



UPCOMING EVENTS:

- 2/07/24 Sandusky District Library - Outreach
- 2/12/24 Tuscola Powerful Tools for Caregivers Class 1
- 2/13/24 Bad Axe Caregiver Support Group
- 2/14/24 Sandusky Caregiver Support Group
- 2/19/24 OFFICE CLOSED President's Day
- 2/20/24 Tuscola Powerful Tools for Caregivers Class 2
- 2/20/24 Parkinson's Support Group
- 2/21/24 Caro Caregiver Support Group
- 2/26/24 Tuscola Powerful Tools for Caregivers Class 3
- 2/26/24 Sebawaing Township Library - Outreach
- 2/27/24 Caro Senior Dining Center - Dementia Education - 12:15p.m.
- 2/28/24 Lexington Senior Dining Center - Dementia Education 12:15p.m.
- 2/29/24 Bad Axe Senior Dining Center - Dementia Education 12:15p.m.

The Art of Caregiver & Kinship Connections

History of Valentine's Day

Where did Valentine's Day originate from? As we know it today, it contains both Christian and ancient Roman tradition.

Valentine's Day is celebrated on February 14th every year. It is a day when people express their love and affection to their loved ones. The history of Valentine's Day is shrouded in mystery, but it is believed to have originated from the ancient Roman festival of Lupercalia, which was celebrated in mid-February.

The festival was a celebration of fertility and the coming of spring. During the festival, young men would draw the names of young women from a box, and the two would be paired together for the duration of the festival. The Catholic Church recognizes at least three different legends. One legend contends that Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men. According to the other, Valentine wrote a letter to a woman and signed it, "from your Valentine," and that is why we use the expression today.

Today, Valentine's Day is celebrated by gifting flowers, chocolates, jewelry, and other lavish gifts. How do you celebrate Valentine's Day?

Valentine's Day and Caregiving

Being a caregiver, you are providing the unconditional love to your spouse, parent, grandchild, child, friend or neighbor. Valentine's Day can be a hard day for caregivers, especially when the one you're caring for is the one you love. Nobody in life is as full of as deserving of love as a family caregiver. The problem is that we caregivers tend to take ourselves out of the Circle of Care while always making sure our loved ones have everything they need.

As the holiday of Love approaches, do not hesitate to plan a day for yourself, you and your spouse or parent, or as a family. It will give you joy to celebrate those you love and cherish. For children, don't be afraid to send them a valentine at school to show them how much you appreciate and care for them, and it will boost their self-esteem. For your spouse or parent, take them to breakfast, or do a craft with them.

For yourself, grab a box of chocolates from the store and nestle in front of the television to watch a hallmark movie. Or, read a book while taking a relaxing bubble bath. Remember, Valentine's Day is all about love, so make sure to love and do something for yourself.

"Love is the great miracle cure. Loving ourselves works miracles in our lives."

- Louise L. Hay

TIPS FOR PARENTS TO TALK TO CHILDREN ABOUT LOVE AND VALENTINE'S DAY



The meaning of love, crushes and dating are all topics that parents should proactively discuss with their children at an age-appropriate level, says a Purdue University child development expert. Talk of love is all around us on Valentine's Day, and this can be confusing for children and challenging for adolescents because the word 'love' is used in so many ways to mean so many different things," says Judith Myers-Walls, professor emeritus of child development. "In all cases and with all ages, parents and other adults should take children's feelings seriously. As adults, we may feel that crushes are silly and unreal, but they are very real to the children who experience them.

For young children: Valentine's Day is about buying cards to give to everyone in the classroom and making art projects out of hearts and doilies. When talking about love with these children, it seems most appropriate to emphasize the idea of loving humankind. "Parents and teachers can encourage these children to show love and kindness to all of the children in the class and to everyone they meet," Myers-Walls says.

Elementary children: This age group starts to focus more on girlfriend and boyfriend relationships. Valentine's card decisions are taken seriously and can be connected to some strong feelings that are either positive or negative. Although they may not actually be able to list anyone as a particular special person, they are very aware of romantic relationships and may have crushes on someone. Who that is may change a day or two later. "They are very easily embarrassed about those feelings, though, so parents and other adults should be respectful and not tease about those issues," Myers-Wall says. "It may seem funny to adults to ask an elementary child if she or he is dating anyone or engaged, but that is an embarrassing question to the child. And it may start to build an expectation that everyone should be paired up."

Adolescents: Intimacy is a natural drive at that age. That does not mean that all adolescents have or should have a relationship with one special person. But Valentines' Day can feel very important with potentially life-changing actions. "They may dream that sending the right card or a flower or a note to a particular person will start a relationship that will last a lifetime," she says. "Or they may struggle to find a way to celebrate the day with a friend who is more serious about the relationship than they are."

VALENTINE'S DAY AMONGST CAREGIVERS WITH SPOUSES WHO HAVE DEMENTIA

For many sweethearts, Valentine's Day is the perfect opportunity for hushed conversations over candlelit dinners, sharing heart-shaped boxes of candy, and spending the day letting that special someone know just how loved they are. However, for caregivers and their older loved ones with dementia, this hallmark holiday might look a little different. In many cases, Valentine's Day has become just another day of trying to get through in one piece.

But, dear caregivers, there are still ways to celebrate the love between you and your other half and all of the wonderful years you have shared. Valentine's Day might look different now, and that's okay, but there is always room to transport back in time to the first day you met, to the day you fell in love, and to all the memories you have shared since.

FOR THOSE WITH DEMENTIA: Remember, your devotion to providing for your loved one with dementia is the ultimate expression of unconditional love. As you approach Valentine's Day, know that it is okay to grieve the relationship you once had with your loved one while also feeling comfortable with embracing the present. In sickness and health, Valentine's Day can absolutely still be a chance to share special moments with your special someone.



VALENTINE'S DAY ACTIVITIES EVERYONE WILL LOVE

1. **Create Valentine's Day Cards**
2. **Bake a special treat**
3. **Play Valentine's Day Bingo**
4. **Play Candy Hearts Tic-Tac-Toe**
5. **Make Valentine's Day Crafts**



Changes in Relationships As We Age



Social support systems are extremely beneficial as people age. Elderly individuals may rely on family or extended family to take care of them if they have physical ailments or health needs. Social support systems are also useful in helping those who may have difficulty getting around with their daily tasks and needs. Not only is it important for care recipients to have to rely on family, but the caregiver also will need to rely on family. Whether you are taking care of a spouse or parent, if you are older and are taking care of a grandchild, social relationships still matter. Below are relationship changes you might experience.

Taking Care of Those With a Cognitive Impairment

1. **Social isolation among family and friends**
 - a. They don't know what to say.
 - b. They do not understand the disease.
 - c. Your increase in home tasks.
 - d. Embarrassment.
2. **Role Changes**
 - a. Taking on more responsibilities (chores, finances, etc.)
3. **Intimacy**
 - a. Decrease in emotional or physical intimacy.
 - b. Care recipient has changes too.
 - c. Progression of disease.
 - d. Attraction changes.
4. **Personality Changes**
 - a. Care recipient becomes more angry, hostile, or use provocative language towards you.
 - b. You may feel stressed or anxious or have a grudge.
5. **Decision Making**
 - a. You may feel "alone"
 - b. You will have to make the important decisions like finances, health, etc.

For Those Who Are Caregiving For Children

1. **Independence**
 - a. Children are learning to make their own decisions and understand judgement.
 - b. You may have to step back and allow this to happen, with guidance.
 - c. You may be scared to let them do things on their own.
2. **Identity**
 - a. Children will learn their self-worth, what they will accept, and who they are.
 - b. You may need to give positive re-enforcement.
3. **Self-Esteem**
 - a. A decrease in self-esteem among children in adolescence is common.
 - b. They may judge themselves more.
4. **Relationships**
 - a. Children will spend more time with friends as they age with similar interests.
 - b. Children may rebel as they age.
 - c. Teens may be ready to begin dating.
 - d. You may not be the most important person in their life.
 - e. As children age, communication may decrease.
5. **Tips:**
 - a. Engage in their interests.
 - b. Establish effective communication.
 - c. Establish trust.
 - d. Educate through example.
 - e. Respect boundaries.
 - f. Encourage emotional expression and continuous learning.



TIPS TO MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS AS A CAREGIVER

As a caregiver, it is easy to forget about yourself. However, it is important to remember that you also have needs, wants, and desires. It is okay to ask for help from other family or friends. It is okay to educate your family on your caregiving situation. It is okay to stay involved with your social activities. It all starts with you, and it is key to stay healthy and do the things you enjoy, coffee with friends, shopping with your child, attend church, etc. You matter also.

1. *Educate your family*
2. *Ask for help.*
3. *Stay Involved with the community and family*

TUSCOLA COUNTY POWERFUL TOOLS FOR CAREGIVERS

Starting in February, Tuscola County Caregivers will have the ability to take a six-week course in the Fundamentals of Caregiving. This class will give you the confidence and support to better care for your loved one.

Huron and Sanilac Counties will start after Tuscola County.

PARTICIPANTS MUST ATTEND ALL SIX CLASSES.

Course Includes:

Textbook
Light Refreshments
Real - Life Scenarios

Caregivers Will Receive Tools To Help:

- Locate Helpful Resources
- Reduce Stress
- Improve Self-Confidence
- Make tough decisions
- Manage Time, Set Goals, and Solve Problems

Instructors:

Kim Reynero
April Hutchinson

Refreshments will be provided and there will be a give away.

To Register, Call Kim Reynero, Caregiver Advocate, at 989-673-4121.

Dates:

February 12
February 20
February 26
March 4
March 11
March 18

Time:

10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Location:

Human Development
Commission
429 Montague Ave, Caro

Powerful Tools
FOR Caregivers

February Support Group Topic

Relationship Changes

As family members age and become more dependent, family caregivers may experience many emotions. Some are new, and some are carryovers from past experiences. As you take on the role of caregiver, you may experience changes in your relationship with the care receiver. Often caregivers find themselves in a role-reversal situation. Now they are caring for aging parents, a spouse, friend, or another relative who once spent many years caring for them. Changing relationships can cause feelings of fear, guilt, or anger as you care for a dependent adult. For a grandparent raising a grandchild, you are now the primary guardian of that child. These emotions are normal. It is not easy to deal with the emotions of changing relationships.

February Birthdays

02/25 - Victoria Kirkwood



Human Development Commission would like to wish you a very happy birthday and we hope it is filled with fun, laughter and those you love!



Find us on Facebook!
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Commission Community
Action Agency



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For questions or concerns,
please contact Kim
at 989-673-4121