- reduced likelihood of constipation
- maintenance of motor skills
- reduced risk of falls because of improved strength and balance
- reduced rate of disease-associated mental decline
- improved memory
- better communication and social skills
- improved behavior, such as reduced rate of wandering, swearing and acting aggressively

Exercise is any physical activity that raises the heart rate. Suggestions for activities that don't feel like structured exercise include:

- walking – this is one of the best all-round exercises, and it's free. Walking also helps to work off the restless urge to wander that is typical of Alzheimer's patients. Try combining the walk with a useful errand, such as going to the shop for milk or exercising the dog.
- dancing – senior clubs often include dancing. If the person with dementia doesn't know how to dance, simple dances can be learned and enjoyed.
- gardening – raking and mowing the lawn are good forms of exercise. Make sure you are on hand to help if required.
- housework – such as vacuuming and folding laundry. Most people with Alzheimer's disease can continue to perform certain types of housework if they are supervised.



**Safety issues to be aware of:**

- For outside activities, make sure the person is wearing a medical alert bracelet or pendant, and some kind of identification, in case they wander off and get lost.
- For outdoor activities, make sure the person is sun smart – cover up with clothing and a hat, and apply sunscreen to all exposed areas of their skin.
- Ensure that the person drinks plenty of water before, during and after exercise. If the person complains of feeling dizzy or faint, or says they have any kind of pain, stop the activity and talk to their doctor.

Adapted from: [betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://betterhealth.vic.gov.au)



## Activities at ADS

*Spirit Week in September was loads of fun as "Friends," and staff, came to the centers dressed in funny hats, pajamas designed with polka dots, stars, and silk; sports jerseys and caps. Wacky Tacky day was full of laughs as many wore wild and crazy clothes and hairdos. Friday of Spirit Week really took the cake with balloons and live entertainment!*

*We're looking forward to Fall activities and celebrations in October!*

*Entertainment, courtesy of Creative Aging  
Friday, October 30, 2:00—3:00  
Dorothy's Place: Side Street Steppers  
Kennedy Park: Frank Shaffer Drum Circle*



## Repite Moments

Warm baths are relaxing

Bubble baths are luxurious

Whirlpools are soothing to tired muscles

*"I can pamper myself once in a while with a well-deserved luxury. I am worth it."*

Adapted from: Lyn Roche, *Coping with Caring*, Elder Books, 1996.

## Signs That May Indicate Your Parent Needs Help At Home:

- ✦ Spoiled food that doesn't get thrown away
- ✦ Missing important appointments
- ✦ Unexplained bruising
- ✦ Trouble getting up from a seated position
- ✦ Difficulty with walking, balance and mobility
- ✦ Dirty house, extreme clutter and dirty laundry piling up
- ✦ Stacks of unopened mail or an overflowing mailbox
- ✦ Late payment notices, bounced checks and calls from bill collectors
- ✦ Poor diet or weight loss
- ✦ Loss of interest in hobbies and activities
- ✦ Changes in mood or extreme mood swings
- ✦ Forgetting to take medications – or taking more than the prescribed dosage
- ✦ Diagnosis of dementia or early onset Alzheimer's

The burden often falls on the family to recognize the signs that a parent might need help with daily living tasks. This doesn't necessarily mean that your loved one has to go to assisted living or a nursing home, but they may need some extra help in their home; it may mean having a loved one move in with them, or having them move to a family's home. Each case needs to be evaluated according to the family's situation.

Adapted from: article by Marlo Solitto, [agingcare.com](http://agingcare.com)

## The “Respect Your Elders” Approach to Dementia Care

1. **Take a deep breath and be patient.** People with dementia issues may appear stubborn or obstinate, but they act differently due to the condition. They are not making a conscious choice to be difficult.
2. **Watch your non-verbal communication — especially facial expressions.** Someone with dementia may have diminished memory, changes in personality and a host of other problems, but they can and do recognize snide facial changes. Negative non-verbal communication often speaks louder than real words.
3. **Reality orientation approaches are ineffective.** You can't convince or rationalize with someone experiencing disorienting dementia; their deteriorating awareness and memory skills don't allow for higher executive functions and logical thinking.
4. **Politely agree or remain neutral to almost everything.** If someone with Alzheimer's says it's a nice day when it's raining outside, nothing is accomplished by attempting to tell them otherwise.
5. **Wait a few minutes and try again.** Obviously individuals with Alzheimer's need care they may refuse to cooperate with, such as bathing or a change of clothes. Refusals are common but sometimes can be managed by waiting and/or trying another approach. In waiting they forget what they were objecting to.
6. **Keep it simple.** Caregivers, especially family members and friends, have a tendency to use too many words when talking to their loved one with dementia. I was guilty too of being overly chatty. The ability to process language and formulate a response wanes significantly as the disease progresses. The more you talk, the less they get.

Source: alzheimersreadingroom.com; original source, Elaine Pereira, I Will Never Forget, ©2012.

### Thoughts From a Caregiver

*I learned that people living with Alzheimer's or a related dementia are not the enemy,  
they are our loved ones.*

Don't get angry at the actions of someone that is deeply forgetful. Ask yourself why are they reacting the way they are? How are they feeling? **Bored, frightened, bewildered, anxious and angry.**

**Be kind, be gentle.**

*Caregiving is seldom simple,  
but it is the ordinary acts we perform each day that make the difference.*

Excerpts adapted from Bob DeMarco, alzheimersreadingroom.com.