

# Caregiver Chronicles

February 2021



Caring for Caregivers

AREA AGENCY ON AGING OF DANE COUNTY  
2865 N SHERMAN AVE, MADISON, WI 53704  
608-261-9930



Alone, we can do so little;  
Together, we can do so much.

—Helen Keller  
American author and educator  
who was blind and deaf.



## We Can Do More Together

It's been a long 10 months since we began social distancing due to the pandemic, and many of us are feeling some strain. It's also winter in Wisconsin, which makes for colder, darker, shorter days. There is less opportunity to see others outdoors where it is easier to be with them at a distance in the open air and where the chances of spreading COVID-19 are less. Your daily walk may also be too hazardous in slippery, icy conditions so you may find you are getting out and moving less. If you are struggling with feeling more isolated, exhausted, irritable, or persistently sad, don't overlook the signs that may point to depression. Check out the article from Jane Mahoney, Caregiver Support Specialist from the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, to learn more about the signs of depression, ways to combat it, and when to seek help (page 3). And remember, you are not alone. Please check in if you need support by phone or email (see bottom of the page).

Finding ways to feel more like a part of a community can help us get through long winter days. February is Black History Month and you can join with others to celebrate and find inspiration in a variety of online events and opportunities to connect. NewBridge Madison and the Alzheimer's & Dementia Alliance of Wisconsin's Diversity & Inclusion Program have created programming with something for everyone: art, song, discussion, yoga, taking in a movie, and even a soul food dinner. (Be sure to note registration dates for some events—see pages 8 and 9). If you're a straight-up history buff, you can also explore [African American History in Wisconsin](#) by learning about history maker Vel Phillips or the Underground Railroad in Wisconsin. Traveling through time via history to see how others have met great challenges can be uplifting during difficult times.

Right now we are also seeing the beginnings of vaccinations for our older adult population. Getting vaccinated is important both for individuals and the community. It's also a positive step toward a time when we can travel and gather together again. See page 10 for COVID-19 vaccine information in *Monthly MIPPA Moments* by Elder Benefits Specialist, Leilani Amundson. It provides important information on CDC recommendations, how the vaccination process will work, and information on Medicare.

Last but not least, February brings Valentine's Day on the 14th. I encourage everyone to extend loving kindness to one another and especially to ourselves. Take a little time to enjoy the things that you care about most and do whatever makes you more resilient.

If you need caregiver resources and support, please don't hesitate to contact me.



Jane De Broux  
Caregiver Specialist  
Dane County Area Agency on Aging



Caring for Caregivers

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## Don't Overlook Depression

Do you feel sad, empty, and hopeless much of the day? Are you having trouble sleeping, eating, or functioning? Have you lost interest in things that you used to enjoy? These are all signs of depression, a medical illness that affects how you feel, the way you think and how you act.

Depression often goes undiagnosed and untreated as people tend to downplay the symptoms or blame them on other things. While it's normal to feel sad and have a lack of energy occasionally, these feelings shouldn't persist for more than a few days. Right now, with the cold darkness of winter and the pandemic raging, depression symptoms are on the rise. Depression is treatable and should not be overlooked as a possible cause of feeling sad and hopeless.

Symptoms of depression can vary from person to person, but anyone who has been experiencing five or more of the following symptoms for more than two weeks should contact their health care provider:

- Persistent sad, anxious, or empty mood (feeling of emptiness, lack of meaning and purpose)
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Change in appetite resulting in weight gain or loss
- Loss of pleasure and interest in activities once enjoyed
- Irritability, restlessness
- Crying too often or too much
- Aches and pains that don't go away when treated
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feeling guilty, hopeless, or worthless
- Thoughts of death or suicide

Caregivers in particular need to be aware of the risk of depression. According to a survey by the Family Caregiver Alliance, caregivers experience depression at twice the rate of the general population. The added responsibility and stress of caring for a loved one, especially during a pandemic, can have a negative impact on a caregiver's health if steps are not taken to stay healthy. If depression goes untreated it can lead to increased emotional and physical problems and affect your ability to care for your loved one.

If diagnosed with depression, treatment usually includes medication, counseling, or a combination of the two. You can also practice these coping mechanisms to relieve symptoms of depression.

- Communicate your feelings with friends, family, a support group, or mental health professional
- Set limits – don't try to do more than you can handle and ask for help
- Take care of your body – eat well, get enough sleep, and exercise regularly
- Learn ways to manage stress and relax.
- Schedule time each day to do something for yourself
- Maintain a good sense of humor and find humor in daily events

Knowing the symptoms of depression and understanding ways to reduce your risk of depression can help you stay healthy. Don't overlook the seriousness of depression. If you or someone you know exhibits the signs of depression, seek medical help. Life can be enjoyable!

—Jane Mahoney, Caregiver Support Specialist  
Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources

## Trualta Highlight: Diabetes Care

Managing your loved one's diabetes can quickly become stressful and overwhelming if you do not have a plan in place. Trualta's newest caregiver badge, *Diabetes Care*, discusses some of the best ways to help care for your loved one who has diabetes. This includes gaining a better understanding of what diabetes is, what kinds of effects it can have on your loved one's health and wellbeing, and how to respond to diabetes-related emergencies.

The Trualta module, *Diabetes Family Management and Care Partnership*, outlines 10 different ways you can help your loved one manage their diabetes.

### 1. Getting connected to a local diabetes program

A local diabetes program can keep you up to date on strategies, tools, and medications that can help with the management of diabetes.

### 2. Providing emotional support and recognizing when they may need professional help

Rates of depression are higher in people living with diabetes. Some signs that your loved one may be struggling include:

- Sleeping too much or not enough
- Eating too much or not enough
- Socially isolating themselves

### 3. Planning healthy meals together

Making lifestyle changes like eating healthy meals will be easier and more enjoyable for your loved one if they have somebody to do it with.

### 4. Finding an activity that you can enjoy together

Making lifestyle changes like doing more physical activity will be easier and more enjoyable for your loved one if they have somebody to do it with.

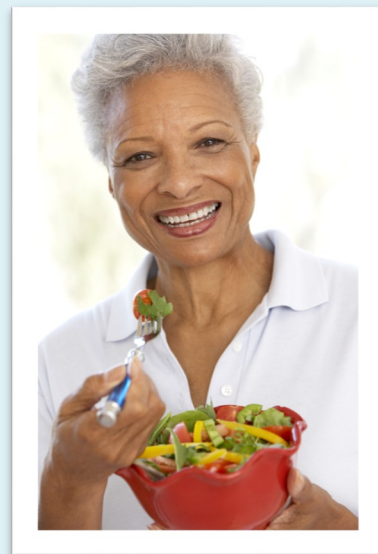
### 5. Keeping track of appointments

You can help your loved one keep track of their important appointments, including:

- Diabetes eye exams
- Blood work
- Family doctor visits
- Diabetes clinic visits

### 6. Attending appointments together

Two sets of eyes and ears are always better than one. Don't be afraid to ask questions! You can try bringing a notebook to write down important information.



## 7. Creating schedules to help manage their diabetes.

Staying organized and on schedule can help your loved one manage their diabetes. You can help your loved one make schedules for things like:

- Taking medications
- Checking blood sugars
- Meals
- Physical activity
- Foot care

## 8. Learning what the target blood sugar numbers are.

It's important to know the target blood sugar numbers for before and after meals. This can help you recognize when there is an emergency or when to reach out for support.



## 9. Connecting with your community pharmacist.

Your pharmacist is a great resource to help you and your loved one manage their diabetes. Try asking your pharmacist about:

- Packing medications in blister packs
- How and where to purchase a diabetic alert bracelet

## 10. Taking a planned break to enjoy a special dinner out or a favorite dessert.

Having a special treat once in a while can help everyone stay on track. Try to follow the 80/20 rule:

- 80% of the time: Make the best lifestyle choices for food and activity.
- 20% of the time: Take a “holiday” to enjoy a treat and then get back on track.

—Sarah Schupbach  
Area Agency on Aging of Dane County Intern

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Trualta is a free and easy to use online resource for Caregivers. It includes informative educational modules related to all stages and aspects of caregiving, along with local Dane County resources. To register, contact Sarah Schupbach at [schupbach.sarah@countyofdane.com](mailto:schupbach.sarah@countyofdane.com) or at 608-335-6506

## Powerful Tools FOR Caregivers



**I don't think of myself as a caregiver.**  
I'm his daughter. He needs me. And because he needs me, I know I need to take care of myself. Powerful Tools helped me do that.

**There's a Powerful Tools for Caregivers workshop starting soon near you!**

**When:** February 16 – March 23, 2021, six Tuesday mornings, 10 am – 12 pm

**This is an ONLINE workshop!**

Participants will need a tablet or computer with mic/audio and have internet access.

**Leaders:** Teena Monk-Gerber & Nancy Thacker of Alzheimer's & Dementia Alliance of Rock/Green, Adams/ Juneau Counties.

**To register:** contact the Rock County Council on Aging at: 608-757-5309 or email: [Lisa.Messer@co.rock.wi.us](mailto:Lisa.Messer@co.rock.wi.us)  
Registration is required by February 9.

**Suggested Donation:** \$15 for those ages 60+. Caregivers under age 60 = \$25 fee.  
(Scholarships may be available!)

# Caregiving is rewarding.

**But it can be challenging too.**

Caring for someone with an injury or illness — such as dementia, cancer, heart disease, Parkinson's disease, stroke or others — can be physically, emotionally and financially demanding.

**Taking care of yourself is important.**

Powerful Tools for Caregivers (PTC) can show you the way!

**What is Powerful Tools for Caregivers? And why should I take it?**

Powerful Tools focuses on **your** well-being. The class meets once a week for six weeks and has been studied and shown to help family caregivers:

- Reduce stress, guilt, anger, and depression and improve emotional well-being
- Manage time, set goals, and solve problems
- Master caregiving transitions and be part of decision-making
- Communicate effectively with the person needing care, family members, doctors, and other helpers
- Find and use community resources





# CAREGIVER TELECONNECTION



[www.caregiverteleconnection.org](http://www.caregiverteleconnection.org)



Date	Time	Topic	A LEADING VOICE FOR CAREGIVERS
Wednesday, February 3rd	11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific	<b>Caregiving During COVID-19: The End of COVID-19 with Lucy Barylak, MSW and Elliot Montgomery Sklar, PhD</b> <i>New vaccines can end this pandemic, but there is skepticism. This session will answer all of your COVID-19 vaccine questions.</i>	
Monday, February 8th	1:00 pm Eastern 12:00 pm Central 11:00 am Mountain 10:00 am Pacific	<b>Competent Conversations with Health Care Providers with Tanesha Tyler-Carr</b> <i>In this session, learn effective communication skills and how to build relationships with health care providers.</i> <b>***Sponsored by North Central Texas Caregiver Teleconnection***</b>	
Tuesday, February 9th	11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific	<b>¿Cómo te sientes? con Nestor Praderio, MD</b> <i>El Dr. Praderio facilitará una discusión en profundidad sobre los sentimientos del cuidador. Usted tendrá la oportunidad de expresar sus preguntas e inquietudes con respecto a su situación y escuchar cómo otros cuidadores están afrontando.</i>	
Thursday, February 11th	11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific	<b>Dementia and Inappropriate Sexual Behavior with Lucy Barylak, MSW</b> <i>Join "Dear Lucy" Lucy Barylak, MSW for this series where she will discuss how to deal with difficult behaviors of people with dementia.</i>	
Friday, February 12th	12:00 pm Eastern 11:00 am Central 10:00 am Mountain 9:00 am Pacific	<b>ZOOM presentation: Cómo hacerle frente al brote del Coronavirus en su papel de cuidador con Dra. Liliانا Oakes</b> <i>La Dra. Oakes centrará en proporcionar información sobre las vacunas disponibles, ¿cómo se produce una vacuna? ¿cómo funciona en nuestros cuerpos? los beneficios, así como para abordar todas las dudas que tiene la comunidad hispana incluyendo abordar la desinformación sobre las vacunas en las redes sociales.</i>	
Monday, February 15th	12:00 pm Eastern 11:00 am Central 10:00 am Mountain 9:00 am Pacific	<b>The Survival Guide to Dementia Care What Happens Next with Tam Cummings, PhD</b> <i>Join Tam Cummings, PhD as she leads a discussion with Family caregivers of People With Dementia who are confronted with numerous decisions regarding the care and eventual placement of their loved one. <b>**Sponsored by VITAS Healthcare**</b></i>	
Wednesday, February 17th	11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific	<b>Caregiving During COVID-19: What Caregivers Need to Know About the COVID-19 Vaccine with Lucy Barylak, MSW and Elliot Montgomery Sklar, PhD</b> <i>Unpaid family caregivers are the largest source of long-term services and support for elders in the nation, but these caregivers haven't been part of a vaccine rollout plan. This session will address what caregivers need to know.</i>	
Thursday, February 18th	11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific	<b>Dementia and Delusions and Paranoia with Lucy Barylak, MSW</b> <i>Join "Dear Lucy" Lucy Barylak, MSW for this series where she will discuss how to deal with difficult behaviors of people with dementia.</i>	
Tuesday, February 23rd	12:00 pm Eastern 11:00 am Central 10:00 am Mountain 9:00 am Pacific	<b>Are My golden Years Gone—or Just Rusty? with Evalyn Greb, LCSW</b> <i>Was caregiving on your "bucket list" for retirement? Are you experiencing the adventurous and fulfilling retirement you spent your life dreaming about? If no is the answer to these questions, please join us for some facts, tips, and discussion on how to shake the rust and revitalize your envisioned "Golden Years"!</i>	
Thursday, February 25th	11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific	<b>Dementia and Delirium with Lucy Barylak, MSW</b> <i>Join "Dear Lucy" Lucy Barylak, MSW for this series where she will discuss how to deal with difficult behaviors of people with dementia.</i>	



A program of the WellMed Charitable Foundation Register online at [www.caregiverteleconnection.org](http://www.caregiverteleconnection.org) or call 866.390.6491 Toll Free



Diversity & Inclusion

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH PROGRAMS

*Paint & Sip*  
**BLACK HISTORY MONTH**  
 Monday, February 15  
 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm  
 Instructor: Artist Linda Mathis

**Black Girl Magic Yoga**  
 Tuesday, February 9  
 10:00-11:15 am  
  
 Instructor: Venus Washington

**BEYOND MLK**  
 Tuesday, February 17  
 3:00 pm-4:30 pm  


*Think Cap Cafe*  
  
 SOCIALIZE - ENGAGE - CONNECT  
 Thursday, February 11  
 11:00 am-12:15 pm

**SING IT LOUD: BLACK & PROUD ANTHEMS**  
  
 With noted musician **LEOETHA STANLEY**  
 Friday, February 19th 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm

**TASTY TUESDAY**  
**A Heart-Healthier Soul Food Dinner**  
  
 Tuesday, February 23  
 5:00 pm-6:30 pm

**BLACK FILM FRIDAY**  
 'The United States vs. Billie Holiday'  
  
 Friday, February 26  
 2:00 pm-5:00 pm

Contact Deana Wright at

[DeanaW@NewBridgeMadison.org](mailto:DeanaW@NewBridgeMadison.org)

or (608)512-0000 ext. 2007



## Black History Month Program Information and Zoom Links

**Paint & Sip**, Monday, February 15th, 3:00 - 4:30 pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81007783285?pwd=dU5SNkpIaVQ5QjQxTFVkszhHWEhudz09>

Unleash your inner creativity by painting your very own masterpiece! Local artist Linda Mathis instructs you step-by-step on creating a work of art from a blank canvas. All artistic levels welcome. Art supplies provided; you provide your beverage of choice. **Register by Monday, February 4th.**

**Black Girl Magic Yoga**, Tuesday, February 9th, 10:00 - 11:15 am

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83503849613?pwd=RUPLS2JROExYeFVMbzIweit1RkZMdz09>

Learn about the history of Blacks and yoga, tracing the historical roots in black communities from the early 1920s into the 21st century, and join yoga instructor Venus Washington for a class that's gentle, low impact and for anyone in their 60s and beyond. Mats not required.

**Beyond MLK**, Wednesday, February 17th, 3:00 - 4:30 pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84208418064?pwd=eIFsVnN2S1M1a3NzT0J4VGhUYWc0Zz09>

Black History Month provides the opportunity to celebrate heroes who have enriched our country, like Rosa Parks, Harriet Tubman, George Washington Carver and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. But what about the many other people, who are just as deserving of recognition? Join us as we introduce you to some Black men and women, you may not be quite as familiar with, who also contributed to the enrichment of our country. Share your personal history, too!

**Think Cap Café**, Thursday, February 18th, 11:00 am-12:15 pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86226491401?pwd=TVRyYzBGbU9oYk53dTFlaEZqS1NVQT09>

Loneliness, isolation and sitting all day have been identified as risk factors for Alzheimer's, the 4th leading cause of death for older Black adults. Reduce your risk by being active, connecting socially and engaging in mental activities and join in the weekly fun. In partnership with the Alzheimer's & Dementia Alliance of Wisconsin's Diversity & Inclusion Program.

**Contact Deanna Wright (email link and phone number on page 8).**

**Sing it Loud: Black & Proud Anthems**, Friday, February 19th, 5:00 - 6:00 pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86295081847?pwd=L0h0TVFVSjdMejdxV01hQ0I3bldldz09>

Celebrate Black music that played a vital role in Black History. Lift your spirits up with musician and community icon Leatha Stanley as he directs songs that have provided inspiration throughout the decades. Music and lyrics will be provided. **Register by Friday, February 7th.**

**Tasty Tuesday: A Heart Healthier Soul Food Dinner**, Tuesday, February 23rd 5:00 -6:30 pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84554207082?pwd=SXhvQVINNEI3Qjc5bHpvaWFxRjBQQT09>

Air-fried chicken, collard greens, candied yams, mac-n-cheese, cornbread, and peach cobbler. Sound yummy? Enjoy a healthier soul food dinner, prepared with less butter, less sugar and smoked turkey, instead of ham hocks, while socializing and sharing your personal Black life experience with others. After all, everyone has a story! Dinners will be delivered prior to event. Register by Tuesday, February 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Black Film Friday**, Friday, February 26th, 2:00 - 5:00 pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88157688036?pwd=Ly9KWnJlYm0xTDNoYi9kNThNaUVBdz09>

Get comfy in your favorite chair, grab your laptop, and join us for, *The United States vs. Billie Holiday*. This movie explores the story of the musical legend and civil rights activist, her encounters with the FBI, and the racial inequalities in the 1940s. Directed by Lee Daniels, it stars a riveting Audra Day in her first-ever movie role. The film also examines Holliday's struggles with addiction, fame, and heartbreaking love. We'll provide the popcorn!

## Monthly MIPPA Moment: COVID-19 Vaccination Information

**MIPPA (Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act) has a goal of educating older adults on Medicare's cost-saving benefits & preventive services.**

***The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has so far granted Emergency Use Authorizations (EUA) for COVID-19 vaccines which have been shown to be safe and effective.***

The data has demonstrated the known benefits of the vaccine outweigh any known or potential harms of becoming infected with COVID-19. Safety information from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) may be found [here](#). Pharmaceutical manufacturers are now working to distribute the vaccine to these priority groups:

The CDC recommended **Phase 1a**:

Initial supplies go out to **health care personnel** and **long term care (LTC) facility residents**.

Next, per CDC recommendations, **Phase 1b** includes:

- **Frontline essential workers:** fire fighters, police officers, corrections officers, food and agricultural workers, United States Postal Service workers, manufacturing workers, grocery store workers, public transit workers, and those who work in the educational sector (teachers, support staff, and daycare workers).
- **People aged 75 years and older not in LTC facilities** because they are at higher risks from COVID-19.

**Phase 1c** of the CDC recommendations includes:

- **People aged 65 - 74 years not in LTC facilities**, because they are at higher risks from COVID-19.
- **People aged 16 - 64 years with underlying medical conditions** which increase the risks from COVID-19.
- **Other essential workers:** those in transportation and logistics, food service, housing construction and finance, information technology, communications, energy, law, media, public safety, and public health.

**How the vaccination process will work:**

- Two doses are needed - depending on the specific vaccine, a second shot 3-4 weeks after your first.
- The side effects from COVID-19 vaccination may feel like flu and might even affect your ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days. Reports of a severe allergic reaction (requiring epinephrine or hospital treatment) are extremely rare and consistent with or lower than rates for other vaccinations.
- It takes time for your body to build protection after any vaccination. Keep in mind COVID-19 vaccines that require 2 shots may not protect you until a week or two after your second shot.

**Here's what to know regarding Medicare:**

- Medicare covers FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines under Part B.
- Medicare covers the lab tests for COVID-19 testing. You pay no out-of-pocket costs.
- Medicare covers certain FDA-authorized antibody tests if you were already diagnosed with a known current or known prior COVID-19 infection or suspected current or suspected past COVID-19 infection.
- Medicare covers all medically necessary hospitalizations. You'll *still pay for any hospital deductibles, copays, or coinsurances* that apply.
- If you have a Medicare Advantage Plan, you have access to these same benefits. Medicare allows these plans to waive cost-sharing for COVID-19 lab tests.

**REMEMBER:** Medicare covers the vaccine at no cost to you, so if anyone asks you to share your Medicare Number or pay for access to the vaccine, you can bet it's a scam.

**Here's what you should know:**

You can't pay to put your name on a list to get the vaccine.

You can't pay to get early access to a vaccine.

Don't share your personal or financial information if someone calls, texts, or emails you promising access to the vaccine for a fee.

**For information on MIPPA Programs call MIPPA Program Specialist Leilani Amundson at 608-240-7458.**



# FREE Virtual (Online) Welcome to Medicare Seminars

**Sponsored by Area Agency on Aging of Dane County's  
Elder Benefits Specialist Program**

## What you need to know about enrolling in Medicare

If you are turning age 64 this year, we can help you make informed choices about your Medicare options! You'll receive accurate and detailed information from unbiased experts in benefit programs.

**January 23, 2021, 9-11:30 am**

Email [aaa@countyofdane.com](mailto:aaa@countyofdane.com) to register by **1/14/21**

**March 20, 2021, 9-11:30 am**

Email [aaa@countyofdane.com](mailto:aaa@countyofdane.com) to register by **3/11/21**

**May 15, 2021, 9-11:30 am**

Email [aaa@countyofdane.com](mailto:aaa@countyofdane.com) to register by **5/6/21**

Seminars will be offered via Zoom.

Email for more information.



**Connecting People with the  
Assistance They Need**

Monday through Friday  
Call 7:45 am—4:30 pm

**(608) 240-7400**

Website:

Email: [ADRC@countyofdane.com](mailto:ADRC@countyofdane.com)

Click on the button to follow the ADRC on  
facebook.



# Caring for the Caregiver Program

AREA AGENCY ON AGING OF DANE COUNTY

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### Contact:

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