

CONNECTING

Healthy Information from the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center  May / June 2003

Adult Children of Aging Parents: Frequently Asked Questions

Chances are, you'll spend more years caring for your parents than for your own children. Most adult children, however, don't think of themselves as caregivers because the word "caregiver" seems to imply only direct personal care. In reality, many adult children are caregivers. They provide all kinds of services for their parents, including:

- Legal and financial planning and management
- Social support
- Decision making and problem solving
- Help in day-to-day activities
- Contacting, arranging for, and overseeing services
- Creating a safe environment
- Communicating with other concerned persons
- Acting as historian of their parents' former personality and identity

Frequently Asked Question #1: *Is It Time?*

Because it's hard to see parents decline and need help, many adult children wrestle with the timing of difficult decisions. The "Is it time?" question may have to do with:

- Limiting or giving up driving
- Considering a change in living arrangements
- Obtaining more help with day-to-day activities
- Accepting assistance managing finances
- Using services such as adult day services, in-home services, hospice, and nursing home care
- Having conversations about and planning for end-of-life care

Adult children tend to err on the side of waiting too long rather than acting too soon. Often, they delay until there's a crisis and then find that their and their parents' options are severely limited. So, the rule of thumb for the "Is It Time?" question is, if you're wondering if it's time, it's probably past time.

Frequently Asked Question #2: *How Can Our Family Come to an Agreement?*

It's not uncommon for each family member to have a different perspective and strongly held values about the best way to help an aging parent. In fact, a study of 100 adult children caregivers found that 40% reported serious family conflict, usually with a brother or sister. The conflict often centered around the adult child's perception that the other siblings were not providing enough help.

What's to be done when family conflict gets in the way? Consider a family meeting or meetings with a trained facilitator. Include everyone in the process. The outcome of these family meetings can be a written action plan that everyone can live with.

Frequently Asked Question #3: *What Resources are Available to Help?*

There are many sources of information on the practical and emotional aspects of caregiving, as well as on services that can be of assistance. Here are just a few:

www.iowafamilycaregiver.org: an online database that lists Iowa resources for caregivers by county (includes nursing homes). Sponsored by the Iowa Association of Area Agencies on Aging. Or, call 1-866-4-NURTURE.

Caregiver HelpBook: Powerful Tools for Caring. V. Schmall, M. Cleland, and M. Sturdevant. Portland Oregon: Legacy Caregiver Services (2000). Cost: \$20. Order by phone 503/413-6578 or at <http://www.legacyhealth.org>

Caregiving: The Spiritual Journey of Love, Loss, and Renewal. Beth Witrogen McLeod. Wiley & Sons, 1999.

Linda Simonton, MA, MSW, LISW
Counselor
Parent Care Issues and Aging-Related Challenges

Educational Events for the Community – The NUCCA Technique

Tuesday, June 3, 2003, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

M. Deborah Sesker, D.C., of Balance First NUCCA Center

Dr. M. Deborah Sesker, who practices in Des Moines, will talk about her work as a NUCCA Doctor (National Upper Cervical Chiropractic Association). There are only 150 doctors in the world who do this specific type of work, with persons traveling hundreds of miles to receive the NUCCA correction. Structural imbalance causes interference to nerve function, which may create symptoms of pain or organ dysfunction anywhere throughout the body. The NUCCA technique is used to correct this structural imbalance. This presentation will provide a greater understanding of how these problems develop and may be corrected by this highly sought after, yet not widely known healing technique.

This event will be held at Central Presbyterian Church (39th Street and Grand Avenue). There is no charge, but please call the Center at (515) 274-4006 to let us know you will be attending. This event is offered by the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center through a grant from the Community Innovation Fund at the Greater Des Moines Community Foundation.

Attachment Theory in Adult Psychotherapy – A 10-Week Course Offered by the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center

Start Date: September 12, 2003
Time: Fridays, 8:15-9:45 a.m.
Instructor: Susan Pierce, M.S., M.S.W.

The Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center is an Iowa Board of Social Work Examiners approved provider #0087 and Iowa Board of Behavioral Science Examiners approved provider #AS98-13. This course is approved for 15 hours of continuing education credit.

For more information or to register, call (515) 274-4006.



C.O.O.L. Corner

Grandparents can play a significant role in children's lives. Here are some of the things kids at C.O.O.L. had to say about their grandparents.

What's your favorite thing about your grandparents?

- The fun we have with her.
- Sleeping over.
- Joking about her age.
- Talk together and helps me learn about sports.
- The way she loves me.
- Playing with them.

What do you think about or notice about them getting older?

- Sad because she is getting closer to death.
- She can't play with me as much.
- Sometimes he has to use a cane or a walker.
- Seems to have trouble remembering little things.
- He sleeps a lot.
- Her body parts begin to break.
- I'm scared about them not being alive anymore.

What can you do to help them as they get older?

- Help them clean up.
- Take care of him and bring food to him.
- Treat her nicer.

Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center Foundation

The Center's Foundation was created to ensure the financial security of the Center for years to come. In the future, earnings from the Foundation will help people with limited financial resources have access to healing at the Center. We encourage you to consider a planned gift to the Foundation. Some of the ways gifts can be made include:

1. A will directing a portion of your estate to the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center Foundation.
2. An insurance policy naming the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center Foundation as your beneficiary.
3. A retirement plan or IRA naming the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center Foundation as the beneficiary.
4. A trust arrangement naming the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center Foundation as the beneficiary.

Please let the Center know if you have already included our Foundation in your estate plan. To learn more about the Center's Foundation, call Stephanie Kuhn at (515) 274-4006.

Women Helping Women 2003

More than 190 women attended the 5th Annual Women Helping Women Luncheon at Hoyt Sherman on March 13th. Sue Roberts spoke on the topic of "Feeding Your Body, Mind, and Soul." Many attendees asked that we include some of the resources referenced by Ms. Robert's in our next newsletter. Here are three places to begin:

- For information on locally grown foods, including farmers markets, visit the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship website: www.agriculture.state.ia.us
- For information on locally grown organic foods, visit the Local Harvest website, and use their search engine to enter your city. www.localharvest.org
- For information on one local CSA (Community Supported Agriculture: weekly source of fresh vegetables), contact One Step at a Time Gardens: 641-495-6367 or libland@frontiernet.net

MANifest Events

Manifest Weekend

- Date:** Friday-Sunday, May 2-4, 2003
Time: Begins Friday evening. Ends Sunday noon.
Location: Retreat center southeast of Winterset (2412 St. Charles Road.)
Cost: \$175 – includes lodging and 5 meals.

Men talk easily about work, sports, and politics, but there are few opportunities for men to talk about their journey as a man. Manifest weekends provide opportunity for this discussion. Men often grow up with a deficit of masculine nurture. Our culture fails to provide a rite of passage to manhood where older adult males offer younger men affirmation and official recognition as men. Manifest weekends seek to create a sense of community that addresses these issues. Retreats are held in a rustic, outdoor setting that provides a sense of connection with nature.

Manifest Workshop: Men and Sex

- Date:** Saturday, June 14, 2003
Time: 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Location: Queen's Point, 2793 St. Charles Road, 6 miles west of St. Charles
Cost: \$50, includes lunch

Henry David Thoreau once said, "I lose my respect for the man who will make a course jest about sex, but when asked to speak seriously on the subject remains silent." Often when we do choose to speak seriously, it is because a sexual problem has developed in our relationship, and we want to fix it. Even then, our fix may be believed to be more medical than emotional. Men find it very difficult to know where to begin in having a serious discussion of sex and may feel awkward or embarrassed in even admitting an interest in such a discussion. After all, we are supposed to be the ones to know, to lead, to be the orchestrator in our sexual lives. "Men and Sex" will provide an opportunity for men to speak earnestly and explore the sexual/emotional connection with full permission to be curious while growing in their understanding of themselves as sexual human beings.

Group size is limited to 12 participants for the weekend and 20 participants for the workshop. Reserve your place early by calling (515) 274-4006. Participants must pre-register. For more information about Manifest, call Lowell Houts or Mike Sears at (515) 274-4006.

New Board Members

Since the last issue of *Connecting*, the Center has invited two additional people to join our board of directors. We are pleased to welcome **Karen King** and **Shelma Scales** to our board.

Autumn 2003 - Pastoral Care Specialist Program

This two-year program is designed for the purpose of professional development and renewal for pastors, chaplains, and other persons involved in ministries of pastoral care. Participants meet once each month for learning about areas critical to effective pastoral care, and for support, encouragement and consultation on their work. The program begins in September and runs through June. Participants meet from 8:45 a.m. to noon.

For additional information, contact J. Jeffrey Means, Ph.D., Director of Clinical Services and Professional Education, at (515) 274-4006.

Connecting Available Through Email

Please let us know if you would like to receive this newsletter through email rather than having a paper copy sent to you. To be added to our newsletter email list, email skuhn@dmpcc.org and indicate in your message that you would like to receive *Connecting* by email. Make sure to include the name and street address to which we have been mailing the newsletter so that we can remove your name from our newsletter postal list.

www.dmpcc.org

Visit the Center's website for information on Center counseling services, Center staff members, support and interest groups offered by the Center, special events taking place in the coming months, and classes the Center offers to mental health clinicians and clergy.

CONNECTING

is a publication of the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center, an independent, interfaith, not-for-profit organization. For over 30 years, the Center has been providing counseling and educational services to individuals, couples, and families for the purpose of enhancing emotional, spiritual, and relationship health. The Center has satellite offices in West Des Moines, Altoona, Ankeny, and Urbandale.

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Des Moines Pastoral

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