



Holiday Workshop for Dementia Caregivers

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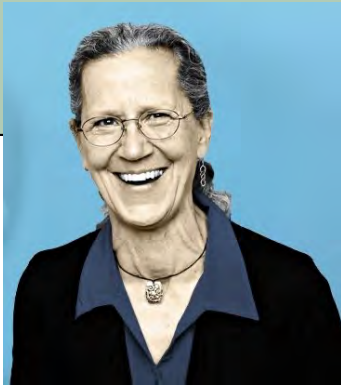
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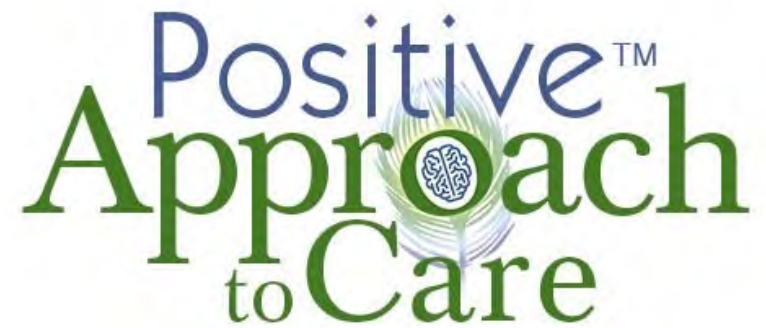
CATHOLIC CHARITIES
HAWAI'I
CIRCLE OF CARE FOR DEMENTIA



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Teepa Snow's Philosophy



The Positive Approach to Care encourages Care Partners to:

- Respond to a person's change in cognition and abilities in a way that is not hurtful or offensive.
- Understand that, with practice, common *reactions* to the person with dementia can become thoughtful *responses* that improve the quality of life for everyone involved.
- Recognize that the person with dementia is *doing the best they can* and that if something isn't working, it's the responsibility of the Care Partner to change their approach and behaviors toward the person with dementia.
- Notice the environment surrounding the person with dementia and make changes as necessary.



Agenda

- ❖ Holiday Stress and Caregiving
- ❖ The Holidays During COVID-19
- ❖ Making Connections, Even When Apart
- ❖ Holiday Gifts
- ❖ PEACE for the Holidays
- ❖ Caring for YOU During the Holidays



Holiday Stress and Caregiving

- ❖ While the holidays are a joyful time of the year, they also can be a very stressful time.
- ❖ This is especially true for those caring for someone living with dementia.
- ❖ The holiday pressures of gift giving, cooking, family gatherings, and fulfilling family other traditions can become overwhelming, especially when they are put on top of the already unmatched stress of caregiving.
- ❖ AND on top of all that, we are still living through a worldwide pandemic!
- ❖ **It is more important than ever to take care of your physical, mental and emotional well-being.**



The Holidays During COVID-19

- ❖ Usual traditions, such as large family gatherings and travel, pose a risk of spreading the virus.
- ❖ The risk is especially high for seniors who tend to have underlying health issues and weaker immune systems.
- ❖ Fully-vaccinated seniors have a much higher risk for breakthrough COVID cases than younger adults. They are also at the highest risk for hospitalization and death from a breakthrough case.
- ❖ The safest option is still to limit in-person holiday gatherings to vaccinated people inside your household.
- ❖ **While how we all celebrate will still be very different than before the pandemic, we can still share love and joy with each other.**



Holiday Caregiver Tips

Avoid being bound by past traditions

Give yourself permission to make changes to, or to even skip some holiday traditions. No one should expect you to maintain every holiday tradition or event, especially during a pandemic.

Discuss holiday celebrations in advance

Make sure that everyone understands your caregiving situation, the safety precautions you're taking to help keep your loved one healthy, and has realistic expectations about what you can and cannot do.

Consider celebrating earlier in the day, or even on a different day!

While Thanksgiving, Christmas and the New Year are specific days on the calendar, their meaning and celebration can be observed on any day. Consider celebrating earlier in the day so you can work around the evening confusion (sundowning).



More Holiday Caregiver Tips

Everything in moderation

There are many temptations throughout the season – alcohol, sweets and rich food. Enjoy but don't over-indulge.

Be prepared for unexpected circumstances

Something may come up, and probably will, so remain flexible. If you can't change the situation, accept it and move on. Remember to laugh a lot!

Celebrate while staying safe

For more than a year and a half, we've been masking and keeping physical distance in order to protect our community. But staying safe doesn't have to mean social isolation.

Hawaii guidelines:

<https://hawaiicovid19.com/safe-gatherings>



Making Connections, Even When Apart

Celebrate while physically distancing

- Drop off favorite treats, plan an outdoor visit, send holiday cards
- Remember to wear masks and maintain at least 6 feet of distance between yourself and any person who is unvaccinated.

Connect through technology

- Use video call software like Zoom, FaceTime or Skype to gather virtually.
- Record and send a “video holiday card” that includes personalized messages.
- If video calls are not possible, connecting with a simple phone call goes a long way.
- Cross talk or simultaneous conversations can be challenging for people living with dementia, so consider this when planning.



Holiday Gifts

Adapt gift giving

- Ask people to send gifts in the mail rather than delivering them in person. Opening gifts over a video call or even over a phone call can still feel very personal.
- Provide people with suggestions for useful and enjoyable gifts for the person, such as comfortable, easy-to-remove clothing, favorite music, photo albums of family and friends, or favorite treats.
- If friends or family members ask you what you'd like for a gift, you may want to suggest a gift certificate or something that will help make things easier, like house cleaning; lawn, handyman or laundry services; or restaurant or food delivery gift cards.



<https://www.alz.org/help-support/resources/holidays>

buckandbuck.com

Holiday Gifts

Your presence is the best present

People living with dementia want human connection – meaningful, one-on-one, in-the-moment connection with loved ones.

Don't underestimate the value of your presence and love.
It is the very best gift of all.



<https://www.alz.org/help-support/resources/holidays>

Peace for the Holidays

- P** **Prioritize** – Decide which family traditions are most important and which parts of those are truly meaningful.
- E** **Empathize** – View events through the eyes of the person with dementia.
- A** **Adjust** – Consider modifying or simplifying plans.
- C** **Capture** – Record the memories of the person with dementia by encouraging reminiscence and storytelling to preserve family history.
- E** **Enjoy** – Make memories. The experience might not be like it used to be, but you can still find the magical moments.

Do what's right for you as you look for new ways to find Peace in the Holidays.

Holiday Tips for Everyone Living With Dementia

Tips for the Person with Dementia

- Take some time out to relax
- Do what you enjoy
- Consider letting people know when you need a break or are having trouble
- Make a list with your partner of what you would like to do this season
- Use the list to help keep on track
- Consider saying – “I know I know you, but I just can’t place you...” when someone greets you and you aren’t sure who they are to you
- Watch or listen to old, familiar music, movies, TV programs that make you feel good
- Get some exercise every day
- Get plenty of water each day
- Be careful about too many sweets or treat
- Work *with a partner* to do familiar and fun ‘doing’ activities – (for example: making, signing or mailing cards OR making up mixes with recipes to share or baking something and wrapping it)

Tips for the Care Partner

- Keep gatherings smaller & visits shorter
- Offer time out
- Make a list of pleasures to do
- Encourage visitors to understand before they begin interacting
- Encourage going out and doing something fun together rather than just talking
- Ask visitors to bring old pictures, old familiar items or props, and be prepared to reminisce about old times
- Take breaks from each other
- Consider cutting back on traditions if they seem distressing
- Help visitors out by introducing them with some orienting information, if they forget to do so
- Get some exercise & take care of your stress levels
- Get a ‘friend’ to help the person with dementia select gifts, shop, or do something special for loved ones, including you!

Tips for the Visitor

- Start off by looking friendly and offering your hand in a handshake
- Introduce yourself by name, then PAUSE, if the person still doesn’t seem to ‘know’ you, give them a little more background
- Use shorter phrases and PAUSE between thoughts or ideas, giving the person a chance to respond
- Talk about the old times more than recent information
- Keep memories positive if possible
- Accept ‘general comments’, don’t push for specifics
- Don’t correct errors, go with the flow of the conversation
- Be prepared to hear old stories over and over, use old pictures or props to bring up other old memories... *and laugh*
- Do something with the person rather than just talking to them
- *If the person says something distressing or seems worried about something, realize it may not be true, but they are not lying to you, their brain is lying to them. Check it out with the care partner before acting on it.*



Peace for the Holidays

By Melanie Bunn, RN, MS, GNP
Dementia Training Specialist, Dementia Alliance of North Carolina

The best of times, the worst of times might well describe the holiday experience of loved ones of people with dementia. With some reflection, planning and flexibility, the balance can be shifted from the worst to the best. Integrate the following suggestions as you plan your holiday events to create memories that bring laughter not tears and help you find joy in the moments.

PRIORITIZE Decide which family traditions are most important and which parts of those are truly meaningful. While the person with dementia may not be able to tolerate the entire ritual, often they can participate in well-chosen components.

EMPATHIZE View events through the eyes of the person with dementia. Changes in routines and environments can be difficult and frightening. Think about how decorations and events might confuse or be misinterpreted by the person with dementia.

ADJUST Consider modifying or simplifying plans. For example, small changes such as changing the time of an event to coincide with the person's best time of day or limiting numbers of people in the environment at any one time might make the experience better for everyone. Watch for signs of stress or distress and help the person find a place and time to relax and recover.

CAPTURE Record the memories of the person with dementia by encouraging reminiscence and storytelling to preserve family history. Use props like pictures, foods and decorations to trigger forgotten memories. Take candid multi-generational photos or video—they can be more touching and much easier than posed portraits.

ENJOY Make memories. Don't get so involved in the plans you forget the point of the activity or event. The experience might not be like it used to be, but you can still find the magical moments. Especially for the person who is grieving: Holidays are difficult when you're experiencing the loss or the losing of someone you care about. Be patient with yourself as you grieve and find support in comforting rituals and people. Do what's right for you as you look for new ways to find **Peace in the Holidays.**

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DEMENTIA
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of North Carolina



Holiday Stress and Caregiving

While everyone is enjoying the joy of the holiday season, there are many caregivers who just want the whole thing over with. Caregiving creates a level of stress unmatched by most endeavors. Add to that the extra stress of family gatherings, gift buying, cooking, and it is almost unbearable.

The following tips may help:

1. *Avoid being bound by past traditions.* Instead of hosting family members and guests, suggest that someone else host or enlist the help of friends and relatives for everything from cleaning to preparing food. A potluck is a great idea—you can even assign specific dishes!
2. *Shop non-traditionally as well.* The Internet or catalogs are fantastic ways to shop for food and gifts without leaving home. If you would rather go out, make lists of specific gifts for each person including where to go to get them.
3. *Make sure you leave enough time to enjoy the holidays.* It shouldn't be all about the hustle and bustle.
4. *Everything in moderation.* There are many temptations throughout the season—alcohol, sweets and rich food. Enjoy but don't over-indulge..
5. *Be prepared for unexpected circumstances.* Something may come up, and probably will, so remain flexible. If you can't change the situation, accept it and move on. Remember to laugh a lot!
6. *Continue your regular exercise routine (or start one) during the holidays.* Walking is a great way to stay in shape and there is something about pounding the pavement that helps release frustrations and clears your head. In wintery weather, you can walk on indoor tracks or in the nearest shopping mall. Some malls open early just for walkers.

Ideally caregivers should have a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly break.

- **Daily**—Half an hour of yoga, meditation, needlepoint, reading, etc.
- **Weekly**—A couple of hours spent away from the house at the mall, library, coffeehouse, etc.
- **Monthly**—An evening out with your friends, a play, a concert, etc.
- **Yearly**—A well-planned (and well-deserved) vacation.

Planning ahead for these breaks is imperative. You may need to arrange for respite care for your loved one.

Happy Holidays.



**DEMENTIA
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of North Carolina

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Source: www.caregiver.com

Caring for YOU during the Holidays

Staying positive doesn't mean you have to be happy all the time.

It means that even on hard days you know that there are better ones coming.




What can you do to Manage Stress?

- ☐ Use mindful meditation to relax mind and body.
- ☐ Exercise on a consistent basis.
- ☐ Learn and/or resume a hobby.
- ☐ Establish a routine sleep time.
- ☐ Eat regular nutritious and balanced meals daily.
- ☐ Practice spiritual or faith based activities.
- ☐ Keep a sense of humor and watch a comedy (i.e.TV or Movie).
- ☐ Relax with music, poetry or play an instrument.
- ☐ Speak with a trusted friend/family member to avoid social isolation.
- ☐ Talk to your doctor if depression or anxiety interferes with your daily activities.

Other Approaches for Self-Care


- ☐ Recognize the things that you can and cannot control.
- ☐ Be kind to yourself. Often times we have higher expectations of ourselves and we may expect the same of others.
- ☐ Take a time-out before you get to the end of your rope.
- ☐ Set limits for yourself. It is okay to say “No” to avoid overextending yourself.
- ☐ Journaling, coloring
- ☐ Get a massage, manicure, pedicure
- ☐ Blow off steam with a brisk walk.
- ☐ Stay hydrated and drink fluids.
- ☐ Avoid self-medication with alcohol and illicit drugs.





**Through intentionally slowing
down our pace; simplifying
calendars, closets, and
commitments; letting go in
order to have fulfilling,
connective enough-ness,
we open more space.**

Dr. Erlene Grise-Owens



socialworker.com

Thank you!

Thank you so much for your desire to learn and your commitment to making a positive difference!

Alzheimer's Association Holiday Tips – <https://www.alz.org/help-support/resources/holidays>

Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline (800.272.3900)

Dementia Alliance of North Carolina Holiday Tips –

<https://dementianc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Holiday-Stress-Peace-for-the-Holidays.pdf>

Visit halekuike.com to learn about **Hale Ku'ike's memory care homes** and view 2021 webinar recordings.

To learn more about Positive Approach to Care visit www.teepasnow.com

To view recordings of 2020's dementia webinars visit **Catholic Charities' Hawaii Circle of Care for Dementia** www.catholiccharitieshawaii.org/dementia/

