CarePartners INITIATIVE

Learning to Live with Memory Loss

FEBRUARY 2025 NEWSLETTER

caring for the caregiver

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Valentine's Day is traditionally a day to celebrate romance, but it's also an excellent opportunity to express heartfelt gratitude and affection to the caregivers in our lives.

Family caregivers constantly perform acts of love and kindness. This Valentine's Day, take the time to show them just how much you appreciate their love and support.

The 4 Rs: Tips to Celebrate Valentine's Day with a Loved One Living with Dementia

Alzheimer's Foundation of America Encourages Families to Follow the 4 Rs this Valentine's Day.

Valentine's Day can bring unique challenges to relationships where someone has dementia and cannot express themselves or remember things as they did before the onset of the illness. To help families affected by dementia, the Alzheimer's Foundation of America (AFA) is offering four tips on how to celebrate Valentine's Day with someone living with Alzheimer's disease or another dementia-related illness.

"Valentine's Day is all about honoring the love and bond between loved ones. Dementia may impact a person's ability to celebrate Valentine's Day as they once did, but there are ways families can adapt the holiday to express love, connect with one another, and show that person how much they mean to you,"—Jennifer Reeder, LCSW, AFA's Director of Educational and Social Services.

♥ Reminisce

Go through old photos together with your loved one and describe them—who the people are, where it was taken, what the occasion was, etc. Simply talking about shared moments, whether it's a vacation, celebration, or another occasion that you happily enjoyed together, is a great way to celebrate the love and special bond you share with one another.

♥ Reconnect

The impact of dementia can make it challenging to do everything exactly as you once did, but there are numerous ways to maintain, restore or create intimacy, love and connection. Sharing a meal, watching a familiar movie, enjoying favorite music, or just taking a walk together are all ways to help stay connected. Nonverbal cues, such as gentle touching, smiles, and eye contact, can also maintain or strengthen connections with someone who may no longer be able to verbalize their emotions as they had before.

♥ Relate

Physical touch, words of affirmation, quality time, gifts, and acts of service are all types of "love languages" that people use to give or receive love. Know what types of gestures your loved one responds positively to and try to "speak to them" in that love language. Be mindful that these may change over time as the dementia-related illness progresses.

♥ Reaffirm

Write a Valentine's card and read it out loud to your loved one. Even if they can no longer grasp the full meaning, the act of writing it and communicating your love can help lift your own spirits. The time-honored Valentine's Day gift of flowers is another way to enjoy the holiday together. Purchase a bouquet of fresh flowers, set it on a table, and enjoy the fragrances together—the scent can help improve mood, promote positive feelings, and stimulate the brain.

Memory Cafes

Our **January 13th** Memory Cafe was a celebration of all our wonderful volunteers. We enjoyed a yummy brunch together. We are so grateful for all you do for our Memory Cafe!!!

Our **January 27th** Memory Cafe was music themed, and we enjoyed "silent disco" with headphones. The laughter, singing and dancing was priceless! Thank you to Sheila Martin for loaning us the headsets. We were also blessed to have guest professor Carolyn Mae Lucas share some history about the classical composer Tchaikovsky and play some of his most famous pieces.

Our next Memory Cafe will be on February 10th and will be Valentine's themed. Please feel free to join us in wearing pink or red. Also, we would love it if you would bring a wedding photo or a photo of when you first met to share with the group.

CarePartners offers a Memory Cafe twice a month on the 2nd and 4th Monday, 10:00 am - noon, at the Sonoma United Methodist Church (Community Room), located at 109 Patten Street, Sonoma.

Upcoming Memory Cafe dates are:

Monday, February 10

Monday, February 24

Attending a Memory Cafe is a very important time for loved ones and caregivers to socialize and enjoy fun activities. Loved ones must be accompanied by a caregiver, however, a friend or family member may bring the loved one in place of the primary caregiver. It's free to attend.

We hope to see you!

Support Groups for Caregivers (in-person and Zoom)

CarePartners offers a free in-person support group each month at the Sonoma United Methodist Church (Community Room), located at 109 Patten Street, Sonoma.
4th Wednesday, 11:00am - 12:30pm ✦ Facilitator: Heidi Lage, LMFT
- **Upcoming: February 26**

Please consider joining us. It is a confidential space to share difficulties and wins with other caregivers. It is truly validating to be in the company of others who intimately understand the journey of a care partner of a loved one with memory decline.

Our in-person support group on January 22nd had to be converted to Zoom due to Heidi having a cold and not wanting to expose anyone. Thank you for your flexibility and understanding.

Our next in-person support group will be on February 26th. Please RSVP to let us know if you plan to attend. We are planning to limit the support groups to 10 people to be sure everyone has adequate time and space to share.

Testimonial: "*Having support groups to connect with has been great because you can talk about what you've been going through and everyone can relate. We talk about situations that have been challenging or tactics to use when actually caregiving. There is no judgment and knowing you are not alone in this journey is comforting.*"

NEW PROGRAM OFFERING!

CarePartners now offers a free once a month ZOOM caregiver support group.
1st Tuesday, 12:00-1:30 pm ✦ Facilitator: Heidi Lage, LMFT
- **Upcoming: February 4**

Have you been hesitant to join our caregiver group because it was only offered in-person? Are you unable to leave your loved one to attend a support group? Do you work and only have a lunch break to attend a support group? Or do you want to attend two caregiver support groups a month (once in-person and one via Zoom)? Then this group is for you! You can join via video teleconferencing or simply dial in.

We had our first Zoom support group on January 7th. We would like to build participation, please let us know if Zoom is a good fit for you. You don't need to do this alone.

Please contact Heidi for a short intake and the Zoom link.at 707-640-3734
or heidilagelmft@gmail.com

Social Activities Group

January Social Activity

In January we had lunch while being entertained by the fabulous Hula Mai dancers! It was just lovely and festive performance! We send our appreciation to them for sharing their time and talent.

February Social Activity
Co-Activity with Memory Cafe - Valentine's Day theme
Monday, February 10
10:00 am - 12:00 pm
Location: Sonoma United Methodist Church (Community Room)

For February we will be joining the 2/10 Memory Cafe for a Valentine's themed event. There will be music and goodies to eat! If you would like, wear pink or red to celebrate Valentine's Day. If you have not attended a Memory Cafe, we hope you can join us!

SAVE THE DATE! *The Magic Toy Shop* at the Sonoma Conservatory of Dance

In March we have been invited to attend a dress rehearsal of the ballet performance of *The Magic Toy Shop* at the Sonoma Conservatory of Dance. The rehearsal is from 1:00 -3:00 pm on **Sunday, March 23**. The Conservatory of Dance is located at 561 Broadway, Suite B, across the street from Peet's Coffee. If you plan on attending, please email me at sippelsusanne@gmail.com.

Volunteer Profile

Susan Murray received a master's degree from Stanford University and worked as a head teacher for 15 years at Bing Nursery School, a laboratory/research facility on campus.

After several years as a stay-at-home mom of two sons, she became a health educator for Planned Parenthood in the South Bay for 17 years. There she was involved in the Prenatal Program before becoming the Breast Health Coordinator.

In retirement she was a volunteer at Bay Area Cancer Connections in Palo Alto, a nonprofit that offers programs and services to people touched by breast and ovarian cancer. In 2015 Susan and her husband Scott, moved to Sonoma - a dream come true for them. She became Lead Volunteer for another nonprofit, Cancer Support Sonoma, nine years ago. It has been a perfect fit for her, and is now family affair, as Scott has been the President of the Board for the last five years.

Susan has been involved at the Sonoma United Methodist Church since moving here. She leads the Dynamic Garden Crew, a group of five 60-90 year old ladies who do most of the gardening and landscaping around the church campus! She also keeps in contact with parishioners who are mostly housebound, visiting them and sending cards and letters. Whatever is going on at SUMC, Susan gets involved. That is how she learned about the Memory Cafe. She loves her volunteer role with this amazing group of loving, caring, and giving people!

Volunteers Needed!

Want A New Sense of Purpose in Your Life?

CarePartners Initiative is looking for volunteers with experience in fundraising, program management and hands-on help executing our many programs. If you are looking for a rewarding volunteer experience, please consider contacting us at info@carepartnersinitiative.org or call our Helpline at 707-732-9436. We look forward to hearing from you!

We would also love to welcome you as a volunteer at one of our hosted Memory Cafes - a safe and supported place for individuals with memory decline and their care partner.

It's a comfortable atmosphere where everyone can come together for shared experiences doing craft activities, interacting with guest artists, musicians, therapy pets, and all sorts of fun socializing while making friends! We hope you can contribute some of your time by lending a helping hand or a listening ear. We know that those in attendance will appreciate your time.
For more information, please call or email Heidi Lage, 707-640-3734 | heidilagelmft@gmail.com

"Volunteers are America's silent strength. Those who give of themselves in a spirit of unselfish devotion to the needs of others are truly this nation's most generous, unsung heroes."
William Arthur Ward, Who's Who in American Education

Dementia Friendly Sonoma Valley

Sonoma is a Dementia Friendly Community

Dementia Friendly America: https://dfamerica.org/
Part of our mission is to deepen awareness of the symptoms and signs of dementia. As a community, we can enhance the safety and quality of life for the estimated 1,000 people in Sonoma Valley with dementia and their caregivers.
Dementia is complex. Here's a short video that summarizes it well.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_KlRpFu1Ub8
If you would like more information on Sonoma's program, please visit the Dementia Friendly Sonoma Valley information page on our website here.

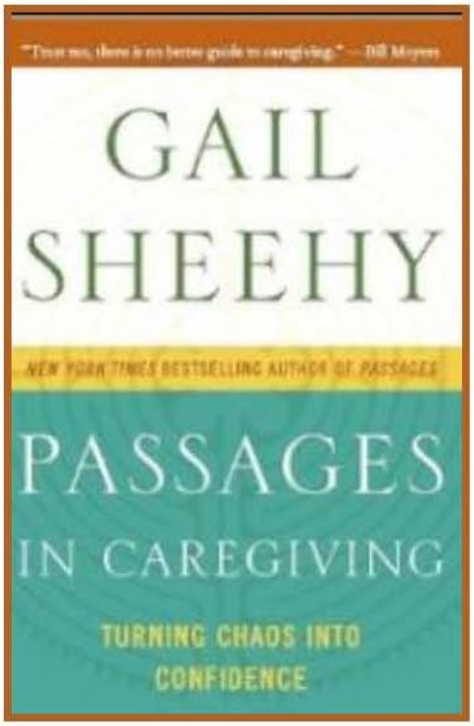
Dementia Friends Milestones
There are currently 188,262 Dementia Friends throughout the United States.

CarePartners' Library at Vintage House

CarePartners Initiative has a collection of books and DVDs relating to caregiving of loved ones with dementia in the library at Vintage House. The above photo on the left shows the location of the shelf on the right-hand wall next to the clock, just inside the Vintage House library, and the photo on the right shows the shelf itself. The books must be checked out at the front desk and returned ASAP. If you have library donations, please contact Susanne: sippelsusanne@gmail.com

Vintage House Senior Center is located at 264 1st St. East, Sonoma.
We hope you have an opportunity to stop by the Vintage House library to delve into all our resource shelf has to offer. A small sample is listed below.

Book Report



Passages in Caregiving: Turning Chaos into Confidence

by Gail Sheehy (Author)

In this valuable guide, Gail Sheehy, the acclaimed expert on the now aging Baby Boomer generation, outlines the essential steps for effective, successful family caregiving—turning chaos into confidence during this most crucial of life stages.

No one really expects it, but at some time or another, just about everyone has been or will be responsible for giving care, for a sustained period, to someone close to them. In Passages in Caregiving, she takes you by the hand and shows you that you will get through this, and you will do the right things. Sheehy identifies the crucial stages of caregiving and offers insights for successfully navigating each one.

With empathy and intelligence, backed by formidable research, and interspersed with poignant stories of her experience and that of other successful caregivers, Passages in Caregiving addresses the needs of this enormous and growing group. Providing invaluable advice and guidance, this book examines the arc of caregiving from the first signs of trouble. Sheehy answers the most important questions to consider: How serious is it? What do I ask the doctor? How will this be paid for? What are our options? At the same time she offers new tips and strategies that you won't find anywhere else and points out that you don't have to be alone in the process. Included are countless resources and names of advocacy groups that are there to help even the most complicated of situations, many of which are woefully underutilized. Passages in Caregiving is sure to help turn a stressful, life-altering situation into a journey that can be safely navigated and from which everyone can benefit.

Reviews:
"*As a longtime champion for family caregivers, I am delighted that Gail Sheehy has brought this passage vividly to life from her own long experience and that of many others'. This is one of those rare books that can drastically lighten even the heaviest of loads.*" — **Rosalynn Carter, President of the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving**

"*In this insightful book that combines a moving firsthand account of her own journey and valuable strategies for navigating the labyrinth of care-giving, Gail Sheehy takes the mystery out of what can be a baffling, heart-rending experience. A must-read for anyone who gets the Call.*" — **Hugh Delehanty, Editor in Chief of AARP Publications**

NBC NEWS Article

"Dementia risk may be twice as high as Americans live longer, study finds"
Article by Kaitlin Sullivan and Jessica Herzberg | January 13, 2025

Older studies estimated a lower risk of dementia. According to new research, the number of people living with the disease in the U.S. is expected to double by 2060.

The risk of developing dementia may be much higher than previously thought, a study published Monday in the journal Nature Medicine has found.

Older studies estimated that about 14% of men and 23% of women would develop dementia in their lifetimes. The new study puts that estimate higher, at around 42% for both men and women.

Click here to read the entire article.

Featured Resource

Hanna Center
CELEBRATING 75 YEARS IN SONOMA

Community Mental Health Hub at Hanna - descriptions of their bereavement services to support the Sonoma Valley community:

• Compassionate Grief Support in Sonoma Valley
In partnership with the Sonoma Valley Interfaith Ministerial Association (SVIMA), the Community Mental Health Hub at Hanna now offers bereavement services to support the Sonoma Valley community.

Recognizing the need for expanded grief support beyond initial pastoral care, SVIMA members began collaborating with Hanna clinicians to address diverse community needs. Through their combined efforts, they developed a multi-faceted approach to bereavement, providing various levels of support, including grief groups, individual peer support, and specialized workshops.

• Workshops on Managing Grief and Loss
Workshops on grief and loss would provide an initial opportunity for the bereaved to learn about the process of grief and loss, to share their story of loss with others who have lost loved ones and offer resources for those who would like additional support. These workshops might provide individuals with the support they need to move forward in mourning their loss or they might be an avenue for accessing additional support.

• Peer Support for Mourners
Individuals who have personally experienced the loss of a loved one and volunteer their time to provide companionship and accompaniment to mourners during the first year after loss. These individuals would be provided with training in grief and loss, active listening, and the art of companioning the bereaved and support to check in with questions or concerns. They would commit to volunteering their time for a minimum of one year of service and agree to provide peer support to the bereaved during that time. Peer support could be offered to individuals who attend a workshop or reach out to join a grief group, which would provide support during a difficult time. It would address the desire to be responsive to those who are grieving and might not be able to join a group right away.

• Grief Groups
Our grief groups were created to support those who are grieving the loss of a loved one by providing information on the grieving process, a safe space to process grief, and offering companionship with other mourners. The grief groups will be for adults in their first year of loss but no earlier than three months after the death of a loved one. Participants will be asked to commit to attending all eight sessions and keeping what they heard in the group sessions confidential. To facilitate group cohesion, each quarterly cohort of eight sessions will be closed. Whenever possible, two clinicians will facilitate each session.

2025 Schedule: Tuesdays, 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm
Winter: 01/14/25 - 03/11/25
Spring: 04/15/25 - 06/10/25
Summer: 07/01/25 - 09/09/25
To learn more or inquire about grief groups, please call the Hub at (707) 933-4482.

Resource Corner

The mission of Redwood Caregiver Resource Center is to help families and communities master the challenges of caring for adults with brain disorders through programs and services that address the emotional, physical, and financial needs of family caregivers. All services are free or low cost. Throughout the year they offer a variety of classes.
Telephone: Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm (707) 542-0282 | 800-834-1636

Respite Care If needed: Redwood CRC helps families locate appropriate respite care for a loved one. Limited financial assistance may be offered to help with the expense of in-home aids, daycare, overnight care, weekend respite or transportation for a family member with brain impairment.

Caregiver 101 Class | via Zoom
For the family members or caregivers of loved ones with dementia.
Discussion: Strategies for dealing with dementia associated symptoms and the importance of advance planning. Who should attend: Family members or caregivers of patients who have a diagnosis of dementia. It is recommended that patients with dementia should not attend this class.
Tuesday, February 18
Time: 1:30 - 3:30 pm
Phone: (707) 582-2329
Click here to register.

Share & Care Support Group
2nd and 4th Thursday of each month, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
ZOOM video teleconferencing or call-in
Evening Caregiver Support Group
(in partnership with First Presbyterian, Santa Rosa Care Ministries)
2nd Thursday of each month, 6:00 - 7:30 pm
ZOOM video teleconferencing or call-in
• To receive Zoom information please contact
Amie at axh@redwoodcrc.org | Telephone: 707-582-2329

Empowered Caregiver: Building Foundations of Caregiving | via Zoom
Hosted by: Caregiver Resource Center OC
The Empowered Caregiver education series teaches caregivers how to navigate the responsibilities of caring for someone living with dementia. Caregivers can register for individual courses to meet their needs or complete the entire series. You must register for each class individually.
Upcoming class topics:
- Communicating Effectively (**Wednesday, February 5**)
- Responding to Dementia Related Behaviors (**Wednesday, February 19**)

Time: 5:30 - 6:30 pm
Phone: (800) 543-8312
Click here to register for the February 5th class.
Click here to register for the February 19th class.

Doing More by Doing Less: Putting Burnout on the Backburner | via Zoom
Hosted by: Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center
At the beginning stages of caregiving, it can be a struggle, it can be confusing and sometimes frightening. Learn about what steps you need to take, where to start and what to do. Learn to reach out to people, services, and information that will be a guide for you to help care for a loved one. The earlier you act and find support, the sooner you'll get a handle on the confusion and frustration that is often experienced in the caregiving process.
Date: Tuesday, February 11
Time: 10:30 - 11:30 am
Phone: (916) 728-9333
Click here to register.

Holding a Family Meeting | via Zoom
Hosted by: Valley Caregiver Resource Center
A 90-minute virtual class presented by Valley Caregiver Resource Center. Family meetings are an important part of caregiving and there are many tips and tools that can help bring a family together to be on the same page about the care of your loved one.
Date: Wednesday, February 19
Time: 2:00-3:30 pm
Phone: (800) 541-8614
Click here to register.

Listen: Powerful Tools for Caregivers Relaxation Recordings
Click here to get relaxed and focused with the free Powerful Tools Relaxation recordings:
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- A Walk to the Beach with Guided Imagery.

Monthly Quote

Dear Caregiver,
You are important!
You are doing a great job!
You should be proud
of yourself.

Humor

"What a coincidence! You forgot my birthday and I forgot how to cook."

PLEASE CONSIDER A DONATION

We are planning big things in 2025. We're excited and know there is so much more we can do. We need your help as we expand our programs to support caregivers and their loved ones impacted by memory decline. Our programs touch lives and make a difference, and you can too.

Please consider a tax-deductible donation. It will help drive our efforts to expand our free programs and reach many more people whose lives can be transformed. We appreciate that you have many choices when it comes to your charitable giving, and we would be grateful for any amount you choose to give,
501 (c) (3) Tax ID: 94-2524840

Click here to
Donate Now