



# CASE

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## Care for Caregivers *Prentiss Care Networks Project*

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### Maintaining Relationships & Communication



Caregivers are doing amazing work for their loved ones and in the workplace. With all there is to do, it is easy to forget about personal lives. One important thing to remember is to maintain relationships. This can be done through positive communication. There are many people with whom you need to interact: family, friends, health care and service providers. In all these relationships, it is important to maintain open, honest, and consistent communication. There are key points to help you communicate with others. One is to be clear and specific. Hinting, or hoping someone gets the idea can lead to misunderstanding and conflict with another individual. Also, use “I” messages and avoid “you.” “I” messages prevent a person from feeling attacked and becoming defensive. Avoid “pushing buttons” of the other person. Do not use harsh language and disrespectful statements. Most importantly, remain calm. If you are frustrated or you feel like you are not getting through, walk away. Come back later. Sometimes it is just not the right time to talk.

Do not forget, communication varies in different relationships. With family, talking about a loved one’s needs can be very difficult. Remain calm. Plan a family meeting. It is important to be non-confrontational. Be open with family. Allow everyone to talk about their fears and worries. Set time limits. Keep the discussion flowing and prevent frustration. Remain calm. Outside of family meetings, set aside time for your family to relax talking about caregiving. Plan activities, like a picnic, to help the family have relaxation time together. Consider using respite workers.

It is important to not only maintain relationships with family but also to maintain friendships. This can be hard due to limited time, stress, a feeling of isolation, or a feeling that others may not understand what you are going through. Avoid the temptation to disconnect from your friends and activities. Your friends want to know what’s going on. There is no need to pretend that caregiving and the feelings that come with it are not a part of your life. Share your feelings. Try to talk with friends about other things as well: your common interests, their lives, ways to relax, and activities you might do together. If going out is difficult, consider time out for a cup of tea and a chat.

Remember relationships are important. It is important to your health to maintain key relationships. Good, supportive relationships help you to be you.

For more information on communication and relationships, visit the American Heart Association at:

<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3039841>

**Next month:  
Relationships Part III-  
Intimacy**

#### Joining us...



Matthew Lewis recently joined the University Center on Aging and Health as the new Department Assistant. Some of Matthew’s primary responsibilities will be working with the Prentiss Care Networks and outreach activities of the Center. Matthew can be reached at (216) 368-2692. Welcome!

#### Leaving us ... to do good things ...

We say farewell to our cherished team member and - notably - our Prentiss newsletter chief editor, Tresa Schumann. Ms. Schumann will be graduating this month with a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing. She has accepted a position in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Johns Hopkins University Hospital this summer. We wish her the best of luck in her career in caring for very small patients and their families.





### “Older Americans: Making Choices for a Healthier Future” - The annual May celebration of older Americans

For 44 years, May has been dedicated to honoring the many older Americans in our nation. This celebration is even larger today as the number of older Americans grows. By 2011, 78 million baby boomers will begin to turn 65 (U.S. Administration on Aging [AoA] ). This will require a change of how we as a nation view healthcare. This year’s theme, from the U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA) , “encourages us to think differently about health and long term care, and work together to rebalance and modernize our current systems so that we may adequately plan for and address the needs of current and future generations. ” This year’s celebration involves the nation’s national aging services network, led by the AoA, that includes state, tribal, and area agencies on aging, as well as more than 29,000 community service providers, caregivers and volunteers. AOA’s mission, under the Older Americans Act, is to provide for and protect the independence and dignity of our older citizens.

For more information on activities in your area for Older American Month, visit The Ohio Department of Aging website at <http://goldenbuckeye.com/oam/list.html>.

#### Caregiving...

“The lifelong process of caregiving, is the ultimate link between caregivers of all ages. You and I are not just in a phase we will outgrow. This is life—birth, death, and everything in between.... The care continuum is the cycle of life turning full circle in each of our lives. And what we learn when we spoon-feed our babies will echo in our ears as we feed our parents. The point is not to be done. The point is to be ready to do again.”

~ Paula C. Lowe (20th century), U.S. author, family life educator. *Care Pooling*, ch. 3 (1993).~



### Are you ready for the summer storm season? Disaster Preparedness for Older Adults and their Families

The following advice comes from the Center on Disease Control. During a disaster, older adults have an advantage over the younger generations: Experience. However, many older adults also may have the added difficulty of chronic illnesses, vision, hearing, or cognitive impairment. During a disaster, the supplies necessary to maintain an older adults health can become inaccessible without proper preparedness. Along with a basic emergency kit including water, food, flashlights etc., the government encourages older adults to carry a more personalized supply kit. This includes a two-week supply of medicines, a photocopy of prescriptions, and ways to transport any needed medical devices such as oxygen. A list should be accompanied with the kit to remind the older adult, caregiver or family member to double check for needed items before leaving, such as hearing aids, batteries, and glasses. For older adults who need assistance with mobility, such as those no longer driving, the Administration on Aging recommends older adults have a plan for whom to contact, such as a family member or caregiver, to help them evacuate. Also, a photocopy of personal documents, and a form of ID should be with each person. For individuals with a loved on in a nursing home, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends an inquiry about the facility’s disaster plan including notification and area of evacuation.

While a disaster is occurring, it is natural for older adults to be reluctant to leave their possessions accumulated over a lifetime. It is important to discuss and recognize the dangers of staying. Also, shelters can be busy and overwhelming to all particularly an older adult with cognitive impairment, vision, or hearing loss. Shelters may not have all the medications and staff they need. Therefore, having a family member who plans to evacuate with the older adult and have needed medical supplies such as hearing aids and medications can help reduce the stress experienced by the older adult.

After the disaster, many area agencies on aging or local senior centers will help to resettle the older adult, and serve as a contact point for family to check in. Older adults who may be more susceptible to the mental and physical affects of traumatic events should consider seeking medical attention afterwards for monitoring.

For more information on disaster preparedness for older adults, view the full national recommendations for disaster preparedness at [http://www.cdc.gov/aging/pdf/disaster\\_planning\\_tips.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/aging/pdf/disaster_planning_tips.pdf)

## Tip for Caregivers :

### Having trouble coordinating care?

**The National Alliance for Caregiving** provides a volunteer coordination service for friends, family, colleagues, and neighbors to assist loved ones in need. The web program provides a group calendar where needs can be posted and emailed to family, and friends who can then register to assist.

<http://nac.lotsahelpinghands.com/>

## Calendar of Events

Please send information about events for caregivers to us so we may include them in our calendar.

Send to: [caregiving@case.edu](mailto:caregiving@case.edu)

Date	Event
June 14th 800am-0430pm	Consortium Against Adult Abuse Conference/Annual Meeting
Ross De John Community Center Second Tuesday of June and July.	Family Caregiver Programs by The Benjamin Rose Institute topics include taking care of yourself as a caregivers, stress, and relaxation tips.
Fridays with the Western Reserve Geriatric Education Center 8:30am-9:00am	<a href="#">Topics In Geriatric Medicine</a> for formal caregivers including long term community support to HIV in the geriatric population.
Third Tuesday of every month at Fairhill 8:30am-11:00am	<a href="#">Fairhill Breakfast Club</a> discussing topics such as driving safety and depression in caregivers.

### It seems like it would be helpful, is it really a good resource?

Knowing where to look for helpful, updated information can be hard. To assist caregivers the National Alliance for Caregiving has created the Family Care Resource Connection, a collection of reviews on books, websites, videos etc. On the site, you may enter a resource to find more information about it.

<http://www.caregiving.org/fcrc.htm>



Prentiss Care Networks Project

10900 Euclid Avenue

Cleveland, Ohio 44106

216.368.2692 | Fax: 216.368.6389

Find more information at: <http://caregiving.case.edu>



## Get time off to help your strength and your spirit

As a caregiver, you care for the people around you. Isn't this summer the time during which you try to take time out for you? To rest, rejuvenate, and recharge? **Think respite**. Respite means time off for the caregiver, where formal substitute caregivers are available to care for your loved one(s). The following are some examples of adult care and child care resources:

The United Way's "First Call for Help" hotline may be a first step. Go to this internet link, which lists several respite care options in our area, to provide care for older adults as well as for younger people:

<http://www.211cleveland.org/ListTaxonomyTerms.aspx?k;:0;:N;:0;113001;respite;Partial>.

The phone number in Cuyahoga County is 211.

The Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging may be able to help. Call the WRAAA Family Caregiver Support Program at 216-621-8010 or 1-800-581-6884 or email [wraaacaregiver@yahoo.com](mailto:wraaacaregiver@yahoo.com)

Home Care Services may be available, through the Cuyahoga County Department of Senior and Aging Services. Call (216) 420-6801, or go to

<http://dsas.cuyahogacounty.us/homesupport/default.htm>

Relatives who are raising young children may find resources through the Grand parent/ Kinship program of the Cuyahoga County Department of Senior and Aging Services. Call the Grandparent/Kinship Care Program Services Coordinator at (216) 420-6772, or go to

<http://dsas.cuyahogacounty.us/communitynav.htm>

### In the next issue...

More on relationships... intimacy and belonging needs of caregivers will be discussed.

Update on activities of the Care Network: Prentiss Care Networks faculty and colleagues will be doing several national presentations for and about caregiving this summer. We will describe these educational and outreach activities in the next issue.