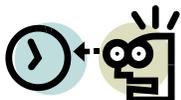




February, 2018



HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY EVERYONE!



Caregiving Stress Busters

(Candy Sagon, AARP The Magazine December 2012/January 2013)

This is a reprint from my newsletter back in 2013. I think these stress busters are worth repeating. Try to incorporate at least one into your daily life. ~ Karen

1. **Make the Freezer your Friend** – Caregivers usually know *what* to eat, they just don't have time to cook healthier meals. "Batch cooking", which lets you freeze individual portions, makes it easier to pull out healthy choices during the week. Make a hearty pot of stew or soup with meat, beans, and/or vegetables and enjoy an all-in-one meal easily.
2. **Mix in Meditation** – UCLA researchers say that 12 minutes of daily meditation can dramatically improve the mental health of caregivers. Their study even showed that meditation slowed cellular aging.
3. **Stockpile Healthy Snacks** – Nutritious snacks that you can eat on the run help keep blood sugar levels on an even keel and energy levels from flagging. Katherine Tallmadge, dietitian, Washington, D.C., nixes the typical granola bars – "too high in sugar" – opting instead for "real food" with hunger-busting protein, such as almonds or a PB&J sandwich. Including fruits and vegetables adds fiber to your diet and gives you a feeling of being "full".
4. **Slow Down** – Don't rush whatever you're doing. It sounds obvious, but when you're stressed and distracted, you're more prone to having accidents. Accidents, such as cutting your finger or burning yourself, can be a sign that you're at your limit of stress.

5. **Volunteer** – Dr. Barry Jacobs, author of *The Emotional Survival Guide for Caregivers*, says that helping out in a different way, in a different setting, can be gratifying and therapeutic. It seems counter-intuitive because you're already doing so much to help your loved one, but helping out in a different way can be helpful emotionally. Volunteer at a school and enjoy the lives of the younger generation or volunteer at church in some way, or what about a food pantry. There is any number of ways to volunteer.
6. **Improve your Sleep Habits** – Disrupted sleep saps your energy for dealing with the demands of caregiving. Sleep labs show that anxiety shoots up by more than 60% in those who were the most fatigued. So adopt good sleep habits – a dark room, fewer distractions in the bedroom – for more restful sleep.

One of my suggestions is to “Do Something Nice for Someone Every Day”. Dr. Gail Hayes suggests that one of the most joyful facets of life is being able to do something good for others. Even negative co-workers have a need to “be blessed” and have something positive happen to them. She says that “what you give out will return to you, so do good!” But that’s what you do every day, isn’t it? You are doing something nice for your loved one that you are caring for. Don’t get bogged down with the stress of it; remember the positives in all you do. Let it uplift you so that you are less stressed.



Caregiving Books

Our caregiving books are still doing well. If interested, go to www.karenboerger.com and click “Books”. Annetta and I still do speaking engagements, and if your church or group is interested contact me. We’d love to hear from you.



Why Does My Elderly Loved One Sleep All Day?

By Carol Bradley Bursack, AgingCare.com (1-12-2018)

As people age, they tend to sleep more lightly than when they were younger and often wake up during the night from achy joints or the need to use the restroom. Many seniors compensate for this lost sleep by catching a restorative nap during the day. That’s normal.

Daytime sleeping only becomes a problem when an elder spends most of their time dozing in bed or their favorite chair instead of engaging in life. If you want your elder to stay awake more during the day and sleep better at night, you will need to discover the underlying reason(s) why they are napping excessively. In some cases, you may need a doctor’s help to narrow down the cause and recommend treatments. Knowing what to look for can give you a jumpstart on improving a loved one’s sleep schedule.

Common Reasons Why Seniors Sleep So Much

Boredom

As people age, they may suffer from chronic health conditions and age-related changes that affect their ability to do the things they enjoy. When options for outings, activities and entertainment are limited, it can deal a serious blow to an elder's quality of life. They aren't working anymore, they may struggle with reading or puzzles because of poor eyesight, and eventually they get tired of watching TV. In these cases, elders may not be clinically depressed or even all that tired. Instead, their fatigue stems from the fact that they are incredibly bored. With no schedule to keep and not much going on in their lives, they slide into the habit of napping throughout most of the day.

Medication Side Effects and Interactions

The average senior in the U.S. takes several different medications each day. All medications have side effects, so it should come as no surprise that taking multiple drugs can produce interactions that magnify these effects. In addition, older individuals metabolize medications differently than their younger counterparts, meaning that they are even more susceptible to adverse effects like drowsiness and dizziness.

Over-the-counter and prescription medications for conditions like anxiety, depression, high blood pressure, insomnia, chronic pain, Parkinson's disease, nausea and allergies can all cause excessive sleepiness. Atypical (second generation) antipsychotics are notoriously hard on most elderly patients as well. If your loved one is on one of these medications, discuss the side effects and alternative medication options with their physician. You may even find that there are some medications in their regimen that could be reduced to smaller dosages or discontinued completely. Sometimes simply altering the timing of a senior's medications can improve their alertness during the day.

Depression

Many elders become sad and lose interest in life, but depression is in no way a normal part of aging. Most people are familiar with the basic signs of depression, but for older individuals, the red flags can be a little different. Sleep issues and fatigue can often indicate that a loved one is suffering from a mental health disorder. If you notice these symptoms in a loved one, do your best to talk with them about how they are feeling and make an appointment with their physician.

If a loved one is already on antidepressant medication or begins antidepressant therapy, keep in mind that finding the correct medication usually takes some trial and error. Again, sleepiness

is a common side effect of these prescription drugs, so be sure to communicate with the doctor about any adverse effects to ensure your loved one finds the right medication.

Dementia

Many seniors with dementia experience a wide array of sleep problems, especially in the later stages of the disease. As the brain deteriorates, issues arise with circadian rhythms and temporal awareness, making it difficult for dementia patients to sleep through the night and keep a normal schedule. In some cases, sleeping during the day is the only way that patients can make up for the shuteye they lose at night.

The resulting odd schedules can be frustrating for caregivers, but sleep deprivation can also exacerbate the symptoms of dementia, like sundowning. While there aren't many foolproof methods for helping a loved one sleep through the night and stay awake during the day, sleeping pills typically aren't advisable. The best methods for encouraging good sleep habits include using engaging activities during the daytime, scheduling brief naps as needed during the day, and sticking to a set sleep schedule as best as you can. A solid routine can be very helpful for helping a loved one stay oriented and managing behaviors and symptoms of dementia.

Excessive Sleep Can Be Serious

In some instances, excessive sleeping in individuals with one or more serious medical conditions can indicate that their health has taken a downturn. This may not necessarily mean that death is near, but it certainly is cause for contacting the doctor to see if a specific treatment should be altered, added or removed. If a loved one is spending a great deal of time asleep, it is important to devise ways to ensure they still get the nutrition, personal care and medications they need. Otherwise, complications like dehydration, malnutrition and pressure ulcers can arise. In the most severe cases, the doctor may recommend an assessment for a different level of care, such as skilled nursing or hospice.

The Importance of Staying Active

In addition to being vigilant about an aging loved one's medications and health, it is also important to encourage them to participate in life as fully as they can. Providing plenty of opportunities for social interaction, mental stimulation and physical activity is key to a high quality of life. But, for many family caregivers, seeing to all these needs in addition to their hands-on responsibilities and personal schedules is nearly impossible. Seeking out respite care that doubles as a source of stimulation for a loved one is a common solution for many families.

In-home care and adult day care are two such options. Both professional in-home caregivers and adult day care staff can help set and maintain daily routines, provide engaging activities and outings, and broaden a senior's social circle. Assisted living and nursing home care can also offer these benefits in a residential setting. When elders spend more time engaged in life

during the day, it reduces boredom, minimizes depressive symptoms and typically leads to better quality sleep at night.

Your goal is to determine why your loved one is so fatigued and how you can boost their spirits and energy level. The problems and solutions above may not apply to every senior, so don't try to solve the problem alone. Communicate with your loved one as best you can and ask for help from physicians, friends and other caregivers. By doing so, you'll get the support and reassurance you need, and you may find a workable solution.



Recipe Corner

Pot Roast or Chuck Roast

We have always enjoyed this. Easy to prepare. It's all in the sauce!

Brown roast. Put into roaster and add a little water (about ¼ inch). Cover and put in oven at 350.

Then brown ½ cup chopped onion and ½ cup chopped celery. Add one can of tomato sauce and 1 TB Worcestershire sauce. Pour over roast one hour before done.



A Caregiver's Prayer

Heavenly Father, your blessings are new every morning. Help me to remember to think about those blessings which will give me a lift for my day. When the valleys are dark, help me to know that you are always with me. You are my rock that I lean on. Comfort my loved one in his/her pain and distress. May Your peace encircle our entire family, Lord. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Phillippians 4:6