



MASE Monthly Newsletter



Proud Recipients of Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

November 2019

October was a difficult month for many of our Carers. Some of you have struggled for a while with a desperate situation, knowing that there was little more that could be done. To any Carer who has lost a loved one recently we send the love and support from all at the MASE. You have been incredible and rest assured have done everything possible for your loved one. Remember also that your friends are here waiting to see you when you feel strong enough to return.



Count your garden by the flowers - never by the leaves that fall
Count your day by golden hours - don't remember clouds at all
Count your nights by stars not shadows - Count your life with smiles not tears
And with joy on every birthday - Count your age with friends not years



Life can be difficult and stressful, but there are many MASE friends you can depend on, to help you through your day.

Winter Footcare - Avoiding mistakes

As the cold weather starts to bite, it's important to wrap up and take care. But - whilst we might pull on our winter scarves and gloves - many of us neglect our feet at this time of year. These are some common winter foot care mistakes you might be making and how to avoid them.



Blaming the weather

If you're suffering from cold feet this winter, the temperature is the most likely cause. However, there are other conditions that can leave your feet feeling disproportionately chilly. If your feet remain cold when in warmer, indoor temperatures or take an age to thaw out, it could be that you are suffering from an underlying health problem such as underactive thyroid or Raynaud's. Conditions like diabetes can cause damage to your nerves, affecting sensation in your feet. If this might apply to you, double check with your GP.

Putting up with wet feet

It makes sense that if you get wet feet, you ought to change into fresh shoes and socks as quickly as possible. Wearing wet shoes, especially in very cold weather, can cause a condition called trench foot that can be uncomfortable and lead to infection.

Rushing to warm up

Picture the scene, you've been sitting on the bus or walking home from work and your feet are frozen. It's natural to want to rectify this situation as quickly as possible, so as soon as you can you stick your frozen toes on the radiator. But whilst it may seem logical to want to rid your feet of cold as quickly as possible, exposing chilly feet to the heat too rapidly can create more problems than it solves.

Exposing cold feet to hot temperatures straightaway can cause problems such as chilblains. The best way to rewarm your feet is to do it slowly and gradually to avoid this problem. So rather than heading straight for your hottest heat source, try slipping on some indoor footwear and moving around to increase circulation and warm feet gradually.

Thinking thicker socks are best... or are they?

Most of us have a pair of trusty, fluffy socks at the back of our drawer, just waiting for the cold weather. However, whilst pulling on a thick pair of socks under your boots may seem to provide a barrier against the cold, you would actually be better off layering. Rather than wearing thick socks, it's better to layer the socks to create thermal air between each layer, helping the heat to stay in. Choose a natural fibre sock, such as wool, as they will provide more warmth.

Carers please always wear sensible shoes and more importantly slippers.

A slip in the icy weather can cause so many problems, so please Carers remember to go for safe, comfortable slippers at all times for both you and your loved one. The slippers in this picture are lovely, but oh so dangerous. Carers always go for a full slipper as slips, trips and falls would be a disaster for you at any time, but even more so over the Festive Season.



Daphne Sharp ☎ 01785 211140 or 07939 505455 MASE Co-ordinator/Trustee ✉ Daphne.scharp@ntlworld.com

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

Sundowning

Winter is here and this is the time of year when “**Sundowning**” can be more prevalent, especially for individuals in the middle stages of dementia. During autumn/winter, our days begin to get shorter, curtains are drawn earlier, lights are put on and shadows can appear.

Sundowning is the phenomenon where people with Alzheimer’s disease or other forms of dementia become increasingly confused and agitated during the early evening hours of twilight and sunset. This time of day can be especially distressing for dementia patients, and it places a great deal of pressure on the Carers who try to help them stay calm and oriented. Pacing, restlessness and shadowing can become more pronounced during these times. Additionally, hallucinations, delusions, wandering, and violent or paranoid behaviour can manifest in more severe cases.

There are several things you can do to minimize the symptoms of sundown syndrome. They can be simple, such as turning on all the lights in the house before it starts getting dark or slightly changing a loved one’s evening routine to compensate for the time change. There are many types of dementia, and each one manifests differently in each person. Therefore, trial and error is the best method for finding out what techniques can help minimize troubling dementia-related behaviours.

Different Approaches to Managing Sundowner’s

Symptoms of sundowning can be brought on by too much activity or noise toward the end of the day, increased fatigue, shadows caused by low lighting around the house. Look for patterns in your loved one’s behaviour that will clue you in as to what may be bothering them or exacerbating their behavioural changes.

For example, if they become more tired and frustrated in the evenings, then encourage a short nap in the early afternoon, not too late, or they’ll be awake all night. If visual hallucinations and disorientation spike after the sun has set, make modifications throughout the home to minimize shadows, reflections and distorted images that could be misinterpreted by their confused mind.

Sometimes medications (e.g. antipsychotics, benzodiazepines, antidepressants), supplements like melatonin, increased lighting, soft music, light therapy, or a carefully tailored routine can help minimize the confusion and agitation associated with sundown syndrome.

Changing any normal routine can sometimes cause confusion and frustration. Keep this in mind when you are considering changing your loved one’s routine. If you make changes, make them as subtle and incremental as possible.

Sundowning in the Winter Months

Everything gets a little confusing when we lose so much daylight and we have to endure all those dreary, dark and cloudy days that usher in winter.

Even people without dementia can experience fatigue and mood changes this time of year.

Keep the house nice and bright, remember that side lights, although very calming and soothing can often cast shadows!



Future Dates for your Diary

December 13th - at The Polish Club, Stafford. From 7:30 until 11:30

Elvis Christmas Fundraiser—Tickets £10.00 to include buffet and a fabulous raffle. Tickets are available at all MASE Groups.

December 22nd - at The Aquarius Ballroom Hednesford 6.00 pm until 9.00 pm

To end the year Tony Wall will be singing songs from Jim Reeves in a Christmas Spectacular. There are tickets available at any of the MASE Groups. Tickets are on sale at £3.00 - this is simply to give us an idea of how many to cater for. Hot and cold drinks will be available and a lovely buffet provided as always by Lisa. There will also be a paid Bar open on the evening.

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

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