CarePartners
INITIATIVE
Learning to Live with Memory Loss

MAY 2025 NEWSLETTER

caring for the caregiver

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May is **Dementia Awareness Month** and Mental Health Awareness Month.

Please join CarePartners in helping reduce the stigma around Dementia.

- Encourage interaction with individuals living with dementia to help challenge negative stereotypes and promote a more inclusive environment.
- Encourage individuals with dementia to participate in activities, exercise, and social interactions to maintain their well-being.
- Focus on the abilities and strengths of individuals living with dementia, emphasizing that they can still participate in meaningful activities and relationships.
- Focus on the individual rather than the disease, using respectful and inclusive language.
- Promote awareness of dementia symptoms and encourage individuals to seek early diagnosis and support.
- Support policies that promote early diagnosis, access to care, and dementia-friendly communities.

Awareness and education are the first steps to understanding Dementia. Dementia is a complex syndrome that affects millions of individuals worldwide, as well as their families and caregivers. In the United States, the Dementia Society of America (DSA) has emerged as a prominent organization that raises awareness and supports those affected by Dementia. DSA is vital in empowering individuals living with Dementia and fostering a more inclusive society.

The Dementia Society of America is a national nonprofit organization celebrating 10 years of improving the lives of individuals living with Dementia, their caregivers, and their families.

The organization offers a wide range of educational programs and resources designed to increase awareness and understanding of Dementia. DSA's educational outreach promotes Dementia awareness among students and fosters a compassionate and inclusive society. By educating future generations about Dementia, DSA aims to reduce stigma and create an environment that embraces and supports individuals affected by the condition.

Recognizing the challenges faced by individuals living with Dementia and their caregivers, DSA provides various support programs. The organization also recognizes the importance of respite care programs that give caregivers much-needed relief, allowing them to recharge and continue providing optimal care for their loved ones.

Click here to view their website.

Mental Health Awareness Month has been observed in May in the United States since 1949. The month is observed with media, local events, and film screenings. Mental Health Awareness Month began in the United States in 1949 and was started by Mental Health America.

The Mental Health Awareness Month theme for 2025 is "Turn Awareness into Action". This theme emphasizes moving beyond understanding mental health issues to taking concrete steps to improve well-being and support those in need.

Memory Cafes

We had two fantastic Memory Cafes in the month of April! On April 14th we celebrated Spring and planted succulents.

On April 28th, we celebrated an early Cinco De Mayo and enjoyed special guest dancers. And of course, we had singing, and music provided by our most dedicated volunteer, Brady Hoff!

Please join us May 12th as we will have a "Western" themed Memory Cafe and we will have ponies visiting from Giant Steps Equine Therapy!
Important Notice: The May 26th Memory Cafe is cancelled in observance of Memorial Day.

CarePartners offers a free Memory Cafe twice a month on the 2nd and 4th Monday, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm, at the Sonoma United Methodist Church (Community Room), located at 109 Patten Street, Sonoma.
Upcoming Memory Cafe dates:
Monday, May 12
Monday, May 26 (cancelled due to Memorial Day holiday)

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: May 28**

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 next in-person support group will be on Wednesday, May 28.
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.*"

CarePartners offers a free once a month ZOOM caregiver support group.

1st Tuesday, 12:00-1:30 pm ✦ Facilitator: Heidi Lage, LMFT

- **Upcoming: May 6**

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.

Our Zoom sessions have been well attended. We would like to build participation so 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: (707) 640-3734
or heidilagelmft@gmail.com.

Social Activities Group

April Social Activity
A lovely time was had by all who attended our lunch at the Sonoma Garden Park!
Many thanks to our wonderful volunteer Brady who shared his musical gifts with us; he is the best!

June Social Activity
Date: Monday, May 19
Time: 1:00 - 2:00 pm
Location: Vintage Kennels
22071 Bonness Road, Sonoma

CarePartners has a special event planned for our May Social Activity!
We are invited to Vintage Kennels for a farm tour of their private zoo! If you have never gone, we hope you take the opportunity to come for this unique experience. Brian, one of the owners, is an amazing guide.
You will not be disappointed!
For planning purposes, please RSVP to sippelsusanne@gmail.com so she can add you to the attendee list.

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.

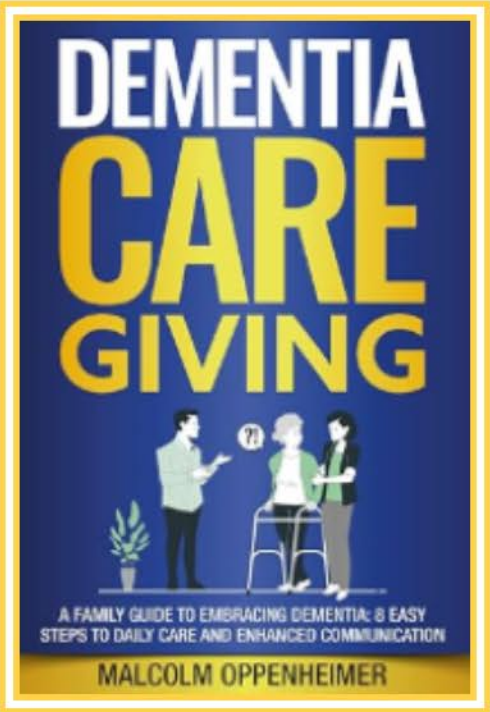
Dementia Friends Milestones
There are currently 188,262 Dementia Friends throughout the United States.

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.

Book Report



Dementia Caregiving:
A Family Guide to Embracing Dementia: 8 Easy Steps to Daily Care and Enhanced Communication
by Malcolm Oppenheimer (Author)

Caring for a loved one who is gradually losing their mental and physical abilities over time is one of the most challenging tasks. However, by adopting a family-centered approach, we can overcome caregiver burnout and find solace in supporting one another.

In many traditional cultures, the elderly receive care from the wider community and the entire family unit. They are respected for their wisdom and knowledge and as a valuable link to the past and family history. Unfortunately, in our Western modern-day culture, we are conditioned to be self-reliant, independent, and often isolated. This raises important questions: How can we involve our extended families? What if they are far away or unable to provide financial assistance? And what about the impact of dementia caregiving on our children and partners?

This compassionate and informative guide offers answers to these pressing questions and more. Even if you believe you are well-versed in the basics of dementia care, being the sole primary caregiver can be incredibly demanding. It is time to draw inspiration from community-based cultures and reach out, forming networks of care with those closest to us and our loved ones with dementia. While the journey may be arduous, remember that you do not have to walk it alone.

Within the pages of this practical book on dementia caregiving, you will gain:
• A deeper understanding of dementia, including its signs, symptoms, and stages.
• Insights into the disease's progression and the duration of each stage.
• Strategies to utilize the strength of the family foundation for the well-being of everyone involved.
• Guidance on communicating with children, partners, siblings, friends, and extended family about dementia.
• Practical tips for creating a peaceful, safe, and welcoming home environment for both the individual with dementia and the entire family.
• Enjoyable activities to foster bonding and connection within the family, creating lasting moments of happiness.
• Advice on building a collaborative caregiving team, allowing each member to contribute their unique strengths and abilities.
• Techniques for addressing resentments and conflicts that may arise.
• Tips for seeking and obtaining the necessary help and support.
• Real-life case studies of families who have successfully navigated the challenges of dementia care.

Featured Resource (Forum)

DEMENTIA CAREGIVING ESSENTIALS

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

PRESENTED BY: ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

This mini-forum is free and donations are always appreciated.

Location: Star of the Valley Catholic Church- MSGR Fahey Parish CTR
495 White Oak Drive, Santa Rosa, CA 95409
Date: Thursday, May 15, 2025
Time: 9:00 am - 12:15 pm
Call (800) 272-3900 to register.

This half-day education forum, co-sponsored by Star of the Valley Church and Tweeten Eldercare Advisors, will offer insights into identifying the role of caregivers, building a support team, planning for future care changes, and exploring various respite care and housing options. Complimentary lunch will be served. **Registration is required**. For more information call (707) 573-1210.

Forum Program Schedule:
9:00-9:30 am: Check-in
9:30-9:40 am: Welcome
9:40-10:25 am: Building Foundations of Care
10:25-10:30 am: Break
10:30-11:00 am: Respite Options – Informal, Home Care and Day Care
11:00-11:30 am: Housing and Care Options for Seniors with Memory Loss
11:30 am: Complimentary Lunch
11:45 am-12:15 pm: Panel Q and A

Resource Corner

5th Annual Women's Health Symposium: Stress Less – Live Longer
Location: Hanna Center, 17000 Arnold Drive, Sonoma
Date: Tuesday, May 6
Time: 11:00 am - 2:00 pm
Presented by the Sonoma Valley Hospital Foundation and UCSF Health. This year's theme, "Stress Less – Live Longer," will feature expert speakers sharing valuable insights on managing stress and its impact on overall health. Don't miss this opportunity to learn practical tips and strategies to reduce stress and improve your well-being. Click here to reserve your spot today.

- **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.

- **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**
The 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
Spring: 4/15/25 - 6/10/25
Summer: 7/1/25 - 9/9/25
To learn more or inquire about grief groups, please call the Hub at (707) 933-4482.

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.

Bathing without a Battle and Mouth Care without a Battle | via Zoom
These films demonstrate helpful strategies for minimizing fear and resistance to help with areas of personal care, including bathing and mouth care. Understanding the root causes of resistant behaviors, anticipating and minimizing predictable triggers for fear and resistance, setting realistic expectations for both then care receiver and the caregiver.
Date: Tuesday, May 6
Time: 1:30 - 3:30 pm
Phone: (707) 582-2329
Click here to register.

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.
Date: Tuesday, May 20
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

Respite Options | via Zoom
Join us to learn about different respite options available to caregivers. It is important for caregivers to take breaks and have time for themselves. This class will provide information on how to access respite services, and how they can benefit family caregivers. Learn about what options are available for respite care, allowing you as a caregiver to take time for yourself to rest, recharge and take care of you.
We will discuss:
• Veterans Affairs Benefits
• Medicare
• Medi-Cal
• Grant Programs & More
Date: Monday, May 5
Time: 2:00 - 3:00 pm
Phone: (800) 543-8312
Click here to register.

The Empowered Caregiver: Responding to Dementia-Related Behaviors | via Zoom
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.
Responding to Dementia-Related Behaviors details common behavior changes and how they are a form of communication, non-medical approaches to behaviors and recognizing when additional help is needed.
Date: Wednesday, May 7
Time: 5:30 - 6:30 pm
Phone: (800) 543-8312
Click here to register.

The Empowered Caregiver: Exploring Care and Support Services | via Zoom
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.
Exploring Care and Support Services examines how best to prepare for future care decisions and changes, including respite care, residential care and end-of life care.
Date: Wednesday, May 21
Time: 5:30 - 6:30 pm
Phone: (800) 543-8312
Click here to register.

Doing More by Doing Less: Putting Burnout on the Backburner | via Zoom
This is a 90-minute class presented by Valley Caregiver Resource Center. We will be joined by a therapist from Independence at Home, A Scan Community Service. This class teaches caregivers to establish boundaries and learn to prioritize self-care and relaxation in their daily lives.
Date: Tuesday, May 13
Time: 2:00 - 3:30 pm
Phone: (800) 541-8614
Click here to register.

Champions of Chaos Supportive Peer Weekly Meeting | via Zoom
Date: Every Wednesday
Time: 12:00 pm
Phone: 415-828-3733

Champions of Chaos is hosted once a week and offered by enABLE Care ManagementSM. The virtual gatherings are always free and always optional. It is a supportive peer weekly meeting for individuals navigating the aging process for someone else. This is a mutual self-help group, not a therapy group. Hopefully, this group will provide emotional, psychological, and moral support for its members. Each of us is encouraged to participate to whatever extent we feel comfortable.

How the Free Champions of Chaos Group Works:
Complete the registration form.
Receive a link to the one-hour weekly call.
Join as you can/need to.

Whether you need to vent, need to brainstorm resources or solutions, or just know that you are not alone in the chaos of helping someone through the challenging chapters of their lives, enABLE invites you to join whenever you can.

Types of Chaos you might be Championing for someone in decline:

- Worries about COVID-19
- Fall worries or issues
- Concerns about finances
- Wondering am I doing enough?
- Resources or tips to help
- Guilt
- Frustration
- Little wins or magical moments!
- Gratitude
- Hope

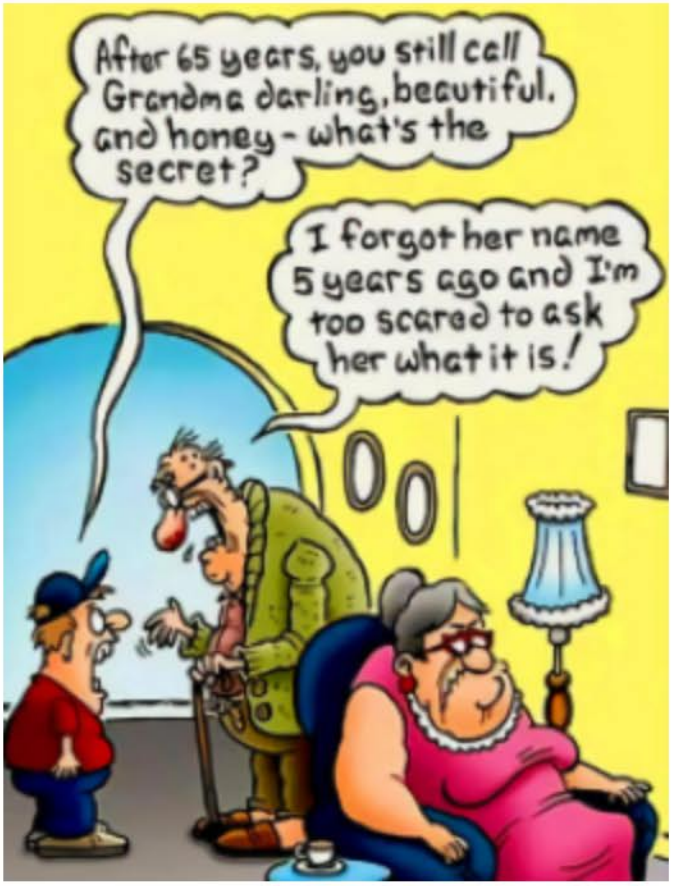
Click here to learn more or to register.

Building Foundations of Caregiving | via Zoom
Date: Tuesday, May 13
Time: 10:30 - 11:30 am
Phone: (916) 728-9333
Click here to register.
Join us the Alzheimer's Association explores the role of caregiver and changes they may experience, building a support team, and managing caregiver stress.

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

Humor



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

CarePartners Initiative
P.O. Box 101
Sonoma, CA 95476