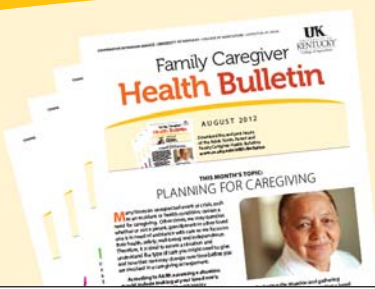


Family Caregiver Health Bulletin



APRIL 2013

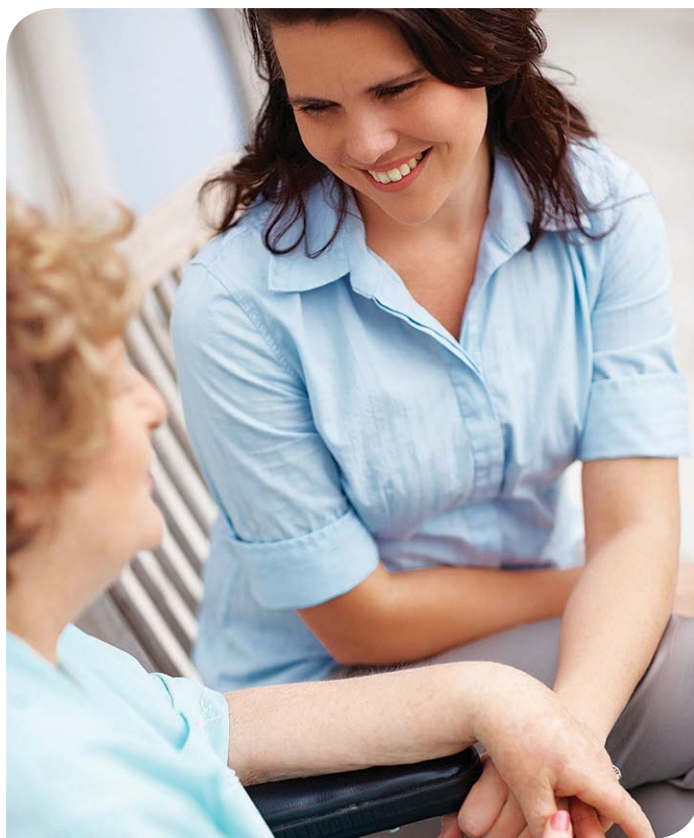
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Atchison County Office
405 Main/PO Box 109
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913-833-5450

THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

MAKE A CAREGIVING PLAN

We plan for major life events and transitions such as education, celebrations, vacations and retirement, but, according to AARP, we often set aside thoughts of caregiving until there is a problem. Yet caregiving affects everyone and we all know someone, regardless of age, who is or will become sick, disabled or in need of some kind of help. What we don't think about is how the failure to have a plan can make it more challenging for the care recipients, who might lose their decision-making voice due to the crisis, and the caregivers, who were not expecting or prepared for the job. AARP also recommends that talking about caregiving and making a plan before a crisis can help eliminate some of the stress, tension and last minute scrambling. Plans allow the eventual care recipient to play an active role in his/her future. AARP's "Prepare to Care: A Planning Guide for Families", provides detailed instruction and worksheets on how to a) Prepare to talk, b) Form your team, c) Assess needs, d) Make a plan, and e) Take action.



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Making a plan before a crisis can help eliminate some of the stress, tension and last minute scrambling.

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Prepare to talk

A conversation about caregiving should take place over time as it can be difficult to acknowledge and talk about decline. While it is important to be straightforward, when approached with an open mind and positive attitude, it is easier to respect everyone's feelings and hear the various perspectives. This conversation does not only have to focus on a caregiving plan, it can also provide insight into a person's values, beliefs and wishes.

A plan doesn't have to be fancy, formal or long, but it should include a general outline of your ideas and list who is in charge of each particular task.

Form your team

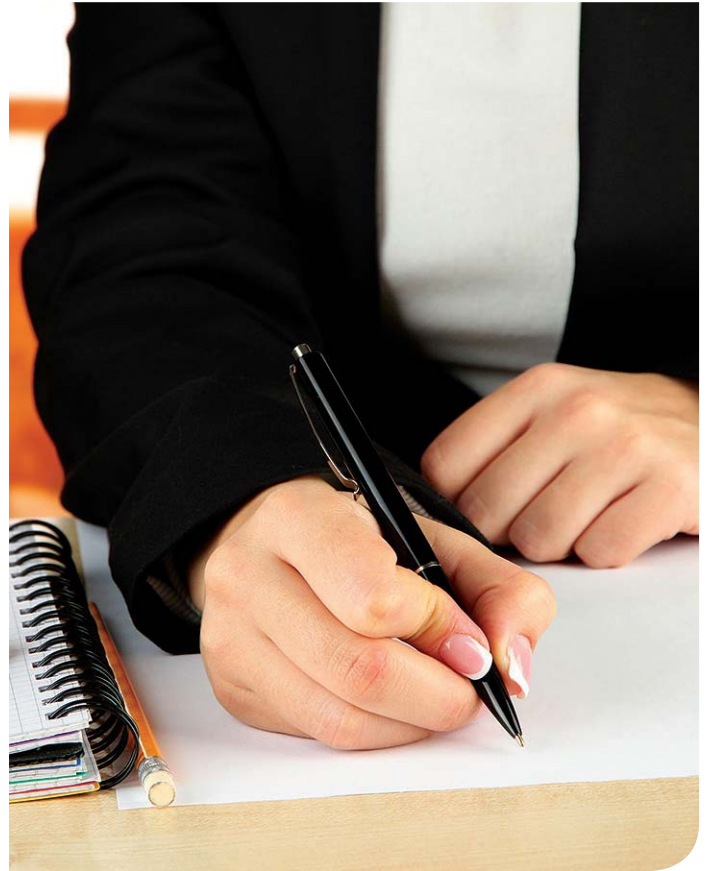
Caregiving is a two-way street between caregivers and the care recipient. It is important to think about who wants, needs and should play a role in the caregiving plan. It is also important to have a team leader who can help keep the process going and help others understand what is being done.

Assess needs

Assessing needs can be difficult to do ahead of time, but you can start by understanding your loved one's beliefs, wishes and priorities. Such insight can help determine future information and resources.

Make a plan

A plan doesn't have to be "fancy, formal or long," according to the AARP. But it should include a general outline of your ideas and list who is in charge of each particular task or step. Again, the care recipient should play the most significant role. It is also important to occasionally re-evaluate and adapt the plan as circumstances and relationships can change.



Take action

With a plan in place, you are more prepared for life's challenges or the unexpected.

For more information about AARP and the Prepare to Care curriculum, visit: www.aarp.org/foundation/preparetocare or contact:

Benefits Outreach Program
AARP Foundation 601 E Street NW
Washington, DC 20049
Tel: (888) 687-2277
Email: benefitisoutreach@aarp.org

REFERENCES:

AARP (2010). Prepare to care: A planning guide for families. Retrieved from <http://www.aarp.org/relationships/caregiving/info-04-2010/prepare-to-care.html>

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Health Bulletin

Written by: Amy Hosier, Ph.D.
Extension Specialist for Family Life
Edited by: Connee Wheeler
Designed by: Rusty Manseau
Stock images: 123RF.com

