

# THE SHARED CARE NEWSLETTER

SECOND EDITION/SPRING 2011



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## Andrea Olitzky, LMSW SHARED CARE Program Coordinator

During the February Caregiver Support Group, I asked each member to share with the group one thing that they have learned about themselves as caregivers. Some of the group members were ready with an answer immediately, while others needed a few minutes to think about how to respond. As each group member shared his or her thoughts, I realized they were all referring to concrete caregiving tasks that they each provide for the person they are caring for. For example, learning how to administer medication or how to clean a feeding tube.

My intention behind presenting the group with this question was to encourage each group member to think about their individual strengths as caregivers, or to recognize the useful coping skills they have each

adopted. I expected the answers to be emotional and reflective, and most importantly, I expected their answers to actually be about themselves. I explained to the group that I wanted to them to share a feeling or emotion related to caregiving, or something that they did not expect to feel when caring for their loved one. The group agreed that they had misunderstood my question because they are not used to thinking about their feelings related to caregiving. Many caregivers are focused on the task at hand, so when asked a question about something they have learned as caregivers, of course the responses would include a concrete service.

I encouraged each group member to think about an individual strength that has developed as a result of

being caregiver. For example, patience or being organized. Caregivers often feel they are not doing enough for the person they are caring for. In recognizing strengths, caregivers are able to focus on their abilities instead of just their limitations. With the support of other caregivers, we can learn how to better care for our loved ones and ourselves!



## What are some of the services SHARED CARE offers at the Y?

- Individual Counseling for support and referrals
- Support groups on-site and via telephone conference call
- Individualized planning and assistance
- Home visits for evaluation
- Informational workshops
- Respite Supports
- Referrals to services in the community
- Friendly visitors, Meals on Wheels, Minor Home Repairs

Andrea Olitzky, LMSW  
Program Coordinator

If you have any questions regarding SHARED CARE please contact [aolitzky@ywashhts.org](mailto:aolitzky@ywashhts.org) or call 212-569-6200 ext 233



## Four Insights on Caregiving by Jean Lee Poggi and Rebecca Krause, SW Intern



“If you feel like you are being spread too thin, don’t be afraid to ask for help”

### 1. **Being a caregiver is like running a small business.**

All of the paperwork, phone calls, e-mails, and working relationships with doctors, aides, social workers, and billing departments can make caregiving seem like you’re running a business. Yet unlike a business, where you’re working for a profit, caregiving is an act of generosity.

2. **While caregiving is often forever, you can also make adjustments.** It is a relentless and unpredictable responsibility, but there is help available.

3. **If your loved one has an impaired memory, find a way to relate to them.** Sometimes, when you don’t have the answer, your loved one does.

4. **“Getting to know me”.** Caregivers can experience a plethora of emotions, and the feeling of being overwhelmed is often the most difficult. In this case, self-awareness is key. Many caregivers connect with their emotions through meditation, breathing techniques, or constructing a mind map. A mind map will help you compartmentalize an emotion by listing all of its components.



## UPCOMING EVENTS FOR CAREGIVERS AT THE Y

A Presentation on Advance Directives with Dr. Dante from Columbia University Medical Center: March 31st 11:00am

De-Cluttering Your Mind and Home, Lessons for Caregivers: April 28th 11:00am

A Spiritual Guide to Caregiving with Suzy Lowinger, LMSW: May 26th 11:00am

Refreshments will be served. Teleconferencing will be available.

RSVP TO Andrea Olitzky: 212-569-6200 x233 or aolitzky@ywashhts.org

Please join our MONTHLY CAREGIVERS’ SUPPORT GROUPS at the Y, held the last Wednesday of the month from 6:30–7:30pm and the last Thursday of the month from 11am–12pm.