

Caregiving Through the Holidays

Patty Callahan, LISW-S

Caregiver Advocate

Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging



FAMILY CAREGIVER ALLIANCE®
National Center on Caregiving

101 Montgomery Street, Suite 2150
Francisco, CA 94104

800.445.8106 | 415.434.3388

caregiver.org

Managing Holiday Expectations

What is realistic to expect of:

- ❖ Yourself
- ❖ Your Loved One
- ❖ Your Family
- ❖ Your Holiday Celebration

?????

Note: LET GO OF THE “SHOULD”!!!

It's OK to make NEW holiday plans!

Planning Holiday Celebrations

Before the holidays consider whether changes are needed to help you preserve your time, energy, and reduce stress.

- ❖ What holiday activities do you truly want to preserve?
- ❖ What will it take to accomplish that?
- ❖ What would you really like to cross off of your list? Delegate???
- ❖ Are there interesting, meaningful activities that could replace “higher energy” activities?

Helping Your Loved One Enjoy the Holidays

What holiday activities is your loved one able to participate in and ENJOY?

- ❖ What is your loved one's endurance?
- ❖ What is your loved one's tolerance for stimulation?
- ❖ Do you need to prepare visiting family and friends for changes in your loved one's appearance, abilities, or behavior?
- ❖ Will travel be stressful for you and/or your loved one?
- ❖ What accommodations would be needed for travel?

Simplifying Holiday Traditions

SCALE DOWN!

- ❖ A pot-luck holiday meal is fine.
- ❖ Get reservations at a restaurant.
- ❖ Use bakeries.
- ❖ Draw names for a gift exchange.
- ❖ Purchase gift cards.
- ❖ Make a donation to a worthy cause in the name of the family/group.
- ❖ Get DVDs of favorite holiday movies, concerts or productions to view together.
- ❖ Go easy on the decorating.



Reach Out for Respite Care!!

Respite care provides temporary relief to a caregiver from caregiving responsibilities.



Sources of Respite:

- ❖ Family, friends, neighbors – ask early so they can plan to help you during the holidays.
- ❖ Paid respite workers – home health aides
- ❖ Adult Day Services
- ❖ Explore programs that help with the COST of respite care.
- ❖ Eldercare Locator: www.eldercare.acl.gov

Advising Family of Your Needs at the Holidays

- ❖ Share how life has changed for you and your loved one with your family & share the changes you need to make in your holiday activities.
- ❖ Be mindful of your tone, no demands, no accusations. Just the facts.
- ❖ Invite suggestions:
 - ❖ You may get some creative ideas & offers of help!
- ❖ Recognize changes in holiday traditions may be difficult for some family members.



Do NOT accept guilt!

Monitoring Your Stress Level — H.A.L.T.S.



A self check-in strategy

Avoid becoming too:

- ❖ Hungry
- ❖ Angry
- ❖ Lonely
- ❖ Tired
- ❖ Scared

Checking In With Yourself During the Holidays

- ❖ Energy requires fuel. When did you last eat and drink?

Tips:

- ❖ Energy bars are good in a pinch. But a quiet, unhurried, satisfying meal provides both physical and emotional nurturing. You don't have to do the cooking. Order take out or use a delivery service.
- ❖ Or, put it out to family and friends that bringing in a meal during the holidays would be a wonderful gift!



Managing Anger

- ❖ Anger happens. When anger becomes the predominant response to all life situations, it is **unhealthy** and potentially **deadly**.
- ❖ Suggestions:
 - ❖ Anger is typically a “cover” emotion for fear, frustration or hurt. Pay attention to how often you feel angry.
 - ❖ Take time to consider the underlying emotions.
 - ❖ Identifying the true emotion is the first step in dealing with it.
 - ❖ Journaling is a helpful way to process your emotions and is readily available to a caregiver.
- ❖ **Seek a Healthy Outlet for Anger!!**



Combating Loneliness



- ❖ Caregivers are at higher risk for isolation and loneliness than the general population. These feelings tend to surface even more during the holidays.
- ❖ Suggestions:
 - ❖ Encourage visits from friends and family – even if they need to be brief. Let them know the best times to visit, what to expect of your loved one, & what to expect within the household.
 - ❖ The demands of caregiving pose a challenge in maintaining our vital connections to others. Set a goal to catch up with an old friend, classmate or neighbor **SOMETIME** over the holidays!

Build in Downtime

Allow yourself time each day to just “Be”

- ❖ NO PHONE!
- ❖ NO COMPUTER! NO TV!



Rest Your Mind!

Breathe!

You can do this!!

Sleep, Sleep, Sleep

Deep, uninterrupted, restful sleep is essential for all of us. Often particularly difficult for a caregiver to manage this.

- ❖ SCHEDULE sleep time, while someone provides you with respite care. Put it on your calendar!
- ❖ At holiday time SCHEDULE YOUR RESPITE CARE EARLY!!
- ❖ Keep in mind: Caffeine and nicotine are stimulants and can prevent restful sleep. Alcohol has an initial sedative effect, but can cause you to awaken later and have difficulty getting back to sleep.

Dealing with Fear

- ❖ Fear is an emotion that can “drive the bus” for any of us if we let it.
- ❖ **Uncertainty** lies beneath many of our fears.
- ❖ Caregivers often live day to day with uncertainty on many fronts. Fear can become ingrained.

- ❖ **Suggestions:**
 - ❖ Try to pinpoint what **idea** is at the base of the fear. Perhaps it isn't accurate.
 - ❖ **Share your concern** with someone you trust to help you gain some perspective.
 - ❖ **Reach out to experts** for information to help in problem-solving.

Through the Holidays and Beyond...

Know that:

You are Body, Mind, and Spirit

All of these aspects of your HUMANNESS require nurturing for you to remain a healthy, whole person.

Tune in to yourself. If you struggle with making changes, there is help.

Please reach out!!

Have a Peaceful Holiday Season!





The Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging (COAAA) plans, funds, and delivers services that help older adults and individuals with disabilities remain safe and independent in their homes.

With the assistance of area providers, COAAA arranges and coordinates services to help individuals with daily living such as homemaking, transportation, home delivered meals, and personal care. COAAA offers education and resources to caregivers, professionals, and the public and advocates for programs and policies that benefit older adults and individuals with disabilities. COAAA manages services for 10,000 people and funds services for another 20,000 older adults in eight counties: Delaware, Fairfield, Fayette, Franklin, Licking, Madison, Pickaway, and Union. COAAA is operated under the City of Columbus Recreation and Parks Department.

COAAA caregiver services include:

- Information and Assistance
- Counseling (via telephone or in-home)
- Education and Training
- Caregiver Respite Services
- Caregiver Support Groups

About FCA

Family Caregiver Alliance offers education, services, research, and advocacy based on the real needs of caregivers. Founded in the late 1970s, FCA is the first community-based nonprofit organization in the United States to address the needs of families and friends providing long-term care for loved ones at home.

National Center on Caregiving (NCC) was established by FCA to advance the development of high-quality, cost effective programs and policies for caregivers in every state. NCC sponsors the Family Care Navigator, a state-by-state resource locator designed to help caregivers find support services in their communities.

Bay Area Caregiver Resource Center — operated by FCA for the six-county San Francisco Bay Area — provides support to family caregivers. FCA's staff of family consultants through education programs and direct support offer effective tools to manage the complex and demanding tasks of caregiving.

Be sure to visit FCA on social media:



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Acerca de FCA

Family Caregiver Alliance ofrece servicios educativos, de investigación, y abogacía basados en las necesidades reales de los cuidadores. Fundada a finales de 1970, FCA es la primera organización comunitaria sin fines de lucro en los Estados Unidos, dedicada a atender las necesidades de familias y amigos que brindan cuidado a largo plazo a seres queridos.

National Center on Caregiving (NCC) fue establecido por FCA para promover el desarrollo de programas y políticas de alta calidad y efectivas en costo que beneficien a los cuidadores en cada estado. NCC es patrocinador del Family Care Navigator, un localizador de recursos disponibles en los estados, diseñado para ayudar a los cuidadores a encontrar servicios de apoyo en sus comunidades.

Bay Area Caregiver Resource Center — operado por FCA para los seis condados en el Área de la Bahía de San Francisco — ofrece apoyo a cuidadores. El equipo de consultoras familiares de FCA provee herramientas efectivas para sobrellevar las complejas y demandantes tareas de ser cuidador a través de programas educativos y apoyo directo.

Asegúrese de visitar FCA en las siguientes redes sociales:



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