



A decision as important as *life* itself.™

## SUPPORT GROUP

**Mild Cognitive Impairment  
Education & Support Group  
for Families affected by MCI**

**Meeting:** May 17, 2007

**Time:** 9:30am

**Location:** Senior Friendship  
Center for Healthy Aging,  
1900 Brother Geenen Way,  
Sarasota

**Speaker:**

Pam Baron, Director of  
Senior Services

**Jewish Family Services**

**Topic: Senior Services**

## Ground Rules for Handling Troubling Behavior

Some of the greatest challenges of caring for a loved one with dementia are personality and behavioral changes. As the disease progresses, it can cause a person to act in different and unpredictable ways. Some individuals with Alzheimer's become anxious or aggressive often misinterpreting what they see or hear. These types of reactions can lead to tension and frustration. As a caregiver, you can best meet the challenges of your loved one's behavior by being creative, flexible, patient and compassionate. It also helps to not take things personally and maintain your sense of humor. Here are some suggestions:

- **We cannot change the person with the memory disorder.** The person you are caring for has a brain disorder that shapes who they have become. When you try to control or change behavior, you'll most likely be unsuccessful or be met with resistance. Unsafe behavior must be addressed to keep individual safe.
- **Remember that we can change our behavior or the physical environment.** Changing our own behavior will often result in a change in our loved one's behavior. Understand that all unusual behavior is not dangerous. Pick your battles. Try to arrange the environment in a safe way to avoid injury.
- **Try to accommodate the behavior, not control the behavior.** Understand that behavior has a purpose. People with dementia typically cannot tell us what they want or need. An individual might try to undress because they are hot – or because they are simply trying to reach an itch. Watch for signal and accommodate need. For example, if the person insists on sleeping on the floor, place mattress on the floor to make him more comfortable.
- **All behavior has a cause, though it may be difficult to figure out.** Try to identify the cause and avoid it if possible.
- **Check with the doctor.** Acute behavioral changes may have an underlying medical reason: perhaps the person is in pain or experiencing and adverse side effect from medications.
- **What works today, may not work tomorrow.** The progression of the disease means that solutions that are effective today may need to be modified tomorrow. The key to managing difficult behaviors is being creative and flexible in your strategies for each challenge.

## THE MEMORY DISORDER CLINIC

### Medical Director

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Sponsored by Sarasota Memorial  
Hospital and State of Florida  
Department of Elder Affairs

**Finally, get support from others. You are not alone. Visit a local support group in your area or contact the local Alzheimer's Association for more information. Expect that like the loved ones you are caring for, you will have good days and bad days and deserve support to continue this difficult (but often joyous) work.**

## State for Florida Sponsor Emergency Contact Registry

The Next of Kin Registry (NOKR) is the ONLY state sponsored program that provides a free emergency contact registration to any individual living in the state. The system allows you to register a next of kin that will be attached to your Florida Drivers License or Florida Identification card.

Many people assume that if they are carrying a driver's license, identification card or credit cards, authorities will know who their emergency contact is. These forms of identification only indicate who you are - not who should be contacted in the event of urgent need. To add to this problem, often times your current identification is not updated or readily available and it becomes very difficult and complex to locate emergency contacts. Difficulty finding an emergency contact can lead to significant delays in families being notified of emergency situations.

For more information about NOKR or to register: go to [www.myflorida.com](http://www.myflorida.com) NOKR is listed under Hot Topics on the home page. Click Next of Kin Registry Emergency Contact System and it will take you to the NOKR home page. You could also contact NOKR by calling 1-800-915-5413.

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### Cell Phones

Cell phones can be very helpful in emergency situations, however not all are user friendly. For those who suffer with memory loss trying to program a cell phone can be difficult. The tiny controls can be too cumbersome to handle or see.

The Spring 2007 issue of Caring Today Magazine suggests a phone that helps with these challenges. This ergonomically designed handset has easy to read numbers. It has a rubber rim to reduce ambient noise and make the phone usable with a hearing aid. The phone can be pre-programmed with 10 to 15 of the user's contacts. There is a one touch dial with only three large buttons including 911 emergencies.

Call 800-918-8543 for details. Keep in mind there are phone companies offer many plans and styles. It is always best to shop around to see what fits your needs.

## Alzheimer's Statistics

The Wall Street Journals March 2007 issue reported some statistics that are eye opening.

More than five million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease. This is a 10% increase since the last Alzheimer's Associations estimate five years ago. Age is the biggest risk factor. What does this mean to the Baby boomer generation?

In 2011 this generation will start turning 65. Already one in eight people age 65 and older have this mind destroying illness and nearly one in two people over age 85.

Unless scientists discover a way to delay the Alzheimer's brain process, some 7.7 million people are expected to have the disease by 2030. By the year 2050 the toll could reach 16 million.

The report also contains a startling finding; between 200,000 and half a million people under the age of 65 has either early onset Alzheimer's or another form of dementia. The Alzheimer's Associations' medical director, Dr. Bill Thies reported that he believes this has been drastically underreported.

Currently there is no known cure, and today's treatment involves medications that only temporarily help symptoms. The mediations that we have so far do not stop any disease process. Understanding the disease process, care and treatment need and their implications for our healthcare system should be a priority for our elected officials in the years to come.

If you or someone in your family is affected by Alzheimer's or related dementia, talk to your legislators about the need for increased focus on these issues. Diagnosis, treatment and care planning are all extremely important to families facing the long struggle with cognitive loss.

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**"A man or woman cannot leave a better legacy to the world than a well-educated and prepared family."**

*-Harry S. Truman*

## Home Safety Tips

- Remove throw rugs and runners.
- Remove lamp, extension and telephone cords out of the flow of traffic.
- Remove clutter from passageways (i.e. plants, shoes, knick knacks)
- Expect that your pets and grandchildren will be very excited to see you. Plan to sit down before your greet them.
- Properly light all passageways (i.e. leave on nightlights)
- Properly light all stair/steps. Install sturdy handrails.
- Apply textured strips to shower/tub floors. Do not use towel bar or soap dish to assist your balance. Install grab bars instead.
- Post emergency numbers in large print by the phone. Use a portable/cordless phone or answering machine to avoid hurrying to the phone.
- Use the buddy system. If you live alone, call a friend or neighbor daily around the same time to check up on each other.
- Carry a current list of your medications including name, dose and reason for use. Dispose of outdated medications. Use a pill organizer to keep track of your daily medications.

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## Healthy Living Life Skills Classes

**FREE**

Lots of fun and giveaways!

Learn about:

Stress

Memory Issues

Anxiety

Medications

Avoid Depression

Negative and Positive Thinking

Healthy Lifestyles

21 Step Evaluation

Jack Swanton, Instructor, Certified Master Educator, University of Florida Extension

Call 941-504-5300 for scheduling.

## Alzheimer's Association presents: A Basic Caregiver (ABC) Course

The Alzheimer's Basic Caregiver Course is designed for family members and home companions who care for someone with dementia/memory loss. The class is free of charge. Classes are held on the first Friday of every month at 2:00 p.m. -4:00 p.m. in Sarasota at Harmony Pavilion, 2600 Courtland Street, Sarasota, 34237 Phone: 684-7875. Classes are also held in Bradenton call 365-8883 for information and reservations.

## Quick Caregiver Tip

**Smile.**

Kindness, humor and creativity are essential parts of caregiving. Hugs, hand massage and other gentle physical contact will help your loved one feel connected and loved.

### News Flash!

**The Johnnie Byrd Alzheimer's Research Institute is now accepting research candidates**

Contact Lorelei Lindenau-Balazs MA; LMHC for details. 941-917-7197

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## Free Memory Screenings

The Memory Disorder Clinic offers **free memory screenings** at The Senior Friendship Centers on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of every month in Sarasota and on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of every month in Venice. Call (941) 917-7197 to schedule an appointment.

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## Sarasota Memorial Hospital

### Memory Disorder Clinic

#### Administrative Office Location

1700 S. Tamiami Trail

Sarasota, FL 34239

(941) 917-7197

[www.sarasotageriatrics.com](http://www.sarasotageriatrics.com)

#### Clinic Locations

1921 Waldemere Street

Suite 403, Sarasota

929 S. Tamiami Trail

Suite 203. Osprey