



The **MASE** Monthly Newsletter

March 2019



Proud Recipients of Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

A Special Note for MASE Carers



Over the past months sadly we have lost many MASE people; we know our Carers have gone through a really difficult time and probably wondering just what the future will hold for them.

The MASE Trustees want to reassure all Carers you will always be welcome at our Groups. The knowledge, care and empathy you have given to your cared-for over the years, will be so valuable to people who are starting out on the dementia journey. Do not, for one minute, think that you will be pushed aside now – believe us when we say you are essential to our groups and will always remain a part of them.

Yes, you will go through phases of guilt, questioning yourself 'did I do enough during the time we were together; could I have kept my loved one at home, rather than putting them into care'. These are normal thoughts – but each of you know that whatever decision was taken, it came from your heart and with the sole intention that your loved one would be cared for properly, and kept safe.

We need to stress to all our Carers, be they past or present, you are doing, or have done, a FANTASTIC job over the years. Please now give yourselves the credit you deserve – this has been a long and difficult journey and you have been incredible.

Carers be Prepared!

We are all guilty of saying 'it wont happen to me', but unfortunately occasionally things **DO** happen and it is always better to be prepared, than to be rushing around at the last minute trying to get things organised. In view of the long waits that people are currently experiencing when waiting at A&E departments it is imperative that you stay one step ahead of any unexpected eventualities .



1. At home always keep a small bag packed, and keep it in a safe place. In it put some personal items just in case of an emergency. If your loved one is then taken by ambulance into hospital, you will not be trying to get things together at the last minute.
2. Put in a small bottle of water and perhaps a packet of biscuits/or a bar of chocolate: things which could prove so beneficial during your wait.
3. A magazine, or a book (in case you are there for a while).
4. A purse with some change so that you can at least buy a drink and also if you need to get back home you can always get a bus or call a taxi.
5. A small packet of baby wipes - which can be used to refresh both Carer and cared for.
6. A few small packs of tissues and perhaps even some peppermints/boiled sweets.
7. Also keep in the bag a note of any allergies or medication that is being taken by your cared for. A list of your own medications could be a useful thing too.
8. Perhaps even a small box with overnight medication for you, should you have to remain at the hospital for any length of time. All these things will be invaluable to a Paramedic/Doctor/Nurse if a person has to go into hospital.

Dates for your Diary

30 March: Haywoods Community Choir Spring Concert Fundraiser to be held at Little Haywood Village Hall £5.00 a ticket includes light bites. Please bring your own drinks for the evening. Ask a Volunteer if you require tickets.

7 April 2019 is our 10th Anniversary of the MASE Groups which will be held at Lea Hall Social Club, Rugeley. Starting at 1:30 and ending at 5:00. Please make sure you put your names down at your respective groups to let us know you are attending and particularly if you need transport to the venue.

5th July at Stafford Rangers - Julie Perry is holding a fantastic musical extravaganza and is fundraising in support of the MASE. Phil Aaron will be the guest artist together with a variety of singers and dancers (including our very own volunteer Freya) to entertain you. Posters will be at all MASE Groups ;**Julie Perry/Volunteers** have tickets for sale.

Daphne Sharp ☎ 01785 211140 or 07939 505455

MASE Co-ordinator

✉ Daphne.scharp@ntlworld.com

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

Help someone with dementia to feel clean and comfortable

Helping the person you're caring for with their personal hygiene, whilst also ensuring they keep their dignity, requires the utmost sensitivity and skill. But it isn't impossible.

Washing, dressing and combing your hair – all activities that we would normally do without a second thought as part of our daily routine. But for someone with dementia, remembering to bathe or being able to brush our hair or shave can end up becoming an extra challenge to deal with.

Is this someone you know?

- You notice that they have been wearing the same outfit four days running.
- They've got cuts on their face from shaving.
- You can tell they haven't washed for a while.
- Someone who always used to be 'well turned out' is starting to look quite disheveled.

Why is it happening?

Alzheimer's disease and other causes of dementia can mean someone could forget to wash or change their clothes regularly. They may not remember that they wore the exact same outfit yesterday, and the day before that, or whether or not they had a shower yesterday.

They may also be suffering from mobility problems which could affect their ability to get into or out of baths or showers, or put items of clothing on.

What can you do?

Talking to them about this isn't the easiest of conversations. They may be embarrassed that they're unable to cope, particularly with something like washing and bathing, which is such a personal activity.

If you think that simply highlighting the issues could cause more hassle than it's worth, you could try approaching it differently. For example, making it sound as if you want to 'treat' them and make them feel pampered. Offering to run them a lovely bubble bath or take them to the hairdressers (or book a mobile hairdresser) might go down far better than an awkward conversation.

You may want to get some products to help with bathing and items that can make the process safer and easier, such as steps, seats or hoists. You should also, of course, think about ways to maintain dignity while bathing so it doesn't have to become traumatic for either of you.

When helping someone to dress, they may need advice on the best clothes to wear for the weather or guidance on where they can find different items of clothing with labelling or signage on cupboards and drawers.

If using the toilet or incontinence has become an issue, it can have an impact on personal hygiene, so you may need to think about ways to make this easier or more straightforward.

Other areas to think about include looking after teeth, ear care and nail care – all of which can fall by the wayside for someone with dementia.

Ultimately, personal hygiene is a vital part of dementia care because it is integral to the sense of identity of someone with dementia, as well as being a key part in ensuring their comfort. Taking steps to maintain it is so important for ensuring a good quality of life for them.

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

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