

PRIME TIMES

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AboutElderCare.org | (918) 336-8500
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Elder Care Expands Support for Caregivers

by Michael Colaw, Development Director

At Elder Care, we believe in empowering mature adults to live happy, healthy, and independent lives.

One of our most vital services is the Caregiver Support Group, which has been a cornerstone of our outreach efforts. Starting this month, we're excited to announce that this group will expand from meeting once a month to meeting every Tuesday at 10:00 a.m. This change reflects our ongoing commitment to supporting those who dedicate their time and energy to caring for their loved ones.

The role of a caregiver is both rewarding and challenging. Many caregivers experience stress, burnout, and isolation as they navigate the complexities of supporting an aging loved one. By shifting our support group to a weekly schedule, we aim to offer more frequent opportunities for caregivers to connect, share experiences, and find solace among peers who understand their journey.

Our weekly meetings will continue to provide a welcoming environment where caregivers can discuss their challenges and triumphs. Each session will include expert guidance, resources, and emotional support, helping caregivers feel less alone and more equipped to handle their responsibilities.

Recognizing that caregivers often need a break, we've paired these support group sessions with a generous respite care offer. While caregivers attend the meeting, their loved ones can enjoy free care at our DayBreak program. This service allows caregivers to participate in the group without

worry, knowing their loved ones are in a safe, nurturing environment. As we continue to grow we hope to extend this opportunity to include more hours of DayBreak each month.

DayBreak provides participants with engaging activities, nutritious meals, and companionship, all under the supervision of our caring staff. This dual benefit of support and respite aims to alleviate some of the stress on caregivers, promoting overall well-being for both them and their loved ones.

If you're a caregiver in the Bartlesville area, we invite you to take advantage of this expanded service. Our support group is a place of understanding and compassion, where you can find strength and encouragement among others who share your experiences.

Remember, caring for yourself is just as important as caring for your loved one. By attending our weekly support group, you'll gain the tools and friendships you need to thrive in your caregiving role.

For more information about our services or to RSVP for an upcoming meeting, please contact Elder Care at (918) 336-8500 or visit our website at www.abouteldercare.org.

Together, we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of caregivers and the aging adults they support. We look forward to welcoming you to our growing community.

Memory Screenings: A Key Step in Brain Health

by Michael Colaw, Development Director

As we age, changes in memory and cognitive function are natural, but how do we differentiate between normal aging and signs of a more serious condition? Memory screenings provide valuable insights and can serve as an essential tool for individuals and families alike.

Memory screening is a simple, non-invasive process that evaluates memory, language skills, and cognitive function. It helps detect potential concerns early, sometimes even before noticeable symptoms appear. According to the Alzheimer's Association, early detection of memory issues allows for better treatment outcomes, access to therapies that may slow progression, and improved long-term planning.

One of the greatest benefits of memory screenings is the peace of mind they offer. For many, results may confirm that memory changes are part of normal aging, alleviating unnecessary worry. For others, screenings can identify areas that may require further evaluation, opening the door to early interventions. Early action is especially important for conditions like Alzheimer's disease, where treatments are most effective when starting sooner.

Memory screenings also empower caregivers and families. Understanding cognitive changes early provides families with the opportunity to prepare, connect with resources, and create care plans that support their loved ones' needs. Additionally, knowing what to expect can help reduce caregiver stress and improve communication.

At Elder Care, we are committed to supporting our community's brain health. Memory screenings are quick, confidential, and conducted by trained professionals in a compassionate environment. A screening is not a diagnosis but a proactive first step to understanding your brain health and addressing any concerns.

If you or a loved one has noticed changes in memory or simply want to establish a baseline for future comparison, we encourage you to schedule a memory screening today.

To learn more about memory screenings, contact Elder Care at (918) 336-8500. Early detection can make all the difference in ensuring a healthier and more confident future for you and your family. Take the first step toward protecting your brain health today!



Find Connection in Our Caregiver Support Group

by Joanie Elmore, Community Outreach Liason

Caring for a loved one is a beautiful act of love, but it can also feel overwhelming and isolating at times. The demands of caregiving can take a toll physically, emotionally, and mentally. That's why finding a supportive community is so important.

At Elder Care, we understand the challenges caregivers face, and we're here to walk alongside you. We're excited to offer a weekly Caregiver Support Group, starting February 4, 2025, as a place where caregivers can come together to share, connect, and recharge.

Imagine stepping into a cozy, welcoming space where others truly understand what you're going through. Our support group offers just that, a judgment-free environment where you can enjoy a cup of coffee, unwind, and share experiences with people who "get it." Together, we'll explore the ups and downs of caregiving in facilitated discussions, offering a listening ear and compassionate advice when needed.

Once a month, we'll welcome a guest speaker to guide us through topics that matter most to caregivers, like managing stress, practicing self-care, planning for the future, and understanding hospice care. These educational sessions will give you the tools and knowledge to navigate your caregiving journey with confidence.

To make it even easier for you to join, we invite you to bring your loved one along. While you attend

the support group, your "care-receiver" can enjoy a free, one-hour stay in our Adult Health and Activity Center, DayBreak. Please call ahead at (918) 336-8500 to pre-register your loved one for DayBreak on the days you plan to attend. This will ensure we have the proper support and resources available to care for them while you take time for yourself.

If you're looking for a place where you can find understanding, encouragement, and practical resources, we invite you to join us. Come as you are, whether you're a seasoned caregiver or just beginning this journey. We meet every Tuesday at 10:00 AM, and we'd love for you to be part of our growing community.

You're not alone in this. Let's learn and grow together, one step at a time.

Caregiver Support Group Schedule

February 4 - Exploring Caregiver Issues

February 11 - I Need A Break!

February 18 - Facing Emotional Challenges

February 25 - Feeling Depressed? (Larry Cowan, Grand Mental Health)

March 4 - Managing Caregiver Stress

March 11 - Improving Time Management



Plan for the Future With a Gift That Lasts

Michael Colaw, Development Director

A planned gift is a gift that involves integrating personal, financial and estate planning concepts with a donor's plan for lifetime giving. For the donor, a planned gift provides a way to give beyond the use of current assets, and it often provides significant estate tax benefits. A planned gift may require the assistance of a qualified legal or financial advisor to help complete the gift.

Planned gifts are a very important way to provide for the future of an organization that is important to you. The bequests Elder Care receives make significant contributions to our work with aging adults and caregivers.

Many of our supporters have generously demonstrated their commitment to the mission and future of Elder Care by way of a planned gift. Leaving a gift is a uniquely personal decision, but the steps are straightforward, and include:

- Arranging for a gift through your will or trust as a defined dollar amount, a percentage of estate or remainder amount, or specific items of personal property.
- Naming Elder Care as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy or retirement account such as an IRA which can offer tax advantages.
- Receiving a lifetime income and a possible tax deduction through a Charitable Gift Annuity.

As we plan for the future, it is helpful to be aware of forthcoming gifts. We are wholly dedicated to our donors, and will ensure that their wishes are honored.



We are also excited to reintroduce our *Giving Society*, a special group of donors committed to making a lasting impact through recurring monthly gifts. Your ongoing support helps sustain and grow our vital programs for aging adults and caregivers.

By contributing \$50, \$100, \$250, or \$500 per month, you play a key role in ensuring we can continue to serve those who rely on our services. These recurring gifts add up to a significant impact, providing consistent resources that strengthen our mission.

If you'd like to learn more about how you can join our *Giving Society* and make a difference, we encourage you to reach out to us.

For more information, contact Michael Colaw at mcolaw@abouteldercare.org or (918) 336-8500 ext. 129.

Learn to Love Your Heart

by Josh Lindblom PT, DPT, Director of Foundation Therapy Services

With so many hearts around us at Valentine's Day, it's important that you pay your own heart a little attention. After all, your heart is incredible. The average heart rate of an adult is 72 beats per minute. If you live to be 80 years old, your heart would have beaten almost 3 billion times. The heart is an amazing organ that keeps beating involuntarily and powers blood circulation for the entire body. Here are some important considerations for your heart health.

While genetics play a part in heart disease, lifestyle choices have a significant impact. The fact that you may have heart disease in your family tree should be the driver of change in your lifestyle. We know that smoking, unhealthy eating habits, and living a sedentary lifestyle negatively impact heart health. Here's how physical therapy can help.

Exercise helps you burn calories, lowers your resting blood pressure and heart rate, reduces bad cholesterol and boosts good cholesterol. Physical therapists are uniquely qualified to assess your mobility and physical activity levels and create an appropriate plan for you to improve. A quality assessment of muscle strength, endurance, and vital signs, taking into account past medical conditions and medications, is imperative in creating a successful program. A therapist will provide patient education and teach proper technique and performance of exercise. If you are not used to exercising, a therapist is excellent at setting suitable intensity and viable goals for activities.

It's important to recognize that being active doesn't necessarily mean that you are running on a treadmill or going to a work out class, yet both of those can be good options. Your plan could be as simple as taking a daily walk, parking farther away from the store to add more steps to your day, or taking stairs instead of an elevator. Maybe it's getting back into playing a sport or participating in a physically active hobby. A physical therapist can help you work through the details.

The decisions you make today help shape the story you can tell tomorrow. Find something you love to do and get moving! You owe it to your incredible heart to tell a good story and we would love to help.

Foundation Therapy Specialists at Elder Care specializes in administering individualized care in a compassionate environment. We dedicate ourselves to provide high-quality skilled services to manage multiple medical conditions and the impairments that accompany these conditions. To schedule an evaluation, contact us directly at (918) 766-0391.



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Think Positive and Reduce Stress

by *Christina Bishop, Executive Director*

The staff at Mayo clinic writes that positive thinking helps with stress management and that it can improve your health! I have often found that there are two categories that most of us fit into; those who are filled with optimism and those that are filled with pessimism. These are considered personality traits. You can probably look at your family and friends and fairly quickly identify who falls in which category. The good news, we can change the way we think and choose to start thinking positive. Positive thinking doesn't mean that you bury your head in the sand and ignore the unpleasant things in life. It just means that you approach the unpleasant parts of life in a different manner.

The first step often starts with how we talk to ourselves. Is it positive or negative? If your self-talk is negative it's time to make a change. Self-talk is the endless stream of unspoken thoughts that run through your mind. You can learn to turn negative thinking into positive thinking. The many positive benefits that come from thinking positively are; increased life span, lower rates of depression, better psychological and physical well-being, reduced risk of cardiovascular disease and better coping skills during hardships and times of stress just to name a few.

The following are some simple steps you can take to start making a difference in the way you think and reducing your stress:

1. Identify areas you typically think negatively about whether it is work, your relationship or health issues. You can pick one area and start focusing on a more positive approach.
2. Check your thinking periodically during the day, if you find that your thoughts are mostly negative, stop and put a positive spin on them.
3. Give yourself permission to smile or live, especially during difficult times.
4. Surround yourself with positive. Hanging out with negative people may increase your stress level and make you doubt your own abilities to manage stress.
5. Be gentle and encouraging with yourself. If a negative thought enters your mind, evaluate it rationally and respond with affirmations of what is good about you.

RESCHEDULED

Upcoming Event: Sip and Paint

Friday, February 21 from 4:30pm-6:00pm

Unwind with a glass of wine and delicious bites as you create a stunning piece of art worthy of display. Instructor Valerie Unruh will guide you step-by-step through this hands-on painting experience. This class is simple, fun, and perfect for beginners—no prior painting experience needed! All materials are included.

\$50 per person. RSVP by February 14 by calling 918-336-8500.



This Month's Donors

In appreciation of contributions to Elder Care in January 2025

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