



## CAREGIVER STRESS MANAGEMENT

If you have taken care of a person who is seriously ill, you know that it can be stressful. Learning to manage stress helps you to be a healthier and ultimately more effective caregiver. A few tips from Vicki Rackner, MD on her website *The Caregiver Club* include:

- Know what you can – and can't – change. While you want to “fix” things, understand that caregiving is usually a long term process. Focus not only on what's important, but what's possible.
- Learn the “51% Rule.” Most caregivers will do anything for their loved one and when they're ready to collapse, there's still more to do. Being a “super caregiver” doesn't work. Instead, accept your mistakes and that you will disappoint your loved one at times. You may lose your patience and make decisions that make your patient unhappy, but you can still be a great caregiver (loving, respectful and responsible) without being perfect.
- Get – and give- help. Think about all the tasks you do and who else might do them. When people offer to help, make concrete suggestions from your list – from errands and housework, to taking you out to a movie. *Accepting help* is one of the best gifts you can give those close to you!

## CT STATEWIDE RESPITE PROGRAM RE-OPENS

The state program that provides respite funds for persons who care for an individual with Alzheimer's or related dementia re-opened on May 1. While funds last, it may provide up to \$3,500/yr. to applicants who have 1) a doctor's diagnosis of dementia 2) income under \$41,000 and 3) liquid assets under \$109,000. For an application, call the Agency on Aging at 1.800.994.9422.

## MEDICARE SAVINGS PROGRAM

If you receive Medicare and your income is less than \$2090 per month, you are probably eligible for a Medicare Savings Program (MSP). MSP's pay your Part B premium (approximately \$100 per month) and some Medicare co-pays and deductibles. The \$2090 figure includes your social security income. MSP does not look at assets (house, car, savings) and in the event of death, will not try to recover this money from your estate. To receive an MSP application, contact Jane at 203.458.4259.

## QUOTABLE QUOTE

*Inside every old person there is a young person wondering what happened.* - Anon

## WHEN IS IT TIME TO STOP DRIVING?

The answer lies somewhere in the struggle between preserving one's independence and protecting the safety of the driver and others. Safe driving is about ability, not age. Ending driving can be a *process* involving many conversations, evaluations, safety courses, equipment, scaled-back trips and planning for alternative transportation. In the case of dementia, it may require acts of “therapeutic fibbing” such as disabling the car. Two excellent pamphlets to help your family navigate this tough issue follow. Both include checklists to assess your situation and to guide constructive conversations. See websites below or call Linda at 203.458.4338 for copies.

*We Need to Talk...Family Conversations with Older Drivers* from The Hartford financial services group [www.thehartford.com/talkwitholderdrivers](http://www.thehartford.com/talkwitholderdrivers)

*The Effects of Aging on Driving Skills* from the USAA Educational Foundation. [www.usaaedfoundation.org](http://www.usaaedfoundation.org)

## AS A CAREGIVER, WHAT ARE YOUR MAIN CONCERNS?

Let us know by contacting Jane Olson at 203.458.4259 or email [jolson@vna-commh.org](mailto:jolson@vna-commh.org).



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# The Caregivers' Corner

When keeping your loved one at home means having 24 hour care, talk to LifeTime Solutions about their devoted live-in caregivers. LifeTime Solutions will find you a great match, help you through those awkward first days, and make certain that changing needs are met. Hiring a live-in can be a surprisingly wonderful experience, and provides safe, compassionate care when you need it most. For more information, contact LifeTime Solutions at 203.458.5990 or toll free 1.866.968.7587.

## LIVE-IN CAREGIVERS: DOING IT RIGHT