



The Gathering Place Newsletter

Issue 70

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Mission Statement::

The Gathering Place at Lakewood UMC is a ministry for those who are living with memory loss and the people who love them.



“Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” – Matthew 25:40



10 Tips for Family Caregivers

- Caregiving is a job and respite is your earned right. Reward yourself with respite breaks often.
- Watch out for signs of depression, and don't delay in getting professional help when you need it.
- When people offer to help, accept the offer and suggest specific things that they can do.
- Educate yourself about your loved one's condition and how to communicate effectively with doctors.
- There's a difference between caring and doing. Be open to technologies and ideas that promote your loved one's independence.
- Trust your instincts. Most of the time they'll lead you in the right direction.
- Caregivers often do a lot of lifting, pushing, and pulling. Be good to your back.
- Grieve for your losses, and then allow yourself to dream new dreams.
- Seek support from other caregivers. There is great strength in knowing you are not alone.
Stand up for your rights as a caregiver and a citizen.

Source: *National Family Caregiver's Association*

Common Ground Caregiver Conversations

Common Ground is a place and time for caregivers like you to meet, talk, share, learn and receive the support needed to take care of yourselves so you can provide the best care possible to a family member or friend.

Common Ground is a free caregiver assistance program of Interfaith CarePartners® in cooperation with partner congregations in greater Houston. Groups are available for caregivers of persons with dementia and caregivers for persons with other diagnoses and conditions.

Lakewood will be hosting Common Ground on April 9, 2018 from 10:00-11:30 am in the Parlor. For more information, contact Pam Cline 281.370.2273 or pam.cline@lakewoodumc.org.

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Activities

A person with Alzheimer's or other dementia doesn't have to give up the activities that he or she loves. Many activities can be modified to the person's ability. In addition to enhancing quality of life, activities can reduce behaviors like wandering or agitation.

Choosing activities

In the early stages of dementia, the person may withdraw from activities he or she previously enjoyed. It is important to help the person remain engaged. Having an open discussion around any concerns and making slight adjustments can make a difference. For example, a large social gathering may be overwhelming, but the person may be able to interact more successfully in smaller groups.

As Alzheimer's progresses, you may need to make other adjustments to the activity. Use the following tips:

Keep the person's skills and abilities in mind.

A person with dementia may be able to play simple songs learned on the piano years ago. Bring these types of skills into daily activities.

Pay special attention to what the person enjoys.

Take note when the person seems happy, anxious, distracted or irritable. Some people enjoy watching sports, while others may be frightened by the pace or noise.

Consider if the person begins activities without direction.

Does he or she set the table before dinner or sweep the kitchen floor mid-morning? If so, you may wish to plan these activities as part of the daily routine.

Be aware of physical problems.

Does he or she get tired quickly or have difficulty seeing, hearing or performing simple movements?

Focus on enjoyment, not achievement.

Find activities that build on remaining skills and talents. A professional artist might become frustrated over the declining quality of work, but an amateur might enjoy a new opportunity for self expression. For activity ideas join [ALZConnected](#), our message boards and online support community. Every day, caregivers like you share new ideas and encourage one another.

Encourage involvement in daily life.

Activities that help the individual feel like a valued part of the household — like setting the table — can provide a sense of success and accomplishment.

Relate to past work life.

A former office worker might enjoy activities that involve organizing, like putting coins in a holder or making a to-do list. A farmer or gardener may take pleasure in working in the yard.

Look for favorites.

The person who always enjoyed drinking coffee and reading the newspaper may still find these activities enjoyable, even if he or she is not able to completely understand what the newspaper says.

Consider time of day.

Caregivers may find they have more success with certain activities at specific times of day, such as bathing and dressing in the morning.

Adjust activities to disease stages.

As the disease progresses, you may want to introduce more repetitive tasks. Be prepared for the person to eventually take a less active role in activities.