



The **MASE** Monthly Newsletter

April 2017

Winners of Queen's Award for Voluntary Service



A Focus on our Carers



As we head into brighter days and hopefully a bit of sunshine, we are aware that some of you are going through difficult times. Please know that everyone associated with the MASE is here for you and will always give you time if you need it. Whilst at the Groups take the opportunity to speak to the Professionals who regularly attend and also open-up to some of your fellow Carers. It is amazing what you can learn from simply sharing a problem or asking for some guidance. Who better to speak to than someone who is on the same journey as you? Or perhaps someone who has lost their loved-one, and who will understand just what you are going through. Friendship and support is so important and sometimes a trouble shared can be a trouble halved. Open up to friends and be honest with them about the illness and how it is affecting you. Please do not ever be afraid to ask for help; you are among friends at the MASE.

MASE Summer Gala

Please pick up a leaflet on the MASE Summer Gala, which is on 9 July at Hednesford from 2:00 until 5:00 pm. There will be a buffet, refreshments & entertainment. Our aim is to get people from all five Groups together in Hednesford on a Sunday afternoon in July to celebrate The MASE entering its 9th year. Details will be available at each Group containing all the information you need. It is very important that you sign the attendance sheets at your respective Groups advising us of the number of people intending to come and most importantly whether you will require transport. Please speak to Daphne or Elaine if you have any questions.

Ten things a person with Alzheimer's may say to their Carer!

- 1. I am still me.** I may forget parts of my life but I will never forget that I am an adult deserving dignity. My memories may go but my personality stays.
- 2. Treat me like an adult.** My behaviour may be child-like, but please NEVER treat me like child.
- 3. Come into my world.** I can't function in yours. This means that I can't remember what happened five minutes ago but I can remember something from 50 years ago. Please don't argue with me, I don't understand why you are angry and I feel unhappy for hours afterwards.
- 4. Actions are better than words.** No big explanations, a gentle touch or hug and a warm smile goes a long way.
- 5. Give me a daily, consistent schedule.** Consistent schedules tap the memories that I have and strengthen the parts of the brain that are still working. I feel better with schedules, even if I cannot remember them.
- 6. Give me nature.** I need fresh air and sunshine. Please make sure I get out every day, even if it is on a porch or patio, or near a big bay window, where I can see outside.
- 7. Give me pleasurable activities.** I may forget that you took me out to lunch, or we went fishing, but the pleasurable feelings and emotions that came from that experience will last for hours.
- 8. Give me social interaction on my terms.** I can't handle large gatherings but I can visit with a couple of people, especially if they are following Commandment No. 3. Again, I may forget that the grandchildren came to visit, but the pleasurable feelings and emotions from that visit will persist after the visit.
- 9. Keep me safe.** That means giving me freedom to move about my home as much as possible without falling or getting hurt. You may need to be creative, ie camouflage the front door to stop me from constantly trying to leave.
- 10. Keep me healthy.** Please help me to eat good foods, stay as healthy as possible, and avoid infections.

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MASE Co-ordinators

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Alzheimer's Society Dementia Helpline 0300 222 1122 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday and Saturday and Sunday 10am - 4pm.

Who cares for the Carer?



It is so important to stay well

Carers are vital to the independence and well-being of thousands of people, however, supporting and caring for others can be very demanding and stressful and it can put your health at risk. 390,000 Carers reported in a recent census that they themselves suffered 'in bad health'. Worryingly, Carers are less likely to find time in their day to focus on their own health, overlooking their own medical check-ups and treatments. In fact, 2 in 5 report that they deferred treatment because of their responsibilities as a Carer.

All of the added stress takes a toll on the health outcomes for Carers. Paired with the likeliness to defer treatment, it makes a dangerous cocktail. With 60-70% of Carers likely to suffer themselves from a long-standing health problem, and a higher chance of suffering from conditions such as arthritis, high blood pressure, diabetes and mobility complications, not to mention mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression; the welfare of unpaid Carers should be put into the spotlight.

It's vital to stay positive

The Department of Health is committed to improving services for both Carers and the people they care for. Recognising the expertise of, and working in partnership with Carers at all levels of health service design and delivery, they aim to enable Carers to be involved in the support plan of the person they care for and their assessments, whilst fully recognising the differing social and emotional impacts of providing support to another person and that impacts do not necessarily correlate to the number of hours spent, or the tasks undertaken, in providing care.

Caring for someone can be incredibly difficult and often feel overwhelming, but it's important to remember that as a Carer, you will have developed fantastic organisational and planning skills, you have great patience, and that you are an expert in the health of the person you care for; knowing as much about their medication, conditions and in particular, their current state of mind and wellbeing, as the doctors and nurses supporting them.

To the world you may be but one person. But to one person you may be their world.

Remember to keep going; that you are amazing and even if the person you care for can't tell you that today - we most definitely can!

Dealing with incontinence



Most people do not find it an easy subject to discuss with relatives or medical staff. However, it is really important that if your relative does have problems getting to the toilet on time that they ask for help. There is something that can be done and you can get help. It is not something you necessarily have to cope with alone or that cannot be resolved.

How your doctor can help the elderly with incontinence

Staff should always treat their patient with sensitivity. When visiting healthcare staff about bladder or bowel problems remember that medication can also be a cause. Your relative will possibly have tests for infection and be asked to record the frequency of toilet visits. There may also be an internal examination to check for prolapse in women and prostate issues in men.

What can you do to help the elderly with incontinence?

- Let your relative know that these problems are common and nothing to be ashamed of
- It may be helpful to reduce caffeine intake and also to drink more fluids to aid constipation
- There are incontinence pads on sale in all leading supermarkets and chemists, as well as on numerous websites. Many of these products come as pull up pants, so they can be worn as underwear
- Barrier cream, such as Sudocrem, is helpful to protect and soothe the skin
- Take your relative to the bathroom regularly to avoid accidents
- Plan ahead for trips and visits outside the home and take products with you. You can keep a bag packed with pads, cream, wipes etc.
- Stop smoking, as this can make the bladder over-active

If you have a computer please take a look at our website which covers all MASE activities: www.themasegroup.com

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