



The Alzheimer's Support Network News

Spring 2015

New Support Services

Caregiver Support Groups at the Golden Gate Senior Center

First Monday of the Month 1:00-2:00 p.m. (Spanish)

Third Wednesday of the Month 1:30-2:30 p.m. (English)

We are very pleased to announce the addition of these two new Support Groups being held at the Golden Gate Senior Center. The center is located at 4898 Coronado Parkway in Naples. The first meeting of the month will be conducted in Spanish. Our own Jeanne Sachs and Maritza Delgado will be facilitating this meeting. The second meeting on the third Wednesday of each month will be in English and will be lead by Clarke.

Plan to Practice for the Alzheimer's Caregiver

Second Tuesday of the Month 2:00-3:30 p.m.

The Alzheimer's Support Network and Nurse On Call of Naples are launching this new family caregiver support service. Plan to Practice will emphasize Speech Therapy (ST) and Occupational Therapy (OT) as it relates to Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. The caregivers will be encouraged to express what they are having trouble with at home. For example, bathing, shadowing, apathy, etc. With this information the ST and OT will demonstrate the ideas, strategies or activities that may help reduce challenging behaviors. We will learn about setting up correct "structure and support" based on the remaining skill set of our loved ones. The hope of this group is to encourage caregivers to explore ways of keeping their loved ones involved and connected, thereby reducing caregiver stress.

Transitions Support Group

Third Tuesday of the Month 4:00-5:30 p.m.

This Support Group is for caregivers to talk openly about whatever changes are occurring. Caregivers and those with a memory issue are separated for this group. Common areas of discussion are respite, transitioning to a facility, etc. During this group our Club Room is available for social engagement for your loved one with a memory issue.

Early Stage Support Group

Fourth Tuesday of the Month 4:00-5:30

This Support Group is for couples who are confronting any form of dementia in its Early Stages. The person with memory issues should be early in the disease process and be comfortable openly addressing the challenges he or she faces.

Naples Botanical Gardens

In cooperation with the Alzheimer's support Network, the Naples Botanical Garden has developed a Sensory Tour for individuals with memory impairment. The tours are special guided tours lead by the friendly and knowledgeable docents of the Garden. Alzheimer's support Network staff will be present to help out. At the Buehler Enabling Garden, those with memory issues and their caregivers are treated to a host of plants which are safe to touch, smell and event taste. Because most people with dementia are not aware that they have any impairments, these groups are referred to as "Sensory tours" rather than Alzheimer's Tours. While at the Garden those with memory impairments are referred to as "clients" rather than "patients". Please call us at (239) 262-8388 for tour dates and time.

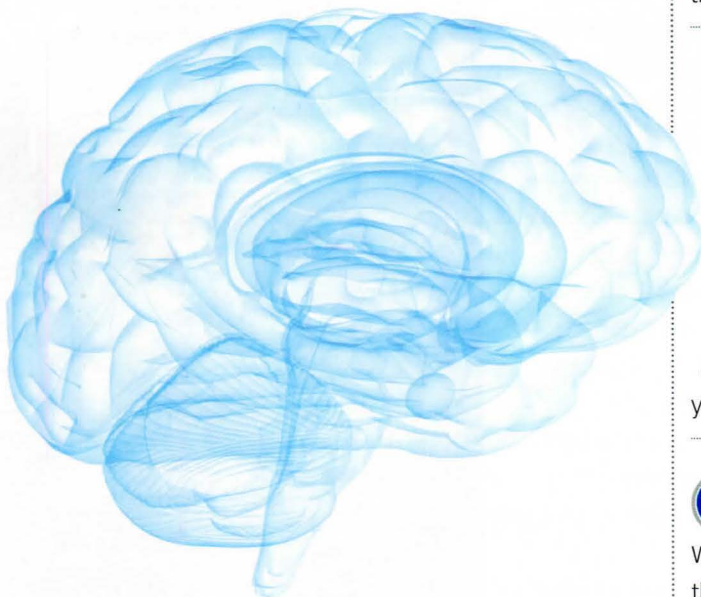
A Warm Welcome to Wendy Wells

The Alzheimer's Support Network is pleased to welcome Wendy Wells to our staff. Wendy is a Professional guardian and is president of Senior Resource consultants Inc. located here in Naples, FL. Wendy and her vast expertise will be a tremendous asset to our staff. Please join us in welcoming Wendy into our Network family.

Dementia and Alzheimer's Caregiver's Guide

Six invaluable tips for caring for someone who is living with long-term brain regression.

Alzheimer's is a disease that progresses slowly. After the first symptoms appear, Alzheimer's can span two decades or more. Caring for someone with Alzheimer's is not a sprint, it's a marathon. You wouldn't try to run a marathon without training first. So if a loved one or friend has recently been diagnosed with Alzheimer's, consider these tips to help you train for the marathon ahead of you.



TIP 1 **Get help early.** Caregivers who do not seek help often suffer serious health consequences of their own. It is never too early to start building a network of supportive friends, family members and community resources. Educate yourself about the disease. Interview home health care agencies. Investigate adult daycare and assisted living options before you need them.

TIP 2 **Don't argue.** You can never win an argument with someone suffering from Alzheimer's. When you find yourself engaged in an argument, ask yourself: does it really matter? Distraction and diversion will serve you better than arguing and confrontation.

TIP 3 **Go where they are.** This could be the most important rule of interacting with someone with Alzheimer's. Instead of trying to bring the person with Alzheimer's back into "normal reality," it is best to go into their world. Alzheimer's affects every part of the brain. Alzheimer's is not just a memory issue, it's brain failure. Asking someone who has Alzheimer's to live in our reality is asking them to do something they cannot.

TIP 4 **You set the tone.** When someone has Alzheimer's, their world shrinks. They start to borrow their loved one's sensibilities to help them navigate the world. They can become highly attuned to the mood of their caregiver. A caregiver who is anxious or upset often results in a patient feeling the same way. In moments of frustration, if you can learn to take a deep breath, and greet the mess and malaise with a smile, often you will see that smile mirrored back at you.

TIP 5 **Be flexible.** The challenges of today will likely be different from the challenges of tomorrow. Watch your expectations. Are you expecting more than they can give? Because they knew how to use the oven yesterday does not mean they can do it today.

TIP 6 **Be with them.** The greatest gift you can give someone with Alzheimer's is to be with them in the moment. They are losing the memory of the past and the concept of the future. They have this moment to share with you. Love them in the present—the only moment they have to give. ❁

Provided by Clarke Pollard, family consultant and executive director, Alzheimer's Support Network of Naples (affiliate of the national Alzheimer's Association)

Please Note: The Alzheimer's Support Network is an independent 501(c)3 Nonprofit. We are not affiliated with the Alzheimer's Association.