

Institute for Disability Studies
ShareCare Notes
March 3, 2006
"Taking Care of Ourselves" Part Two

In this issue:

1. Online Support for Family Caregivers and Health Care Professionals
2. March is National Nutrition Month
3. Depression Scale for Caregivers
4. More Resources for Caregivers
5. Upcoming Meetings

1. Online Support for Family Caregivers and Health Care Professionals

The Alzheimer's Association sponsors online message boards and chat rooms at <http://www.alz.org/login.htm> If you want ideas and the support of others caring for a person with a dementia-related condition, consider an on-line group, especially if you are unable to get out to one of our ShareCare face to face groups. The "threads" or topics are listed in the left hand column, On the far right is the date of the last posting on that thread. Another good online group is SAFE/Stroke Awareness for Everyone/Caregivers Support

<http://listserv.tbinet.org/archives/safe-caregivers.html>. This one is run as a listserv to which you can post questions and get replies in your mailbox. The great advantage of the online group is that it is as available as your computer, day or night and weekends, too. And you don't need to worry about schedules!

2. March is National Nutrition Month

ShareCare believes in eating right and having fun, too. This is especially important for family caregivers. With that in mind, here is a link to a short trivia quiz from www.AgingInStride.org to see how nutrition-savvy you are. To test yourself, visit <http://gwendolymn.portentinteractive.com/aispwp/index.cfm?fuseaction=public&article=534&issue=360&pubid=48>

3. Depression Scale for Caregivers

Here is a depression scale that appeared in the International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry 2005; 20: 911-918. Please score yourself to see where you fall.

Choose the best answer for how you have felt over the past week:

1. Are you basically satisfied with your life? YES / NO
2. Have you dropped many of your activities and interests? YES / NO
3. Do you feel that your life is empty? YES / NO
4. Do you often get bored? YES / NO
5. Are you in good spirits most of the time? YES / NO
6. Are you afraid that something bad is going to happen to you?
YES /
NO
7. Do you feel happy most of the time? YES / NO
8. Do you often feel helpless? YES / NO

9. Do you prefer to stay at home, rather than going out and doing new

things? YES / NO

10. Do you feel you have more problems with memory than most? YES / NO

11. Do you think it is wonderful to be alive now? YES / NO 12. Do you

feel pretty worthless the way you are now? YES / NO 13. Do you feel

full of energy? YES / NO 14. Do you feel that your situation is

hopeless? YES / NO 15. Do you think that most people are better off

than you are? YES / NO Although differing sensitivities and

specificities have been obtained across studies, for clinical purposes

a score > 5 points is suggestive of depression and should warrant

a follow-up interview. Scores > 10 are almost always depression. The

answers are 1.no 2.yes 3.yes 4.yes 5.no 6.yes 7.no 8.yes 9.yes 10.yes

11.no 12.yes 13.no

14.yes 15.yes

4. More Resources for Caregivers

Here is a caregiver self-check survey that we shared with you last year. It is just another tool for you to use to monitor yourself. We cannot take care of our loved ones unless we take care of ourselves.

<http://www.caregiverresource.net/selfchecksurvey.html>

Also, if you find that you are depressed or feel that you are at high risk for depression, please seek medical advise.

5. Upcoming Meetings

For the month of March there several things going on. Every Wednesday in the Union, Room G on Southern Miss' campus we have Wellness

Wednesdays at 12:15 with Dr. Susan Bone. She covers a variety of topics on nutrition and general wellness, as well as demonstrates things like chair yoga. For the schedule, see

<http://idsusm.ventech.com/calevents/mitts.asp>. Also, our Forrest

General support group for caregivers meets March 9, 2006 at 6 p.m. in

the Elm Room near the hospital cafeteria. Our ShareCare Bank Potluck

dinner will be March 16, 2006 at 6 p.m. at Westminster Presbyterian

Church. Everyone is invited to attend. Bring your favorite covered dish

and a friend. Lastly, our caregivers support group at Westminster

Presbyterian Church will be on March 22, 2006 at 10 a.m. Mark your

calendar, and please join us.

Project ShareCare, funded by the Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Area Agency on Aging, provides counseling and networking for family caregivers of adults 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

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