



La Crosse County Aging Unit

Bridging care from our community to your home.



Family Caregivers Newsletter

July/August 2015

About Alzheimer's Disease: Mild Cognitive Impairment

Mild cognitive impairment (MCI) is a condition in which people have more memory or other thinking problems than normal for their age, but their symptoms do not interfere with their everyday lives. Older people with MCI are at greater risk for developing Alzheimer's, but not all of them do. Some may even go back to normal cognition. Studies are underway to learn why some people with MCI progress to Alzheimer's and others do not.

The problems associated with MCI may also be caused by certain medications, cerebrovascular disease (which affects blood vessels that supply the brain), and other factors. Some of the problems brought on by these conditions can be managed or reversed.

The type of MCI with memory loss as the main symptom is called amnesic MCI. In another type, non-amnesic MCI, the main symptom is an impaired thinking skill other than memory loss, such as trouble planning and organizing or poor judgment.

Causes and Risk Factors

The causes of MCI are not yet completely understood. Experts believe that many cases, but not all, result from brain changes occurring in the very early stages of Alzheimer's disease or other dementias. The risk factors most strongly linked to MCI are the same as those for dementia: advancing age, family history of Alzheimer's or another dementia, and conditions that raise risk for cardiovascular disease.

Treatment

No medications are currently approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to treat MCI. Drugs approved to treat symptoms of Alzheimer's disease have not shown any benefit in delaying or preventing progression of MCI to dementia.

The following coping strategies may be helpful for those with MCI. Some studies suggest that these strategies may help slow decline in thinking skills, although more research is needed to confirm their effect. But they pose little risk, and may offer other health benefits and enhance one's sense of well-being, so they're a reasonable part of anyone's overall wellness plan:

- **Exercise** on a regular basis to benefit your heart and blood vessels, including those that nourish your brain.
- **Control cardiovascular risk factors** to protect your heart and blood vessels, including those that support brain function. Follow a heart healthy diet!
- **Participate in mentally stimulating and socially engaging activities**, which may help sustain brain function.

Experts recommend that a person diagnosed with MCI be re-evaluated every six months to determine if symptoms are staying the same, improving or growing worse.

For more information about MCI, Alzheimer's or other types of dementia, caregiving, legal issues or clinical trial participation, visit www.alz.org or call the toll-free, 24/7 Helpline at 800-272-3900.

WELLNESS FEST 2015

Saturday, July 25, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., La Crosse Center



GUNDERSEN
HEALTH SYSTEM®
Where Caring Meets Excellence



Meet Chef Dana Herbert,
winner of season
2010-2011 TLC's

***"Cake Boss:
Next Great
Baker"***

Cooking demonstrations at
10 and 11:45 a.m. Experience
Chef Dana prepare tasty,
healthy dishes. Come early
to receive your complimentary
ticket for samples, available
in limited quantities.

Gundersen Health System is proud to announce Wellness Fest 2015! We are excited to welcome Chef Dana Herbert, Winner of season 2010-2011 TLC's "Cake Boss: Next Great Baker" to this year's Wellness Fest. Chef Dana, being brought to us by Novo Nordisk, will be preparing great tasting and healthy dishes for attendees to try. Cooking demonstrations at 10 and 11:45 a.m. Come early to receive your complimentary ticket for samples, available in limited quantities.

Wellness Fest will take place on Saturday, July 25, from 9a.m.-1p.m. at the La Crosse Center.

This **FREE**, fun and informative healthy-living event, features activities for all ages:

- Health screenings and displays
- Shop at area vendor booths and learn about local services
- Bikes Limited safety inspection and mini tune-up (Don't forget to bring your bike!)
- Free bike helmets and fittings for kids (while supplies last)
- Kids' Zone with The Parenting Place and a Home Depot kid's workshop

Bring a non-perishable food item to help local food pantries.

For more information, please visit <http://www.gundersenhealth.org/wellnessfest>.

POWER UP

Empowering Caregivers

Tuesday, August 4th, 2015
Black River Beach Community Center
1433 Rose St | La Crosse, WI 54603

Registration Deadline:

Wednesday, July 29th, 2015

Fee:

FREE for Family Caregivers (*Registration is Required*)

\$15.00 Professional Caregivers

Featured Speakers Include:

Janet Zander—Advocacy & Public Coordinator for GWAAR (Greater Wisconsin Agency on

Dr. Ellen Rozek—Faculty member and Co-chair of the Gerontology Emphasis at UW-La Crosse.

Amy Schaack—Owner and Director of Services at Life in Harmony Music Therapy LLC.



Respite care is available if you would like someone to be with your loved-one while you are at this event. It is provided at no cost to you by the La Crosse County Aging Unit.

Reservations are required. Please call 608-785-6438 to make an arrangement.

To Register, please call 608-785-9710

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La Crosse County

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Free Educational Events

alzwi.org | alzheimer's association
Community Education Programs

Dan Zabel, Community Outreach Specialist with the Alzheimer's Association, is offering free community education programs in the La Crosse area during the month of July.

"The Basics: Memory Loss, Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease" will take place on Tuesday, July 21, 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. This program is designed to help participants understand the difference between normal age-related memory changes and more serious memory problems that should be evaluated by a medical professional. The location for this program is the Northside Community Policing Center, 713 Saint James St., La Crosse.

"Know the 10 Signs: Early Detection Matters" will be held Monday, July 27, 2:30 - 4:00 p.m. The warning signs of Alzheimer's disease are often dismissed as side effects of normal aging. This training shares the 10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's disease, separating myth from reality and addressing commonly-held fears. This program will be held in the Community Room of Goodwill, 3954 Mormon Coulee Road, La Crosse.

"Caregiver Stress - Take Care of Yourself" will be the program provided on Monday, July 27, 5:00 - 6:30 p.m. Caregivers will gain a better understanding of dementia, the changes, and how these changes may affect the caregiving journey. Learn about stress, how to identify it and initiate an action plan to lessen caregiver stress. This program will be held in the Community Room of Goodwill, 3954 Mormon Coulee Road, La Crosse.

Additional programs will be scheduled in the La Crosse area over the next couple of months or so. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Dan Zabel at 715.720.7611 or by email: dzabel@alz.org



Successful Aging Program

The **Successful Aging Program** offers monthly educational sessions to give you the opportunity to socialize and learn something new. From cooking for one or two, to Alzheimer's updates, the topics are designed with you in mind.

Sessions take place on the fourth Thursday of each month. Refreshments are available at no charge from 2 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. and sessions start at 2:30 p.m. and go until 3:30 p.m.

Cost: No charge

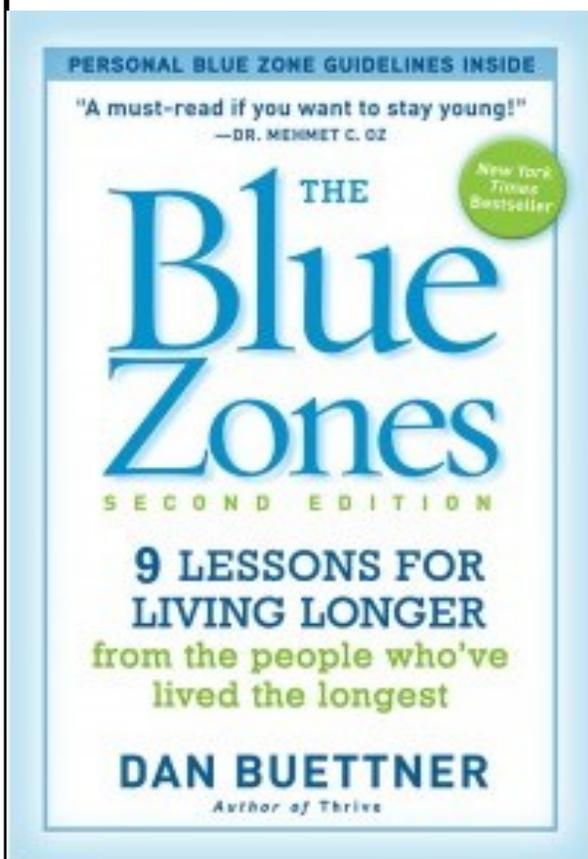
Location: Marycrest Auditorium, 2nd floor of the Mayo Clinic Hospital Building, 700 West Avenue South, La Crosse

Dementia Education and Support Groups are programs that offer family education sessions, individual consultations, written material, and community education programs. Along with the Alzheimer's Association we offer three different support groups including Early Memory Loss Discussion/Support Group, a Memory Loss Activity/Support Group and a Family Support Group.

Events are free of charge and anyone is welcome to attend. For more information or to be added to the mailing list please call **Elder Services at 608-392-9505**.

Health & Longevity Across the World

Sponsored by the Helen Bader Foundation



Join life coach **Luann Alemão** for a look at The Blue Zone strategies, as outlined in the best-selling book of the same name by Dan Buettner. Our conversation will touch on how aging continuously evolves as new research and approaches towards longevity and health emerge.

In 2004, National Geographic magazine researchers sought out pockets of the world where an extraordinary percentage of the population lived to age 100 and beyond. The team sought to identify the common factors that might play a role in the longevity of these elders.

Dubbed “The Blue Zones,” these areas have inspired a global effort to help communities of all sizes enable their older adults to live full, fascinating lives.

We invite our partners and friends from across Wisconsin to join us and think how we can make our home state’s diverse communities become Blue Zones of their own. ***Come as Our Guest!***

When: Wednesday, August 5, 2015, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Location: La Crosse Radisson, 200 Harborview Plaza

There is no charge to attend, but seating is limited.

Please RSVP by July 31, 2015 to: kim@bader.org or at 414-224-6464

Can’t join us in LaCrosse? Ms. Alemão will also be the keynote speaker at the 2015 Healthy Aging Summit in Stevens Point August 6-7, presented by the Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging.



“Each and every act of kindness done by anyone, anywhere resonates out into the world and somehow mysteriously, invisibly, and perfectly touches us all.”

Principles for a Dignified Diagnosis

Is the first statement of its kind written by people with Alzheimer's disease

In recognition of the changing landscape of Alzheimer's, the Alzheimer's Association hosted four regional town hall meetings with more than 800 participants, including 300 people living with the disease. The 2008 report *Voices of Alzheimer's Disease* examined the rich dialogue at these town halls and identified diagnostic challenges and dissatisfying interactions with the medical community as two major challenges articulated by people living with the disease. The new, innovative *Principles for a Dignified Diagnosis* contains insights from people living with the disease on how to improve that experience.

The *Principles for a Dignified Diagnosis* include the following:

- ◆ **Talk to me directly, the person with dementia.** I am the person with the disease, and though my loved ones will also be affected, I am the person who needs to know first.
- ◆ **Tell the truth.** Even if you don't have all the answers, be honest about what you do know and why you believe it to be so.
- ◆ **Test early.** Helping me get an accurate diagnosis as soon as possible gives me more time to cope and live to my fullest potential and to get information about appropriate clinical trials.
- ◆ **Take my concerns seriously, regardless of my age.** Age may be the biggest risk factor for Alzheimer's, but Alzheimer's is not a normal part of aging. Don't discount my concerns because I am old. At the same time, don't forget that Alzheimer's can also affect people in their 40s, 50s and 60s.
- ◆ **Deliver the news in plain but sensitive language.** This may be one of the most important things I ever hear. Please use language that I can understand and is sensitive to how this may make me feel.
- ◆ **Coordinate with other care providers.** I may be seeing more than one specialist — it is important that you talk to my other providers to ensure you all have the information so that changes can be identified early on and that I don't have to unnecessarily repeat any tests.
- ◆ **Explain the purpose of different tests and what you hope to learn.** Testing can be very physically and emotionally challenging. It would help me to know what the purpose of the test is, how long it will take and what you expect to learn from the process. I would also appreciate the option of breaks during longer tests and an opportunity to ask questions.
- ◆ **Give me tools for living with this disease.** Please don't give me my diagnosis and then leave me alone to confront it. I need to know what will happen to me, and I need to know not only about medical treatment options but also what support is available through the Alzheimer's Association and other resources in my community.
- ◆ **Work with me on a plan for healthy living.** Medication may help modify some of my neurological symptoms, but I am also interested in other recommendations for keeping myself as healthy as possible through diet, exercise and social engagement.
- ◆ **Recognize that I am an individual and the way I experience this disease is unique.** This disease affects each person in different ways and at a different pace. Please be sure to couch your explanation of how this disease may change my life with this in mind.
- ◆ **Alzheimer's is a journey, not a destination.** Treatment doesn't end with the writing of a prescription. Please continue to be an advocate — not just for my medical care but for my quality of life as I continue to live with Alzheimer's.

The *Principles for a Dignified Diagnosis* will build greater understanding of Alzheimer's disease in the medical community," said Dr. Laurel Coleman, Alzheimer's Association national board member. "Since Alzheimer's is a progressive brain disease, the physical, emotional and social implications of the diagnosis need to be considered throughout the journey."

Are “Care Partnerships” Really Possible?

When I first started caring for my mother, Judy, 10 years ago, I felt that all I was doing was *giving*—my time, energy, and patience—around the clock. I would have resisted the idea that my mother, who seemed much diminished with early-stage dementia, had anything to give back to me. For a while, I even thought of her as my third child (which I soon learned was not a great idea). I assumed that my job as caregiver meant *doing* things for Mom: running errands, taking her to the doctor and emergency room, making sure she had enough to eat and clean clothes to wear, paying her bills. But as a caregiver is quoted as saying in “I Care,” “to become a care partner, one first has to be present. This is far different from just being there.”

Care partners are more likely to sit down and pay close attention to the feelings and needs of their partner, and to their own feelings and needs—in short, to accept the present moment and just “be.” Once I learned to slow down and enjoy my mother—to see my time with her as a pleasure and not just duty—I was able to be her partner, to appreciate all the ways she was still a lovely person to be around despite the dementia and our challenging history as mother and daughter.

Tips for Dealing with Caregiver Stress

Here are some tips on keeping your stress levels as low as possible:

- **Know what caregiver resources are available.** In-home assistance, Home Delivered Meals, Adult Day Programs and Support Groups are just some of the services that can help you. Find out what’s available in your community.
- **Become an educated caregiver.** As the disease progresses, new caregiving skills will become necessary. The Alzheimer’s Association and www.alz.org can provide you with information and resources on all aspects of the disease.
- **Get help.** You are not failing as a caregiver by asking others for assistance. Seek the support of family, friends and community resources.
- **Take care of yourself.** Watch your diet, exercise and get plenty of rest. Make time for friends and family. Take advantage of respite care options so you can take a break once in a while.
- **Manage your stress level.** If you experience any of the symptoms of caregiver stress, try relaxation techniques that work for you and consult your doctor to learn if there’s anything further you can do.
- **Accept changes as they occur.** People with Alzheimer’s/dementia will change, and so will their daily needs. They often require care beyond what you can provide—and it’s important that you don’t try to do everything yourself.
- **Make legal and financial plans.** At the beginning of your duties as a caregiver, consult an attorney to discuss legal, financial and care issues. Whenever possible, involve the person with Alzheimer’s/dementia and family members.
- **Be realistic.** Many of the behaviors that occur are beyond your control and the control of the person with Alzheimer’s/dementia. You will need to find time alone or with supportive friends to grieve and be angry.
- **Give yourself credit, not guilt.** You are doing the best you can. Don’t feel guilty because you can’t do more. The person with Alzheimer’s/dementia needs you, and you are there.

LEARN MORE—Visit www.alz.org/stresscheck to take the Caregiver Stress Check. Answer a series of simple questions to define your caregiving experience and receive a customized list of resources to help you cope.

Community Resources

NAMI of La Crosse County

If you or your loved one has a diagnosis of bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, depression, borderline personality disorder or similar brain disorders, we can help. And we have special programs designed for parents of children and adolescents diagnosed with ADHD, childhood depression bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, and other illnesses.

We know that families can be confused and overwhelmed when confronted with a diagnosis of serious mental illness. We've been there too. NAMI La Crosse County members are families and professionals who understand what you are going through. By helping each other, we all gain new insights and understanding, and we make the world a better place for those coping with mental illness.

NAMI Family Information Meeting at First Congregational Church, corner of Losey and Main Streets on the third Tuesday of February, March, April, May, September, October and November 7:00-9:00pm. Guest speakers followed by time to share. If questions call NAMI at (608) 779-1554 or info@NAMILaCrosseCounty.Org

NAMI Family to Family Support Group meets on the second Monday of each month from 6:30 to 8:00 PM at the Southside Neighborhood Center, 1300 South 6th Street La Crosse, WI (608) 779-1554. For more information Support@NAMILaCrosseCounty.org

Depressed Anonymous meets Monday, 5:30-6:30pm at the Franciscan Spirituality Center 920 Market Street La Crosse. For more information call Vince (608) 791-5298.

Survivors of Suicide meets on the third Wednesday of the month from 7:00-9:00pm at the Franciscan Spirituality Center, 920 Market Street, Room 141 La Crosse. Contact Nancy at (608) 769-5007 or Mary at marystoy@gmail.com

Wellness Recovery Group meetings meeting Wednesday evenings from 5-6:30 at RAVE. Call Aaron (608) 785-6264.

Women to Women Support Group offers support, strength, care, and empowerment. Meetings began in March and are every Thursday from 1:00-3:00pm at Independent Living Resources (ILR) 4439 Mormon Coulee Road La Crosse. Call for more information (608) 787-1111.

Helpful Websites



FREE! Online Education
for those who *care*
for **Older Adults**



mmLearn.org

THE MISSION—Our Purpose and Passion

mmLearn.org's mission is to improve the quality of care and the quality of life of older adults by providing family caregivers, pastoral care providers and healthcare professionals, training and education based on evidence and best practices, using progressive technology and other advanced delivery methods. If you are a **healthcare professional**, a **family caregiver**, or a **pastoral or spiritual caregiver**, you will find mmLearn.org an essential learning tool in caring for older adults.

Community Resources

Lunch Bunch Memory Café

The **Lunch Bunch Memory Café** is a place to meet with others diagnosed with Alzheimer's or dementia and their care partner in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Once a month, this group offers a chance for everyone to have some fun and share a positive experience in a supportive environment. It's a place to talk with others who may be on a very similar journey and to learn, "You are not alone".

When: This group meets the last Tuesday of every month

Time: 11:30am—1:00pm

Location: Black River Beach Neighborhood Center
1433 Rose Street
La Crosse, WI 54603



Lunch & beverage provided at a suggested donation of \$4 per person

Topics: Art, music, health and wellness topics will be featured at each café. Details will be announced on monthly invites.

Upcoming Dates:

July 28, 2015 | August 25, 2015 | September 29, 2015 | October 27, 2015

RSVP is encouraged. If you would like more information, or to be added to our mailing list, please contact: Amy Brezinka with the La Crosse County Aging Unit at **608.785.3460** or email at: abrezinka@lacrossecounty.org

Caregiver Support Groups

Support Group for Persons with Dementia and Care Partners

When: 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of the Month from 3pm to 4pm
Where: Village on Cass, 225 South 24th Street, La Crosse
Contacts: Chris Brown, Terry Fleming and Art Peek at 608-392-9505

Family Support Group—Alzheimer's/Dementia

When: 2nd Wednesday of the month from 6pm-7pm
Where: Bluffview Memory Care, 2101 Bluffview Court, Holmen
Contact: Bluffview Memory Care Management Team at 608-526-5864

Caregiver Support Group

When: 4th Wednesday of the month at 1:15pm
Where: Hillview Health Care Center—Sunshine Room
3501 Park Lane Drive, La Crosse
Contact: Nikki Weisenberger at 608-789-4867

Caregiver Support Group

When: 2nd Thursday of the month at 1pm
Where: Lakeview Health Center, 902 E Garland Street, West Salem
Contact: Luann Rose at 608-786-1400 ext. 40155

Caregiver Support Group— A group for Women caring for someone with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

When: Every Monday from 8:30am—Noon
Where: Perkin's in Onalaska—9428 Wisconsin 16, Onalaska, WI
Contact: Mitch Mader at 608-519-0753

Parkinson's Support Group

When: 4th Tuesday of each month from 2pm-4pm
Where: Gundersen Health System
Contact: Julie Halzwarth at 608-775-2789

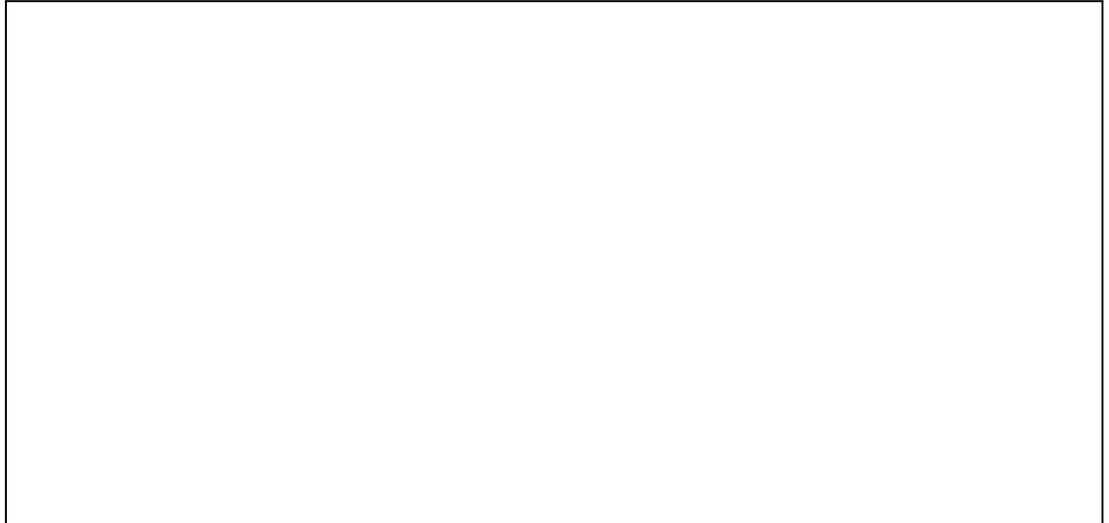
Great Rivers 2-1-1 ~ For more information about area support groups dial 2-1-1





La Crosse County Aging Unit
County of La Crosse, Wisconsin
Administrative Center • Room 2260
400 4th Street North • La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601-3200
(608) 785-9710 • FAX: (608) 785-6135
web site: www.co.la-crosse.wi.us

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Family Caregivers Newsletter

July/August 2015

La Crosse County Aging Unit
400 4th Street North, Room 2260
La Crosse, WI 54601-3200
608-785-9710
www.co.la-crosse.wi.us/aging/

Newsletter Editor:

Amy Brezinka, Program Coordinator
Caregiver Coach Program
608.785.3460
abrezinka@lacrossecounty.org

The **La Crosse County Aging Unit** provides information and services that promote independence, and support the dignity of Seniors by allowing choices for living in and giving to their community.

Programs & Services include:

- Home-delivered Meals
- Meal Sites
- Transportation
- Caregiver Coach Program
- Caregiver Support & Education
- Gifted Hands
- Senior Farmers' Market
- Nutritional Supplements
- Wellness & Prevention
- Senior Life Newsletter

