

Caregiver Assistance News

“Caring for You - Caring for Others”

Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

Serving Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton Counties in Ohio

www.aaa7.org **Helping You Age Better!**



FEBRUARY 2014

The Plan of Care

A Plan of Care is a record of the care and treatment a person needs. The Plan helps you and anyone who assists you with caregiving tasks, especially when a patient leaves the hospital. The discharge planner provides the caregiver with a copy of the doctor's orders and a brief set of instructions for medical care to include in the Plan.

The Plan shows:

- Diagnosis
- Medications
- Functional Limitations
- A List of Equipment Needed
- Specific Diet
- Detailed Care Instructions
- Services the Home Healthcare Agency Provides

This information is presented in a specific order so that the process of care becomes repetitive and routine. When the Plan is kept up-to-date, it provides a clear record of events that is helpful both in solving and in avoiding problems.

The Plan also keeps you from having to rely on your memory and allows another person to take over respite care or take your place with a minimum of

disruption.

Making and Recording the Plan of Care

To record a Plan of Care, use a loose-leaf notebook. Place a copy of the doctor's instructions on the inside front cover. After using your Plan of Care for one week, make necessary adjustments and continue to do so as the person's needs change.

Always adjust to what works for you and the person being cared for. Use notes, pictures, or whatever it takes to describe your responsibilities. Also, use black ink, not pencil, to maintain a



permanent record.

Patient Privacy

Be aware that because of HIPAA regulations, medical information is confidential. Professional caregivers must follow the guidelines of their agency when reporting.

Tips to Ensure You are Heard

Be sure the person in your care has their hearing aid turned up.

- Stand, sit, or squat so that you are at eye level with the person.
- Make sure your face is in the light so that your lips and facial expressions can be seen.
- Use simple sentences. For example, “Do you want your sweater?”
- Use body language such as nodding or pointing and lots of facial expressions.
- Speak in a normal tone, facing the person, and making eye contact. Do not shout.
- Do not rush or be impatient.



Tips to Make Alzheimer's Sundowning Behaviors Less Likely

- ☾ Keep the person active in the morning and encourage a rest after lunch.
- ☾ Early-evening activities that are familiar from an earlier time in the person's life may be helpful, such as "paper work" for a former secretary or planting seeds for a gardener.
- ☾ Closing the curtains, having a pre-dinner non-alcoholic drink, or assisting with preparing dinner or setting the table may be helpful.
- ☾ Consider the effect of bright lights and noise from television and radios. Are these adding to the confusion and restlessness?
- ☾ Try not to arrange baths or showers for the late afternoon if these are upsetting activities. The exception may be the person who is calmed by a hot bath before bed.
- ☾ Some people find warm milk, a back rub, or music calming.
- ☾ Some may need medication. This will need to be discussed with the doctor.

Sleeping and Aging

Sleep problems often increase with age. An older person has difficulty reaching the deeper stages of sleep and may be awakened frequently throughout the night.

The best thing to do is to keep on a regular sleep schedule. Help the person in your care to have some physical exercise and maintain a healthy diet. Be aware of medications that may cause insomnia. A tape of soft music at bedtime might help. Be sure that any emotionally upsetting topics are not discussed close to bedtime.

Source: No More Sleepless Nights, by Peter Haurin, Wiley & Sons



Don't Fall, Be Safe!

Due to changes in the brain that are caused by Alzheimer's disease (AD), those with AD are especially at high risk for falling. Slower reaction time or difficulty

recognizing changes in the height or depth of a step, for example, can lead to tripping and falling. Changes in balance and coordination combined with poor memory can make it difficult for a person with AD to move from one place to another and avoid hazardous objects at the same time.



To help the person in your care feel more confident, adaptive devices such as walkers or canes can be useful, but you will have to remind him/her to use these devices.

"Your eyes see what they are trained to see."

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

Gratitude

We all have times when we have conflicts with family and friends, feel we are not doing a good job, and generally feel keyed-up. Take a few moments every day, preferably at a routine time, to write in a "gratitude" journal. You will feel better and be more optimistic. Refer to your gratitude list regularly. Express appreciation to someone every day.



Carry Vital Medical Information

It is important to organize medical information so that it is on a card and with the family caregiver when traveling with the person in your care. Include:

- Doctor's name and phone number
- Pre-existing medical conditions, drug and food allergies
- Medical devices
- List of all medications, including supplements and herbs
- Past surgeries
- Insurance information



Upcoming Alzheimer's Association Workshops

Understanding and Dealing with Alzheimer's Disease or Another Dementia



This program will provide an opportunity for families and caregivers to learn and ask questions about Alzheimer's disease and dementia, while receiving support from others in similar situations. Program is free of charge. No registration required.

Jackson County - Four Winds Nursing Facility in Jackson or Jenkins Care Community in Wellston (noted below)

1:00 pm - 2:30 pm

Scheduled Topics:

March 20th - Communication (Jenkins) • April 17th - Understanding Behavior (Four Winds)

May 15th - Open Discussion (Jenkins) • June 19th - Unspoken Grief: Losses of Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementia (Four Winds) • July 17th - Safety Considerations (Jenkins) • August 21st - Open Discussion (Four Winds) September 18th - Activities and Interaction (Jenkins) • October 16th - Advanced Stage Issues and Decisions (Four Winds)

November 20th - Dealing with Holidays (Jenkins) • December 18th - Open Discussion (Four Winds)

January 15, 2015 - Making the Transition from Home to a Care Facility (Jenkins)

Scioto County - Best Care Nursing and Rehab in Wheelersburg

2:00 pm - 3:30 pm

Scheduled Topics: April 8th - Unspoken Grief: Losses of Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementia

June 10th - Open Discussion • August 12th - Making the Transition from

Home to a Care Facility • October 14th - How to Make Visits More Meaningful (At Home and Nursing Facility)/Dealing with Holiday Issues • December 9th - Understanding Challenging Behaviors

For more information about these programs and other similar programs available in or near your community, or for assistance with registering, please call Melissa Dever, LSW, from the Alzheimer's Association, at (740) 710-1821.



Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

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Your local Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc. serves the following counties in Ohio: Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton. Services are rendered on a non-discriminatory basis. Those interested in learning more about the services provided through the Area Agency on Aging District 7 can call toll-free at 1-800-582-7277. Here, individuals can talk directly with a nurse or social worker who will assist them with information surrounding the programs and services that are available to best serve their needs. The Agency can also be reached via e-mail at info@aaa7.org.

Safety Tips - Sundowning in Alzheimer's

Individuals with Alzheimer's disease may become more confused, restless, or insecure late in the afternoon or early evening when the sun is going down. It can be worse after a move or a change in their routine. They may become suspicious or see and hear things that are not there. Some other possible causes:

- An upset in the "internal body clock," causing a biological mix-up between day and night.
- Less need for sleep, which is common among older adults.
- The person can not see well in dim light and becomes confused.
- The person becomes tired at the end of the day and is less able to cope with stress.
- The person is involved in activities all day long and grows restless if there is nothing to do in the late afternoon or evening.
- The caregiver communicates fatigue and stress to the person and they become anxious.

