

PRIME TIMES

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AboutElderCare.org | (918) 336-8500
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“But she can talk just fine.”

Speech Therapy for Dementia

While it may not seem obvious, speech-language pathologists can play an important role in caring for individuals who have dementia. SLPs are qualified professionals that can provide skilled intervention relating to cognitive-linguistic functioning, including all aspects of communication as well as cognitive skills such as memory and executive functioning. After an evaluation, including an interview with the individual and their family/caregivers, an SLP will design an individualized plan of care that may involve any of the following:

- Cognitive strategy training, including memory strategies and other strategies to improve the individual’s ability to complete tasks independently
- Caregiver training, including ways to interact with the individual, ways to support the individual, etc
- Support for creating routines and processes that keeps the individual safe
- Suggestions for ways to modify the environment to improve the individual’s functioning
- Education, resources, and counseling

An important part of providing services to individuals with dementia is that these impairments are usually progressive in nature. That means that services are not usually aimed at rehabilitating a skill, but instead compensating for lost skills via strategies and modifications to their daily routines

and tasks. It is vital that the family/caregivers of the individual are heavily involved in the therapeutic process so that the interventions are truly meaningful and functional for that individual as they continue through the disease process.

Another important aspect of speech therapy services for these individuals is counseling. Cognitive changes can cause tension and stress due to a lack of preparedness or even just a lack of understanding the disease or impairments. SLPs can help both the individuals themselves as well as their family/caregivers as they all learn to cope with these changes and adapt to their “new normal.”

This can be a scary time for anyone dealing with this problem, but you don’t have to deal with it alone. If you believe you or a loved one would benefit from speech therapy, ask your doctor for a referral and call 918-766-0391 to set up an evaluation with our speech-language pathologist.



What is Aphasia?

By Abigail Petermann, SLP at Foundation Therapy Specialists

Actor, Bruce Willis, has been diagnosed with aphasia. This high profile individual's diagnosis has given speech language therapists opportunities to educate the public about the condition. We asked Abby Petermann to share more about this condition and possible treatments.

Damage to the language centers of the brain, which in most individuals are in the left temporal and frontal lobes, can cause an impairment known as "aphasia." Varying levels of severity are possible, from mild symptoms that minimally disrupt an individual's life, to severe symptoms that make a significant impact on daily functioning.

There are different types of aphasia depending on the specific location and extent of the damage. Some different symptoms include:

- Word finding errors: difficulty naming objects, getting "stuck" trying to think of a word ("I went to the grocery store because I needed a... ah... you know... the red thing...")
- Slow, effortful, agrammatic speech: leaves out "less important" words but has the main words ("tired... bed")
- Fluent, nonsensical speech: sentences don't make sense ("Monday came and the rain went up so I couldn't cook my soup")
- Difficulty understanding what is said to you

- Paraphasias: words come out only partially correct ("fife" for "knife") or they are unintentionally substituted for a different word (frequently within the same category, like saying "spoon" instead of "fork")

Difficulty reading or writing

Something that is a common confusion with aphasia is that when individuals have aphasia, their cognitive skills are often intact. Because our language use is often associated with our level of intelligence, it can be easy to misunderstand an individual's impairment as a loss of intelligence. This is not the case. These individuals can usually "think" just as quickly as they used to be able to; they have just lost some of their ability to express these thoughts through words.

Individuals with aphasia will have varying degrees of recovery across time. The sooner intervention can start, the better the prognosis for recovery. Speech therapy intervention can include a wide range of activities, such as language exercises that help your brain re-map linguistic information, developing strategies to compensate for lost skills, and developing alternative means of communication.

Let us help you get your voice back! If you believe you or a loved one could benefit from speech therapy, call 918-766-0391 to set up your appointment today.

Connecting After Retirement

By Deanna Dodson, CMS

Do you often feel that you lack companionship? Are you living alone? Have you had a major life change such as moving after retirement? If so you, or someone you care about, may be one of the estimated eight million adults over age fifty that are at risk of social isolation. When we are no longer working and move to a new area it can be especially tough to maintain or create a social support system. Life changes happen and we may not realize how staying connected and engaged with others can fluctuate and the influence this has on our wellbeing.

Along with the high numbers of adults at risk for isolation listed above, Expand Your Circles also published recent studies on the negative outcomes of isolation. The research showed prolonged isolation equal to the health risk of smoking fifteen cigarettes a day. Other undesirable consequences of isolation and loneliness include higher rates of heart disease, depression, and death. So where do we begin? First, let's have realistic expectations. Making friends takes time. A University of Kansas professor recently published an article in the Journal of Social and Personal Relationships that detailed just how long. His findings revealed it takes adults near fifty hours for a relationship to change from acquaintance to casual friend.

Thankfully we can start increasing our social world with a few easy steps. A couple of things to try include scheduling time each day to call and visit

someone or using social media like Facebook to stay in touch or renew a friendship. Not tech savvy? Take a class to learn to use social media, not only will you gain a skill but you will also meet potential friends who are new to using social media. Joining local community wellness or senior centers can provide a



variety of activities to choose from including group exercise or travel programs. Continuing these steps will provide the foundation for real friendships to develop.

We all need companionship no matter our circumstances. Being socially connected in a way that adds meaning to our life is different for everyone. If you have any questions or suggestions please reach out to us at Elder Care we have several programs that offer opportunities to meet others and we love to hear from you!

Sleep is important at any age

By Tracy Stuckey, APRN



As we age we experience normal changes in our sleeping patterns, we may get sleepy earlier or wake up more frequent throughout the night. The disturbance in our sleep pattern may leave us feeling tired when we awake.

The importance of sleep as we age is essential for

memory and concentration. The recommended hours of sleep for adults are 7-9 hours per night. If we don't get the required sleep our bodies need then we are more susceptible to illness, depression, attention and memory problems and even falls.

The most common reported sleep problems in older adults are poor sleep habits, medical conditions or pain, medications, lack of exercise, decrease in social engagement and stress. There are things we can do to help promote good sleep patterns to improve overall health. The first thing is making your sleep environment conditions optimal for sleep. It is good practice to limit TV, or any brain stimulating activity, an hour before bedtime and to dim the lights in your room. Also, maintaining a consistent sleep schedule helps program your brain to sleep and wake cycles.

Improvements to our diets can help promote sleep such as; limit fluid intake at least 1 hour prior to going to bed, limit caffeine late in the evening, reduce sugar intake and avoid alcohol before bedtime. Exercise is another important part of our everyday life that will help ensure good restful sleep.

If you experience sleep loss for an extended period of time consult your physician to help facilitate a plan that best fits your need.

- *Stick to a sleep schedule*
Go to bed and get up at the same time every day.
- *Pay attention to what you eat and drink*
Avoid heavy or large meals within a couple of hours of bedtime. Nicotine, caffeine, and alcohol deserve caution, too.
- *Create a restful environment*
Consider using room-darkening shades, earplugs, a fan or other devices to create an environment that suits your needs.
- *Include physical activity in your daily routine*
Regular physical activity can promote better sleep.
- *Manage worries*
Start with the basics, such as getting organized, setting priorities, and delegating tasks.

DayBreak Welcomes Summer

By Leah Alexander, DayBreak Director

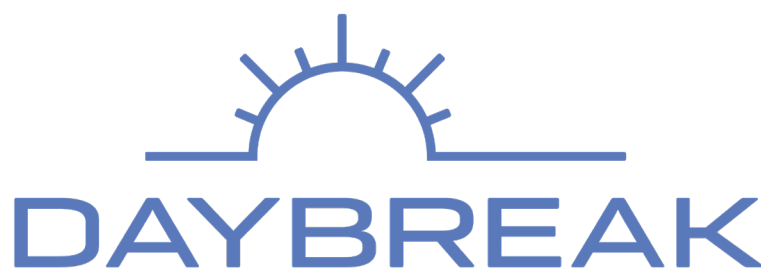
DayBreak Adult Day Health provides socialization, therapeutic activities, fitness, music, nutritious meals and much more at Elder Care. Participants can attend DayBreak up to 5 days a week, Monday through Friday, between 7:30 am – 5:30 pm

This summer, DayBreak participants will be spending time outdoors in the beautiful DayBreak gardens reminiscing about summers past and enjoying the fresh air and beautiful setting.

Participant Nancy Wesley says, “We enjoy summertime at DayBreak. We seem to have more time to work on our art projects and we like the summer schedule.”

As always, DayBreak participants enjoy arts and crafts that spark creativity, games that keep minds sharp and fitness that keep everyone moving.

DayBreak is available for adults of various levels of physical and cognitive levels; from those simply seeking social interaction and a sense of purpose to those who may need care during the day. For more information, please call Leah Alexander at 918-336-8500.



ADULT DAY HEALTH & ACTIVITY CENTER

Monday – Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. • Enhance Exercise • Art Enrichment • Nutritious Meals
Supervised, compassionate environment • Transportation available in Bartlesville, Dewey, and Nowata

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Angie Thompson

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ABC's of Medicare Success!

As anyone who has obtained Medicare age can attest, navigating the world of Medicare insurance can be overwhelming. There are so many choices, complex information, unsolicited mail and phone calls, and a constant barrage of television commercials which appear to offer plans too good to be true.



Phoenix Insurance brings Medicare specialist Melissa Hanes to Eldercare in a free education program to discuss the complex world of Medicare. Melissa will cover original Medicare A&B, Medicare Supplement Insurance, Medicare Advantage Plans, and Prescription Drug Coverage. In this interactive program, participants are encouraged to ask questions and complete free workbooks to help them navigate Medicare. Refreshments will be served.

“The ABC’s of Medicare Success”

June 9th, 4:00-5:30pm

Eldercare dining room

A Free Program with Workbook
Refreshments will be served

This Month's Donors

In appreciation of contributions to Elder Care in April 2022.

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