

Institute for Disability Studies
ShareCare Notes on Upcoming Events and Coping
October 21, 2005

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1) ShareCare Bank+ Meeting

On Tuesday, Nov. 1 at 5:30 p.m. at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Hattiesburg, we will hold our first meeting to launch our new project ShareCare Bank+. We will have a second meeting on Wednesday, November 2 at 10 a.m. for those who cannot attend on Tuesday. We want to encourage all caregivers to attend this meeting to learn how to contribute to and benefit from the project. ShareCare Bank+ provides an opportunity for area family caregivers of adults with disabilities as well as senior adults to build a community of caregivers who wish to help one another, using whatever skills or resources they may have to share. Now, more than ever, family caregivers need support to meet the responsibilities and care of their loved ones. Many times it is the little things that make a difference-someone to pick up groceries, someone to mow the grass or remove yard trash, or someone to make phone calls. A little help with daily tasks that are overwhelming this week, but not the next, can make a big difference. We believe everyone has something to contribute and together we can be stronger, healthier, better caregivers who are prepared for whatever personal or community challenge may be in the future. We invite all who are interested to attend. For more information you may call Christy or Stella at (601) 266-5163 or visit our Web site at www.usm.edu/sharecare.

2) Disability Awareness Event

On Tuesday, Oct. 25, the City of Hattiesburg Disability Program will be sponsoring a disability awareness event, "Walk with Me". It will begin at 1 p.m., at City Hall on Forrest Street in downtown Hattiesburg. There will be several activities at this event, including: Walk with Me, Officials on Wheels, A Blind Walk, and Smoky the Bear. Refreshments will be served. Information on disabilities will be provided and door prizes will be awarded.

3) Too Much Stress!

In the last two months, our community has been tested. We have been pushed beyond our limits and have rallied strength we did not know we had. As the recovery efforts continue, it is important for us to take care of ourselves. As caregivers, we have others relying on us to make it through these difficult times. It is very easy to overload ourselves and become overly stressed. This can affect both us and our loved ones. Here are some warning signs of being too stressed. . Your family member's medical condition is worsening despite your best care efforts.

- . No matter what you do, you feel as though your care is not enough.
- . You feel you are the only person in the world enduring this and that you are alone.
- . You do not have any time or place to be alone for even brief respite.
- . Things you used to do to help the care recipient occasionally are now

- part of your daily routine.
- . Family relationships are breaking down because of care giving pressures.
 - . Your care giving duties are interfering with your work and social life
(your other roles) to an unacceptable degree.
 - . You realize you are all alone, and doing it all.
 - . You refuse to think of yourself because "that would be selfish."
 - . Your coping methods have become destructive to you: you're overeating/under eating, abusing drugs/alcohol.
 - . There are no more happy times and there is no humor.
 - . Loving and caring have given way to exhaustion and resentment.
 - . You no longer feel good about yourself or take pride in what you are doing.
 - . You feel like a victim.
 - . You dislike the care recipient.

If you are having feelings like the ones listed above, please ask for help. Everyone needs a shoulder to lean on at some point. (Source of list of warning signs taken from

<http://www.cancercare.msu.edu/patients-caregivers/issues/caregiver-overload.htm>.

Project ShareCare, funded by the Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Area Agency on Aging, provides counseling and networking for family caregivers of adult with disabilities and seniors.

ShareCare is sponsored by the Institute for Disability Studies (IDS), Mississippi's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD). IDS provides university training, community service activities, research, and information that promote the independence, productivity, and community inclusion of individuals with disabilities and their families. For more information about IDS, visit the Institute's Web site at www.usm.edu/ids or call 1-888-671-0051 (TTY). To make a tax-deductible gift to IDS for this and other projects, visit <http://www.usm.edu/ids/supportus.html>.

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