

# CAREGIVER CHRONICLE

*Connections for Caregivers*

## Caring for the Caregiver – Complementary Treatments and Local Resources

By Marcia Greenberg

Many of you and your family and friends are performing the most important and difficult job you have ever performed – caregiving for a family member or close friend.

Taking care of others is a wonderful gift you are giving to your loved one, but it takes a significant toll on you, the caregiver – emotionally, physically, as well as financially.

Fortunately there are some excellent resources available to assist the caregiver in their own personal care. Two local organizations that provide support are Elder Options ([www.agingresources.org](http://www.agingresources.org)) and the Alzheimer's Association ([www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)). Both of these organizations have 24-hour helplines available if you have questions or just need to talk to someone about your caregiving. They also offer periodic caregiver conferences that present information to assist caregivers in caring for themselves and their loved ones. Alzheimer's Association helpline is 1-800-272-3900, and Elder Options helpline is 1-800-963-5334.

Elder Options provides a great training course, the Savvy Caregiver, to help educate the caregiver, and they also provide

a wonderful self-help class – Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance. Not only does Tai Chi assist in improving your balance it helps you feel more



centered and relaxed to better handle your caregiving duties. Several of the attendees of the Savvy Caregiver shared the following information:

*"This is an excellent course and very helpful for the caregiver. I intend to strongly encourage family members to seek workshops in their communities so they can gain knowledge and become more helpful in the caregiving responsibilities."*

*"My attitude has changed from frustration anger to much more compassion and eliminating the pity or negative thoughts. Thank you, thank you."*

The Alzheimer's Association also provides informational sessions to help better understand the dementias and how

to help provide support to your loved ones with dementias. Several times a year, the local Alzheimer's Association provides an art program, Memories in the Making, for the person you care for. This program also helps the caregiver who accompanies the person feel good watching their loved one create art while enjoying whatever level of interaction that makes them comfortable.

Many other helpful programs are available at the Senior Recreation Center, 352-265-9040. Their website, <http://eldercare.ufhealth.org/senior-recreation-center/>, includes their various classes – Yoga, Tai Chi and many activities that could provide a needed respite for the caregiver.

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The Alachua County Library (<https://www.aclib.us>) provides a variety of programs at their many branch locations. If you look at the calendars provided at those locations you will find Yoga, Tai Chi, Meditation, creative arts programs, to name a few. These are all wonderful tools that assist you in stress relief, mindfulness and just overall feeling better.

Acupuncture and massage are complementary treatments that help in easing stress, as well as physical pain, often related to your caregiving duties.

According to Jerrod Fletcher, AP of North Florida Acupuncture in Gainesville, "Acupuncture is a very effective treatment for caregivers who often experience moderate to high levels of stress as a result of their care taking responsibilities. Oftentimes, the caregiver is prone to burn out and other health-related conditions as a result of their occupational stress. Acupuncture effectively helps calm and relax the nervous system, regulate and balance hormone production and assists in healthy blood flow. Stress can often lead to a variety of serious health disorders such as obesity, heart disease, and

cancer. Acupuncture has been shown both anecdotally and in clinic trials to help mitigate the effects of stress and has proven a viable intervention for a variety of other health disorders. According to the National Institutes of Health (1997), just a few of the benefits of acupuncture include a more restful sleep, greater emotional stability, reduction in muscle tension and pain, and improved digestion. I find that most patients report a general improvement in their overall well-being with regular acupuncture visits."

The most important thing for caregivers to remember is that it is critical that caregivers take care of themselves so they can be available to care for others.

### Community Coalition for Older Adults

Second Friday of the month, Senior Recreation Center, 5701 NW 34 St.  
Contact Shirley Bloodworth at [sgblood@bellsouth.net](mailto:sgblood@bellsouth.net) for information.

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## From the Desk of Sam W. Boone, Jr.:

### How Does a Veteran Get the Final Honor – Burial in a National Cemetery?

By Sam W. Boone, Jr.

*Editor's Note: This is part of a series of columns that will be presented in this newsletter by Sam W. Boone, Jr., a local attorney whose primary practice areas include elder law, estate planning, probate and trust administration. It is hoped that the information will be valuable for caregivers and family members dealing with issues related to elder law.*

We always honor in life those who have served our country in the military. And of course that honor extends to their passing as well.

Any member or veteran of our armed forces who have met a minimum active service requirement and was not dishonorably discharged can choose to be buried in one of our national cemeteries. The Florida National Cemetery is in Bushnell, about 75 miles southwest of Gainesville. Burial in the national cemetery is also open to the veteran's spouse, widow or widower, minor dependent children, and under certain conditions, unmarried adult children with disabilities may also be eligible for burial. Relatives can be buried in a national cemetery even if they predecease the veteran.

If, as a veteran or family member, you qualify for burial in a national cemetery, that will include opening and closing of the grave, a grave liner, perpetual care and an upright headstone, flat marker or niche cover. Veterans are also entitled to a burial flag and presidential memorial certificate. In order to be buried in a national cemetery, there are certain steps that a veteran or their designee must take in advance. That includes completing a pre-need eligibility form. Completion of the form allows officials at the VA to review and determine eligibility.

Until recently, the pre-need eligibility form (VA Form 40-10007) could be submitted by email, traditional mail and fax. However, a few months ago, the VA suspended acceptance of the form by email, announcing that it may resume that service at some future date.

If you or a veteran in your family is considering burial in a national cemetery, the process may now take a little longer, so it is

important to act quickly. Remember this first step is designed simply to determine eligibility. By planning in advance you can eliminate stress and potential delays should there be any issues with your application.

When you submit the form, you should also include copies of supporting documentation that demonstrates military service. The most common form of supporting documentation is a DD214. These forms can be submitted by the veteran or an authorized agent or representative who has been legally designated by the veteran to serve in that role.

Once the VA receives the application, it will review the documents and provide a written notice regarding determination of eligibility.



If the VA determines you are eligible, it will store the documents until the veteran passes away. It is strongly recommended that you keep your copies of the approval documentation just as you would maintain any other legal documents, such as a will, durable

power of attorney and others. The VA Form 4107 explains your appeal process.

Remember time is critical if you are considering burial in a VA National Cemetery. You can download VA Form 40-10007 by going to this site: [www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-10007.pdf](http://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-10007.pdf).

When you are ready to submit the form you can mail it to the National Cemetery Scheduling Office, PO Box 510543, St. Louis, MO or fax it to 1-855-840-8299.

*Sam W. Boone, Jr. is a Gainesville-based attorney practicing elder law and estate planning. He is past-president of the Academy of Florida Elder Law Attorneys and is accredited by the Veterans Administration. To learn more about elder-law issues, go online to [www. http://boonelaw.com](http://www.boonelaw.com), or call (352)-374-8308.*

## Savvy Caregiver Training

Savvy Caregiver Training is a multi-session training dedicated to people who care for family members and friends with dementias (like Alzheimer's). Our goal is to reduce caregiver stress by offering easy-to-understand information about progressive dementias, related medicines, and diagnostic tools. In the program we help caregivers build skills on relating to persons of dementia when they behave in ways that baffle, embarrass or irritate you and others.

Here is an introduction to our summer/early fall schedule. In 2017, all Savvy Trainings will be 7 weeks in length. Choose whichever series works for your schedule and call Tom Rinkoski at (352) 692-5226 to register. Or e-mail him at [rinkoskit@agingresources.org](mailto:rinkoskit@agingresources.org).

- Starting 07/10/2017; Mondays; 1:00 – 3:00 pm; Hospice of Citrus & The Nature Coast; Chiefland
- Starting 07/11/2017; Tuesdays; 2:00 – 4:00 pm; Marion Senior Services, Ocala
- Starting 07/12/2017; Wednesdays; 1:00 – 3:00 pm; Citrus Memorial Health Foundation YMCA, Lecanto
- Starting 08/03/2017; Thursdays; 2:00 – 4:00 pm; Cone Park Library, Gainesville
- Starting 09/06/2017; Wednesdays; 1:00 – 3:00 pm; Elan Assisted Living, The Villages
- Starting 09/07/2017; Thursdays; 1:00 – 3:00 pm; Blessed Sacrament Church, Clermont
- Starting 09/13/2017; Wednesdays; 1:30 – 3:30 pm; Bradford County Senior Center, Starke
- Starting 9/21/2017; Thursdays; 2:00 – 4:00 pm; Staywell/Wellcare Offices, Ocala, Florida

*More dates of upcoming Savvy Caregiver Trainings can be found at our Web Page (<http://www.agingresources.org/savvy-caregiver-for-families>). Or, go to our Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/SavvyCaregiverNorthCentralFlorida>) for other information, tips and techniques about caregiving and dementia.*

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The advertisement includes three black and white photographs of a young girl. The top photo shows her sitting on a bed. The middle photo shows a row of four metal walkers. The bottom photo shows her standing and using a three-wheeled scooter.

## Answering the Questions

By David Huckabee

At the Alzheimer's Association, we get a large number of questions along the lines of "Will I get Alzheimer's disease?" "How can I know what my risk is?" "What are the first signs that I know something is wrong?"

These questions are certainly designed to obtain knowledge, just as most questions are. However, the inquiries often have an additional component. That component is fear. Fear of the progressive and fatal disease known as Alzheimer's. Fear of the debilitating and destructive symptoms of dementia. Fear that once those symptoms become apparent, it will be too late to make important decisions, enjoy time with family and friends, or even care for oneself.

All of these fears are real and unfortunately, there are no simple answers to any of these questions. Nobody can predict with absolute certainty whether or not a symptom-free individual will develop dementia. However, as with any other disease, the better educated we are about Alzheimer's disease, the better prepared we are to face the uncertainty that comes with having a family history of the disease, the first (or one hundredth) time we forget someone's name, or the day we or a loved one actually get a diagnosis.

The reason that the answers to these questions are not simple is that scientists do not fully understand what causes Alzheimer's disease, let alone an effective way to prevent the symptoms from appearing and progressing. However, research has made great strides in this area over the past several years and we now have a better understanding of causes

and warning signs than we ever have before.

Two risk factors that play a huge role in whether or not someone will develop Alzheimer's disease are increasing age and a family history of the disease. Our likelihood of developing Alzheimer's increases as we age and increases still further if we have close family relatives who have had the disease. The downside to this knowledge is that I do not know anyone who has been able to keep themselves from aging or trade in their genetic material for a newer and healthier set.

Fortunately, we now know that there are other factors that play at least some part in determining whether or not we develop Alzheimer's disease. These factors are at least somewhat under our control and include cognitive activity, nutrition, physical activity, and social connections. We also know more about the warning signs of Alzheimer's disease, so that diagnoses can be made earlier in the disease process.

If you would like more information about these subjects, I encourage you to attend a "10 Warning Signs" or "Healthy Habits for a Healthier You" educational presentation in your area. These programs can answer many of your questions and are offered by the Alzheimer's Association at no charge.

*If you would like more information about the work of the Alzheimer's Association Central and North Florida, please call (800) 272-3900 or contact David Huckabee at [dhuckabee@alz.org](mailto:dhuckabee@alz.org).*

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## Veteran Benefits

If you are a veteran or widow of a veteran please note that you may be eligible for benefits under the Veteran's Administration. These benefits may be able to help with the cost of additional care in the home or assisted living facility. There are income and asset eligibility criteria to be met. However rules of financial benefits can change at any time so it is important to speak with a Veteran Service Officer. It helps to have discharge papers available. Locally, the Alachua County Veteran Service office holds free workshops for those interested in applying. On Tuesdays there is a Pension Workshop and a Compensation Workshop on Wednesdays. On Thursdays there is a General Informational Workshop. For more details about these, please contact the Alachua County Veteran Service Office at **264-6740**.

## *This is Your Newsletter*

It only works with your contributions  
Poetry  
Stories  
Recipes for Comfort Food  
Information About Meetings or Workshops  
Whatever Helps You Make It  
Through the Day

Send your contributions to  
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ALF# PENDING

## 10 Simple Self-Care Ideas for Caregivers

By Tom Rinkoski,  
Caregiver Coach at Elder Options

*Tom was not available to write for this issue of the Caregiver Chronicle. This is a reprint of a 2014 article that seemed appropriate for this issue.*

Caregivers don't get much time to relax and unwind, let alone take care of themselves. When caregivers do find time, they rush toward household chores that have been put on hold. This revolving door feeds exhaustion and stress instead of helping us to ready ourselves for the next time we're needed.

Here are 10 simple ways caregivers can practice self-care. They are designed to be low-cost and easy-to-do in those brief moments that caregivers get throughout the day. One may not work for you, but another might. Or maybe, some of these ideas might spark your own! Try one or two out. Be good to yourself. You deserve it!

1. Take a brief walk. More caregivers mention this option than any other. It can be moving in fairy circles around your back yard, or sauntering down the block. Just enough to clear your head and bring a smile back to your face.

2. Eat a piece of chocolate. Buy yourself some quality chocolate (you deserve it). My favorite is really dark chocolate. When you are given the gift of five minutes, unfold the wrapper and eat it in small pieces. Go slow. Savor the taste. Let the chocolate work its magic inside you, let your outside reflect that goodness.

3. Hand massage. Keep a bottle of special lotion that you particularly like ready. When the clock strikes find a comfy chair and softly massage your own hands. Move gently, feeling your muscles, inviting them to loosen their grip. Go up your arms, if it feels good. If you really want to have fun, massage your feet.

4. Color. Buy yourself a new box of crayons, or some really good chalk. I like coloring to music myself. Don't try to make anything at first, just return to playing with the colors without any specific agenda.

5. Watch Funny You Tube Videos. Power up your computer and ask the search for something really funny – Abbot and Costello or maybe those cute baby, kitten or puppy videos. Laughter is a healing thing. Use a headset, cover the volume of your laughs if you feel it is necessary. Laugh deeply.

6. Breathe. You can do this inside or outside, in your closet, or in front of the bathroom mirror if it helps. Personally, I lay down on my bed. Breathe intentionally from your diaphragm, emptying your lungs when you exhale. Imagine it a cleaning of your system. Practice.

7. Read. Have a favorite book or magazine at the ready. A good novel is usually able to be picked up wherever you left off. Having a comfy chair helps. Sometimes I read and eat nuts at the same time!

8. Close Your Eyes. You may not have time to take a quality nap. But there is nothing like "shutting it out" for a while. Find a comfortable spot. Don't squeeze your eyes shut, gently bring down your lids, offering a temporary goodbye to the stress. Set a timer, if it helps you to relax and enter your imagination freely. This is not brainstorming problems time, but flying time!

9. Aromatherapy. This might be burning a scented candle or incense. There are some smells – like lavender – that can be relaxing in and of themselves. Find the smell that takes you away. This could also be the smell of freshly baked chocolate chip cookies, or brewed coffee!

10. Snuggle or Hug. Snuggle with your cat or dog, or maybe a baby if one is around! Take a walk and hug people. Hugs and hellos that emanate from inside have been known to change the atmosphere. I have been known to call friends and ask them to come over for a hug and cup of coffee. It works wonders.

## Caregiver Support Groups

### **Alz Place**

3rd Thursday of the month at 9am  
Open to all caregivers  
1610 NW 23rd Ave., Gainesville  
Contact Nancy at 352-265-9200

### **Alterra Clare Bridge**

3rd Thursday of the month- 6pm  
4607 NW 53rd Ave, Gainesville, FL 32653  
Contact Gail at 376-5151

### **Cancer Center at NFRMC**

Breast Cancer Support Group  
2nd Tuesday of the month - 6pm - 7:30 pm  
Call Susie at 352-213-5890

### **Community Cancer Center**

Living With Cancer Supports  
www.ccnf.com for more information

### **Community Cancer Center**

Lake City Support Group  
2nd Wednesday every month 11am - 1pm  
4520 W.US Hwy. 90, Lake City, FL 32055 For more  
information call 386-755-0601

### **Haven Hospice**

Bereavement Supports  
Call 692-5123 for more information

### **Hospice of Marion County**

Transitions Caregiver Support Group  
Usually the 2nd Tuesday of each month 11am - 1 pm  
The Elliott Center, 3231 SW 34th Ave. Ocala  
Call for information 352-854-5200

### **Hospice of the Nature Coast**

Wings Community Education Center  
Grief Support Group- High Springs  
Call 386-454-1338 for more information

### **Lake Area Caregiver Support Group**

4th Tuesday of the month from 1-2:00pm  
Trinity Episcopal Church  
204 SR 26, Melrose, FL 32666  
Call 352-475-3792 for more information

### **Park Meadows Health and Rehab Center**

3250 SW 41 Pl, GV  
Call the Alz Helpline at 1-800-272-3900 for more  
information

### **Senior Healthcare Center at Springhill**

3rd Tuesday of the month- 2:30-4:00pm  
3720 NW 83rd Street, Gainesville, FL 32606  
Contact Flory at 336-3050

### **NF Mind Matters Stroke Support Group**

4th Thursday of the month from 1-2 pm  
South Tower, 4th floor Conference Room-NFRMC  
Call 1-800-611-6913 for more information

### **The Village**

(for Village residents only)  
2nd Thursday of the month from 1:30-3 pm  
8000 NW 27th Blvd., Gainesville, FL 32606  
Call 872-5332 for more information

### **United Church of Gainesville**

1624 NW 5th Ave, GV  
3rd Tuesday of the month from 7-8pm  
Open to caregivers of persons with dementia  
Contact Lynda at 352-219-3023

### **VA Caregiver Support**

Mon-Fri- 8am- 11pm, Sat. 10:30-6pm  
Call 1-855-260-3274

## Useful Resources

Seniors vs. Crime: [www.seniorsvscrime.com](http://www.seniorsvscrime.com)

Alzheimer's Association – [www.alz.org/cnfl/index.asp](http://www.alz.org/cnfl/index.asp)

Doggie Styles: Mobile Pet Grooming – [www.doggiestyles.org](http://www.doggiestyles.org)

Elder Affairs – [www.elderaffairs.state.fl.us/index.php](http://www.elderaffairs.state.fl.us/index.php)

Elder Helpline – 1-800-963-5337, [options@agingresources.org](mailto:options@agingresources.org)

Elder Options – Savvy Caregiver Classes – [www.agingresources.org](http://www.agingresources.org)

Florida Silver Alert – [www.floridasilveralert.com](http://www.floridasilveralert.com)

SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) [www.floridashine.org](http://www.floridashine.org)

Driving – [www.independencedrive.phhp.ufl.edu](http://www.independencedrive.phhp.ufl.edu)

Medicare – [www.medicare.org](http://www.medicare.org)

State of Florida – [www.myflorida.com](http://www.myflorida.com)

National Institute on Aging (free publications) – [www.nig.nih.gov](http://www.nig.nih.gov)

United Way – Alachua, Bradford & Putnam counties – [www.unitedwaycnfl.org](http://www.unitedwaycnfl.org)

National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Management – [www.caremanager.org](http://www.caremanager.org)

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)