

TRANSITIONS

# Share the Care an organized way to lend assistance

I can't wait to share this with you. Recently I learned about a program that can make your life easier. Really.

So read on if you are taking care of a spouse/parent/neighbor/friend who is facing major health issues/aging issues that are so overwhelming for them that they need your help. Read on if it is becoming so much for you that you are finding your life completely absorbed by them and you wish you had help. You may even find yourself crying for help. It's called "care-giver burnout" for a reason.

Read on if you know there are other family members/children/neighbors/friends who could



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help, but don't, or if their idea of helping isn't what you really need.

Read on if you can't think of anyone to turn to, but you know you need help.

You don't have to do this alone.

You can put together a group of people to help. It's called Share the Care. Today we'll see how it's done.

Ready?

First, do some homework. Don't read this and think you should just get some friends and family together to help. Nope.

## ABOUT SHARE THE CARE

Learning sessions for key people are at Thompson Community Center, 820 W. College Ave., Appleton.  
» June 19, 5 p.m.  
» Sept. 28, 5 p.m.  
» Or by calling the Share the Care hotline 920-225-1745  
» RSVP at 866-739-2372 or email [adrc@outagamie.org](mailto:adrc@outagamie.org)

Learn about Share the Care, with their easy-to-follow, step by step model. Don't reinvent the wheel.

In the Fox Cities, Share the Care is taught by the Outagamie Care-giver Coalition. They provide education and support. Their flyer says: "Share the Care is a way for friends and neighbors to organize a caregiving team to provide much-needed support."

The plan also is available on the official website at: [www.sharethecare.org](http://www.sharethecare.org), or as I did, read the book: "Share the Care," by Cappy Caposela and Sheila Warnock.

Basically, two key people learn about the system and coordinate a single gathering. That might be their only task. It shouldn't be done by the person who is ill, nor the primary caregiver. Ask someone else to do this. They will.

The Share the Care plan walks these two key people through the first meeting, who to invite, how to brainstorm on needs, how to find the best fit for each member — whether they live in town or across the county; essentially, learn how to turn a diverse group into a functioning caregiving unit.

It is important to include the person receiving help. They need to know there are people who want to assist; they need to hear why people want to help them and why it is important to those people; and they need to articulate their boundaries, like "I don't want personal care, but I want you to visit."

We don't want to do this to them or for them —

rather, with them. With forethought and organization, there will ultimately be an assorted group of caring individuals working together as a team to help the person with need. It also will free up the primary caregiver to concentrate his/her efforts where they are most needed.

In the book, they say: "A little help can make a huge difference." People want to help. Let them really make a difference.

—Jean Long Manteuffel, senior move manager and CEO of Long's Senior

Transitions in Appleton, writes a column on the first Sunday of each month about life changes associated with aging. She can be reached at 920-734-3260 or [JeanLM@longmoving.com](mailto:JeanLM@longmoving.com)