

UK Elder Care

IN THE KNOW

E-Newsletter
January 2008



A MESSAGE FROM THE COORDINATOR

I am pleased to announce in January we will be offering 3 support groups for employee caregivers. From the CARE Group Kick-off we had in October, we had a lot of interest in the support group, so we will expand the group and have them in different locations to reach more of campus. The dates and locations are as follows: January 10 in Room 220 Scovell Hall, Suite 1; January 17 in Room C 110 UK Hospital; and January 24 Room 379 of the Peterson Service Building. All meetings will be from Noon- 1:00 p.m. Please RSVP by calling 323-4600 or Janice.Austin@uky.edu. There will be FREE Lunch to the first 15 who respond provided by Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Please help spread the word!



NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

New Study Finds Elders Most Fear Loss of Independence - And Boomers Share Their Concern

Senior citizens fear moving into a nursing home and losing their independence more than death, according to a new research study, "Aging in Place in America," commissioned by Clarity(R) and The EAR Foundation that examines the attitudes and anxieties of the nation's elderly population. The children of seniors also fear for their parents, with particular concern about their emotional and physical well-being should they have to enter a nursing home.

One of the most significant findings of the study is that, when asked what they fear most, seniors rated loss of independence (26 percent) and moving out of home into a nursing home (13 percent) as their greatest fears. These two possibilities are a much higher concern than death, which was the greatest fear for only three percent of seniors.

Other key findings include:

Vast majority of seniors (89 percent) want to age in place - or grow older without having to move from their homes - and more than half (53 percent) are concerned about their ability to do so.

Large majority (82 percent) of baby boomers fears their parents will be mistreated in a nursing home and 89 percent fear they will be sad.

Seniors living at home are determined to maintain their independence; they report that they require - and receive - limited support from their children or other caregivers.

Not only are boomers concerned about their aging parents, almost two-thirds (63 percent) are providing some kind of help or support to them.

Half of seniors are open to using new technologies to enable independence, including having sensors installed in their homes to monitor their health.

Baby boomers have not turned to technology to assist their aging parents. Only 14 percent have actually looked for solutions that would help them ensure the health and safety of their parents.

These findings tell us that, above all else, older Americans value their ability to live independently," said Peter Bell, president of National Aging in Place Council. "As a society, we must find ways to help our parents and grandparents live their latter years at home. We must make aging in place a national priority and a reality for older Americans.

Seniors cited three primary concerns that could jeopardize their ability to live independently: health problems (53 percent); memory problems (26 percent); and inability to drive and/or get around (23 percent). They said they do not expect nor do they receive much support from those around them. The majority of seniors (55 percent) views themselves as very independent in that they receive no assistance from their children and seem content with that fact. The vast majority (75 percent) said their children are involved "enough" in their life.

To access the full report, visit: www.clarityproducts.com/research.

Source: Elder Care / Work Balance Newsletter: Vol. 6, No. 9 *The "Aging in Place In America" study comes from an article entitled "Study: Seniors fear loss of independence more than death" that appeared in the November 1, 2007 edition of the Portsmouth (NH) Herald. The findings regarding baby boomers' attitudes and anxiety levels about elder care have particular relevance for planning work-based programs supportive of elder care/work balance. - Editor*



UPCOMING EVENTS ON CAMPUS & IN THE COMMUNITY

CAMPUS

- **Health & Wellness Events:** Health and Wellness Weight Loss Matters begins January 8th or 10th, low cost Chair massage Feb 1st 11am – 3 pm at KY Clinic

South. RSVP required for chair massage. Visit www.uky.edu/HR/Wellness to learn about other services and scheduled events.

- **CARE Group meetings** start January 10th in Room 220 Ste 1 at Scovell Hall; January 17th Room C110 UK Hospital; and January 24th Room 379 Service Building. The meetings are from 12:00-1:00 p.m. RSVP suggested by calling 323-4600 or emailing Janice.Austin@uky.edu. FREE Lunch to first 15 responders by Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.



CAREGIVER SURVIVAL GUIDE

Long Distance Caregiver - Challenges and Solutions

By: Helen Hunter, ACSW, CMSW

Families who struggle to care for a parent across the miles have a unique disadvantage. They cannot be there to know what is really happening. It is often difficult and frustrating to reach doctors or social service agencies and to be able to coordinate the needed care. The older parent may forget what the doctor has told them, or choose not to “burden” their child with problematic information. Indeed, many adult children are not aware that there is a problem until a visit is made, and they see the changes in the parent’s physical, mental or emotional functioning.

What can adult children do to be better aware of and be able to manage care for their older relative when there is a physical distance between them? The following strategies might be utilized:

1. If there is a neighbor or close friend who lives near to the older relative, entrust them to check up and visit on a regular basis. Make sure that you are contacted if there are any serious changes that occur.
2. Make contacts with formal services that are appropriate with the older person’s care. These services might include visiting nurses, senior centers, adult day care or a meals program. Keep in regular contact with these agencies and make sure that the older relative is receiving the care that is needed.
3. Keep in regular contact with the older relative’s physician. Call and speak to the physician directly. If you feel comfortable, have the physician send you regular, updated notes on the visits and tests that are administered.
4. Hire a private care manager. There are professionals throughout the country who are trained and experienced in the assessment, coordination, monitoring and direct service delivery of services to the elderly and their families. Many people hire private care managers to serve as their “eyes and ears” in relation to the status of their older relative’s condition. Private care managers can also assist families

with implementing and monitoring a long-term care plan. Family members are relieved to know that someone is watching over their loved one, and is keeping them informed if a problem arises.

A private care manager helps to reassure the family regarding the care that the older person is receiving. Another role is to assist in helping family members deal with emotional concerns, such as not being able to be physically present to provide care or dealing with guilt over the past relationship and emotional distance that might still be felt toward the older parent.

When you are not able to be around to oversee the day-to-day care of your older relative due to geographical distance, it is comforting to know that there are strategies that can be used to plan and to monitor your relative's situation. Customizing a caregiving network will make your life much easier, which will lead to decreased stress and both you and your older relative will reap the benefit of the care that is provided.

Source: Adapted from Caregiver.com Weekly Newsletter, Thursday, October 4, 2007, Issue #347

If you are a long distance caregiver, it is never too early to plan ahead for future emergencies. Call UK Elder Care at 323-4600 for support, information, and referrals to community resources.



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