



SENIOR
COMMUNITY
SERVICES

Winter 2024

Caregiver Newsletter



Downsizing: Let's break it down

The holiday season often brings *more* into our lives. More love, more food, and...more things. We've also moved into a new year and many of us set goals to better ourselves, which may include decluttering, getting rid of things we no longer use or need and making room for the new items.

If you've set this goal for yourself or are helping a loved one with these tasks, it's important to keep goals manageable and realistic.

"Downsizing" continues on page 11

"Winter Blues" Bringing You Down?

Once the holiday celebrations are over, children have returned to school, and many adults have returned to work, the remaining months of our (usually) chilly Minnesota winter lie ahead.

For those who may not have the resources to head to the sunny South each year, or are unable to plan a spring break getaway due to health restrictions, financial hardship, or caregiving responsibilities, the world of virtual reality might be an option for you!

[Virtual Reality Allows Seniors To Experience a Whole New World Right at Their Fingertips - Sonida Senior Living](#)

Are you or a loved one eligible for **Elderly Waiver** benefits or enrolled in **Minnesota Senior Health Options (MSHO)**?

Our award-winning Caregiver Coaching and Counseling Service is covered by these programs.

To learn more, [submit the online form](#) or call 612-770-7005 to speak to a Social Worker.

This quarterly Caregiver Newsletter is brought to you by Senior Community Services' Senior Outreach & Caregiver Services Team of Licensed Social Workers.



Coaching Corner

Dear Social Worker,
My mother moved in with us four years ago after a hip fracture, but now, as she ages, she is demanding more of my time. Her memory and reasoning skills have gone down hill, she takes a lot of medications and is not very mobile.

I have a small business to run as well as take care of my 12 year old son. My relationship with my wife is starting to be negatively affected as well. I don't know if I can do all of this anymore. How do family members decide when to move their loved one to a care facility? I feel guilty asking the question, but I don't know what to do.

~ Jack, Hennepin County

Dear Jack,
Deciding to place a parent in long term care is always difficult. You have every right to feel overwhelmed. Here are the most common reasons why family members move their loved ones: incontinence, mobility decline, dementia-related care, end of life care. There are services to help you find care facilities in your area. Check the [resources page on carenextion.org](#).

Remember even if your mother moves out of your home, she will still need you to help her with some tasks and to advocate for her. You will always be her caregiver, just in different ways.

Guilt is one of the most common emotions among caregivers. Most caregivers agree that doing your best, letting go of things outside of your control, and being kind to yourself, can greatly reduce the feeling of guilt.

Also, it may be time to get some Caregiver Support. We are here for you along the way.

Senior Community Services Social Worker
612-770-7005

Quarterly self-care tip

Self-Care in The New Year

There's no doubt this Minnesota winter has been unusual with less snowfall and higher temperatures than normal. But the shorter days and post-holiday "funk" may still be bringing you down. If this is the case, consider the options this time of year brings in terms of renewal and self-reflection.

We don't mean the lofty yet dreaded "New Years Resolutions" that many of us make and fail to keep. The new year does, however, give us the opportunity to reflect on what is working in our lives and what is not and make some changes. **The key is to make those changes specific and attainable.**

Giving up sweets, spending less money, and exercising every day are examples of goals that are too vague and unrealistic for most of us to be inspired by. Instead, make goals specific so you see progress and results. Do you want to:

- Move more? Do a short, simple exercise video on [YouTube](#) 5 days per week.
- Reduce soda/sugared beverage intake? Reduce by one serving each day.
- Get more sleep? Commit to a specific bed time including "lights out".
- Try a new hobby? Pick a course that interests you from your local community education brochure and sign up.
- Stay hydrated? Pick your favorite water bottle and commit to drinking the entire amount each day.
- Use your brain more? Find free [online games and puzzles](#).
- Volunteer? Sign up with [SCS](#) or use resources like [HandsOn Twin Cities](#) or [VolunteerMatch](#) to find opportunities in your area that interest you.





The Journey

Frequently we hear caregiving described as a "journey". Let's reflect on that word for a moment. According to Vocabulary.Com, from the Old French "journ'e" means "a day's work or travel". Journey doubles as a noun and a verb. The noun refers to a voyage. The verb is the act of taking a voyage.

How appropriate then to think of the caregiver role as a journey. As one moves along each day, we find ourselves going from one place to another. It can be exhilarating and exhausting. Some days are smooth sailing, sprinkled with little pockets of beauty while other days seem gray and filled with bumps in the road.

It's nice to have a travel buddy along for the journey. They spur us on when the road gets steep and our load is heavy, and celebrate with us when we conquer a lengthy hike. ***In the journey of caregiving, think of support groups as travel buddies.*** They are a great place to find encouragement and guidance.

In a recent article in [Beverly's Daughter](#), author Rial Smith highlighted these six Benefits of Caregiver Support Groups:

1. Emotional Support
2. Practical Advice and Guidance
3. Empowerment and Validation
4. Social Connection
5. Access to Resources
6. Personal Growth and Coping Strategies

We offer several Caregiver Support Groups throughout Carver, Hennepin, Scott, Sherburne, and Wright Counties, and even have virtual support groups via Zoom. We would love to connect with you to find the perfect fit. See our current listings on pages 6 and 7 of this newsletter or [online](#).

Traveling with Dementia

Living with Alzheimer's or another dementia does not mean it's necessary to stop participating in meaningful activities such as travel. However, it does require planning to ensure safety, comfort and enjoyment for everyone. The Alzheimer's Association (alz.org) has some great tips.

For all travel, regardless of distance or duration, it's important to take into account the specific needs, abilities and preferences of everyone involved. For example, if you have always gone to Florida in the winter, you can continue the tradition until the trip becomes too difficult or is no longer relaxing for the person living with dementia or the caregiver.

Tips for a calm traveling experience:

- Plan ahead.
- Learn to recognize the warning signs of anxiety and agitation and identify strategies to reduce them. Discuss this plan with the person living with dementia.
- Try not to overload the person with a lot of directions or too much information.

[Read more](#) from the Alzheimer's Association



Trends in Senior Technology Scams

Scams targeting senior citizens come in all types and sizes, range greatly in complexity, and may originate from someone close to you or a stranger halfway around the world. Here are two of the most common types of scams that target older adults.

Computer Scams

These scams generally begin with a call or email from a con artist posing as a representative of a well-known company, such as Microsoft or Norton. The scam artist typically claims your computer has been infected with a virus or is not working properly because of an error. They then tell you they can remove the virus or fix the error for a fee if you allow remote access to your computer, usually by going to a website.

In some cases, the scam artist uses this access to steal personal or financial information on your computer, which can be used to commit the crimes of theft or identity theft. Other times, the scam artist may attempt to install malware on your computer, which may allow the scam artist to control the computer remotely, or rogue applications that display fake security alerts to convince you to pay for a useless service. More information is available in this publication titled [Scams Targeting Computer Owners](#).

Grandparents Scam

Under this scam, a con artist calls or emails you posing as a relative in distress or someone purporting to represent the relative (such as a lawyer or police officer). The scam artist may frantically begin the phone call with a variation of “Grandpa, it’s me,” followed by a description of his or her purported problem (arrested, in jail, in a car accident, in need of a lawyer, etc.). The scam artist will likely attempt to create a sense of urgency and encourage you not to tell anyone, including the parents of the “grandchild,” about the matter. You will then be instructed to send cash—usually by wire transfer, money order or a reloadable card—with the claim that the money will be used for bail, lawyer’s fees, hospital bills, or other expenses. For more information on this scam, view this publication titled [Beware of Scams Targeting Grandparents](#).

Keep in mind that scam artists constantly reinvent new ways to perpetrate old scams. Because knowing how to spot a scam is important, this resource titled [How to Spot a Scam](#), outlines some of the tell-tale red flags.

For more information, visit the Minnesota Office of the Attorney General website:
<https://www.ag.state.mn.us/consumer/Publications/ComputerScams.asp>

Caregiver Services Offered

Available to residents of Carver, Hennepin, Scott, Sherburne, and Wright Counties

- **Caregiver Coaching** equips caregivers with knowledge, skills, and tools to perform their caregiver role while achieving a balanced lifestyle.
- **Caregiver Consultation** addresses caregiver concerns about the care receiver and may include identifying needs, developing person-centered approaches, problem solving, decision making, referring to services.
- **Family Meeting Facilitation** helps families understand their current situation and plan for the future with realistic expectations, positive communication, and fewer misunderstandings.
- **Information and Assistance** is a service that assists caregivers in obtaining access to the services and resources that are available within their communities. To the maximum extent practicable, it ensures that the individuals receive the services needed by establishing adequate follow-up procedures.



FREE one-on-one tech support for adults age 60 and older is available by appointment at several locations across our service area. Contact the location to schedule an appointment.

Brooklyn Park

Community Activity Center
Every Wednesday
763-493-8333

Buffalo Community Center

1st Tuesday each month
763-682-6063

Chanhasen Senior Center

2nd and 4th Tuesdays each month
952-227-1124

Eden Prairie Senior Center

1st and 3rd Wednesdays each month
952-279-8058

Edina Senior Center

Every Friday
952-833-9570

Elk River Senior Activity Center

2nd and 4th Fridays each month
763-635-4500

Maple Grove Senior Center

1st and 3rd Mondays each month
[Online registration required](#)

Minnetonka Senior Center

1st and 3rd Mondays each month
1st and 3rd Wednesdays each month
[Online registration preferred](#)
952-939-8393

Monticello Senior Center

1st and 3rd Tuesdays each month
763-295-2000

Otsego Prairie Center

Call Senior Community Services
763-231-6283

Rogers Senior Center

3rd Thursday each month
763-231-6283

St. Michael

Crow River Senior Center
Once per month, variable
763-497-8900

Waconia Area Senior Center

2nd Thursday each month
763-231-6283

For more information about Technology Education, Connection & Help (TECH) services from Senior Community Services, visit seniorcommunity.org/tech, call **952-888-5530**, or email tech@seniorcommunity.org.

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS

Designed for those caring for an older adult or someone with a cognitive diagnosis; open to caregivers who live in (or caring for someone who lives in) Carver, Hennepin, Scott, Sherburne, or Wright Counties.

Bloomington - Lisa Engdahl, LSW

4th Thursday each month
1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

952-767-7890 or
l.engdahl@seniorcommunity.org

Chanhassen - Sara Roberts, LSW

1st Thursday each month
1:30 PM - 3:30 PM

612-868-6720 or
s.roberts@seniorcommunity.org

Eden Prairie - Danielle Schmidt, BSW

3rd Thursday each month
3:00 PM - 4:30 PM

952-934-3370 or
d.schmidt@seniorcommunity.org

Edina - Krystal Wiebusch, LSW

1st Thursday each month
1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

952-679-0577 or
k.wiebusch@seniorcommunity.org

Elk River - Becky Allard, LSW

2nd Monday each month
1:30 PM - 3:00 PM

612-804-0968 or
b.allard@seniorcommunity.org

Jordan - Lisa Engdahl, LSW

4th Wednesday each month

Starts April 24!

10:00 AM - 11:30 AM

952-767-7890 or
l.engdahl@seniorcommunity.org



Minnetonka - Adele Mehta, LGSW

2nd Thursday each month
10:00 AM - 11:30 AM

952-767-7888 or
a.mehta@seniorcommunity.org

Monticello - Becky Allard, LSW

2nd Thursday each month
10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

612-804-0968 or
b.allard@seniorcommunity.org

Plymouth - Krystal Wiebusch, LSW

3rd Wednesday each month
10:00 AM-11:30 AM

952-679-0577 or
k.wiebusch@seniorcommunity.org

Rogers - Becky Allard, LSW

1st Monday each month
10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

St. Michael - Becky Allard, LSW

3rd Thursday each month
1:30 PM - 3:00 PM

612-804-0968 or
b.allard@seniorcommunity.org

Waconia - Sara Roberts, LSW

2nd Monday each month
1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

612-868-6720 or
s.roberts@seniorcommunity.org

**Contact the facilitator to register.
Join any time.**

These services are supported, in part, by Hennepin County, municipalities, and Title III grants from Trellis & CMCOA, and a Live Well at Home Grant from the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

We welcome [individual donations](#) to help support caregiver services.

VIRTUAL SUPPORT GROUPS

A Zoom link will be provided when you register.

Krystal Wiebusch, LSW
2nd Tuesday each month
4:30 PM - 6:00 PM

952-679-0577 or
k.wiebusch@seniorcommunity.org

Sara Roberts, LSW
Memory Loss Focus
4th Monday each month
1:30 PM - 3:00 PM

612-868-6720 or
s.roberts@seniorcommunity.org



Use CareNextion to invite friends and family from **any location** to stay connected and help you care for your loved one. Your loved one can also be part of the team to add tasks, provide updates, or see who will be helping with a task.



To learn about other caregiver services, scan the QR code, visit seniorcommunity.org/caregiver-support, or call 612-770-7005.

MEMORY CAFES

Memory Cafés offer different activities each month, providing a positive experience for older adults with memory loss (or other types of dementia) and their caregivers.

While care receivers participate in the activity, caregivers may attend a support group facilitated by a licensed social worker.

Minnetonka - Danielle Schmidt, BSW

For those in the beginning stages of dementia

First Tuesday each month
1:30 PM - 3:00 PM

For those in the middle stages of dementia

Third Tuesday each month
1:30 PM - 3:00 PM

Call 952-939-8393 or visit
minnetonkamn.gov/register

Prior Lake – Lisa Engdahl, LSW

Last Tuesday each month
3:00 PM – 4:30 PM

952-767-7890 or
l.engdahl@seniorcommunity.org

Wright County – Becky Allard, LSW

3rd Wednesday each month
1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

612-804-0968 or
b.allard@seniorcommunity.org

These services are supported, in part, by Hennepin County, municipalities, and Title III grants from Trellis & CMCOA, and a Live Well at Home Grant from the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

We welcome individual donations to help support caregiver services.

The value of visiting someone with dementia

Visiting a loved one in the advanced stages of dementia can be a difficult and painful experience for family and friends. Many family members feel their efforts are in vain when it seems their loved one barely recognizes them and can no longer interact with them. However, continuing frequent visits increases the person's ability to recognize the person, and can also bring them joy.

Not long ago I had a client in memory care who I'd not met before. I had communicated mostly with her daughter, who visited mom frequently. The client was a petite woman, resting in a special wheelchair which was positioned in front of a large picture window. When I arrived, she was looking out the window and I couldn't tell if she was aware I was there and talking to her.

I started talking about her daughter and a wide smile emerged on her face; she looked over at me and made eye contact. It was quite apparent that she still understood who her daughter was, and it made her happy to think about her. She even tried responding to me but was unable to form sentences. In this difficult journey so many go through, it's comforting to know there doesn't seem to be an expiration date on our capacity to love and feel loved.

By Sara Roberts, LSW
Senior Outreach & Caregiver Services
Social Worker

Heart Memories

*I remember you with my heart.
My mind won't say your name.
I can't recall where I knew you;
Who you were or who I was.*

*Maybe I grew up with you,
Or maybe we worked together,
Or did we bowl together yesterday?
There's something wrong with my memory,
But, I do know you.*

*I know I knew you
And I do love you.
I know how you make me feel;
I remember the feelings we had together.*

*My heart remembers.
It cries out in loneliness for you,
For the feeling you give me now.
Today, I'm happy that you have come*

*When you leave,
My mind will not remember
That you were here,
But my heart remembers.*

*Remembers the feeling of friendship
And love returned.
Remembers
That I am less lonely
And happier today,
Because you have come.*

*Please don't forget me;
And please don't stay away
Because of the way my mind acts.*

*I can still love you.
I can still feel you.*

*I can remember you with my heart;
And a heart memory is maybe
The most important memory of all.*

~Author unknown

Senior Outreach Services Offered

Available to residents of suburban Hennepin County who are age 55 and older

- **Identify Needs.** We work with the client to identify strengths and needs, and assess areas of daily life where support might be helpful.
- **Connect to Resources.** We connect the client to a personalized combination of trusted, affordable resources for chores, health care, finances, personal care, transportation, insurance or legal issues, and more to support independence.
- **Navigate Life Changes.** We provide support for older adults when life changes occur. Examples are loss of income, widowhood, diagnosis of Alzheimer's or other chronic diseases, and preparing for the future.



Have you seen our new CareNextion video? Click the image to view the video and see how CareNextion can help your caregiving team stay connected.

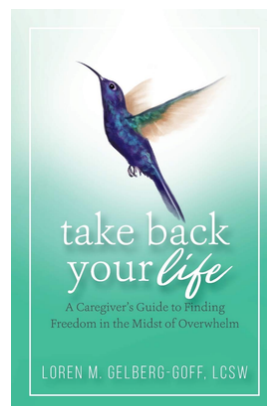
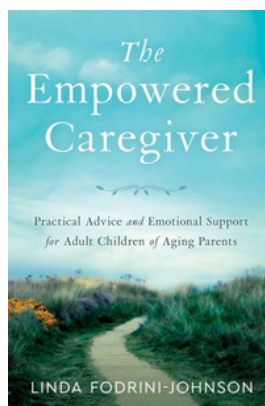


CareNextion Resources Listing

Using feedback from our older adult clients and caregivers, as well as our own research, we maintain a robust list of Minnesota resources in multiple categories. Visit the [resource page](#) to search by topic, location, and category.

What Caregivers are Reading

Click images for details





Sleep Deprivation Increases Anxiety, Undermines Emotional Functioning

Experiencing sleep deprivation appears to increase the risk of certain anxiety symptoms, including rapid heart rate and increased worrying, a new research review has found. Sleep loss may also undermine emotional functioning by decreasing positive emotions like contentment and happiness.

“This occurred even after short periods of sleep loss, like staying up an hour or two later than usual or after losing just a few of hours of sleep,” said Cara Palmer, lead study author. “We also found that sleep loss increased anxiety symptoms and blunted arousal in response to emotional stimuli.”

The review analyzed data from 154 studies that spanned 5 decades and involved 5,715 participants. Three types of sleep deprivation – extended wakefulness, shortened sleep duration, and nighttime awakenings – were all associated with worsened emotional functioning and higher anxiety risk.

“Research has found that more than 30 percent of adults and up to 90 percent of teens don’t get enough sleep,” added Palmer. “The implications of this research for individual and public health are considerable in a largely sleep-deprived society.”

~ Article from 1440 Daily Digest; [read the full press release here](#)

Strive for Good “Sleep Hygiene”

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) explains that good sleep habits (sometimes referred to as “sleep hygiene”) can help you get a good night’s sleep.

Some habits that can improve your sleep health:

- Be consistent. Go to bed at the same time each night and get up at the same time each morning, including on the weekends
- Make sure your bedroom is quiet, dark, relaxing, and at a comfortable temperature
- Remove electronic devices, such as TVs, computers, and smart phones, from the bedroom
- Avoid large meals, caffeine, and alcohol before bedtime
- Get some exercise. Being physically active during the day can help you fall asleep more easily at night.

Downsizing (continued from page 1)

People will say their goal is to de-clutter, but that also has them looking through a lens at “The Big Picture”. When you look at the big picture, it can be quite overwhelming and paralyzing, making it more difficult to get something accomplished.

Like most tasks, if we are able to break it down into manageable parts, we can attack the big picture piece by piece. Here are recommendations from the Public Health Department from the City of Bloomington on how to organize your downsizing process.

1. Be realistic about what you can and cannot do.
2. Set achievable goals – and be willing to expand or change goals as needed.
3. Create simple categories – KEEP, TOSS, SELL, and GIVE.
4. Decide where the KEEP, SELL & GIVE items will go.
5. Have a bag or bin for the TOSS items, and when it’s full get rid of it immediately! Only handle items one time.
6. Select a target room, and then a target area within the room.

It may help to take a picture of the area before and after so you can see your progress. Another idea is to reward yourself on the progress you make. Talking to a friend or family about what you are doing provides some accountability. You may find verbalizing your progress wins gives you a sense of pride in the job you are doing.

From Public Health Department from the City of Bloomington



Get to know the team!



Krystal Wiebusch, LSW

Licensed Social Worker

Senior Outreach and Caregiver Services

Krystal has been working with older adults and their families since she was in high school. She graduated from Saint Cloud State University's Social Work program in 2006. She worked in nursing homes and assisted living facilities prior to joining Senior Community Services in 2012.

Krystal specializes in caregiver support and support group facilitation. She has been a caregiver for her mother for many years and knows first-hand how challenging it can be to care for a parent.



Senior Community Services is committed to creating a culture of belonging for all our staff, volunteers, partners, and those we serve with no discrimination on the basis of status or identity. We know that celebrating a diverse range of identities, experiences, and perspectives is crucial to carrying out our mission.

Support our mission to empower people as they age



Donations **help fill the gap** between the actual costs of services and the combination of grants, funding, and modest payments we receive from participants. All of these sources are critical for us to continue to provide Senior Outreach & Caregiver Services.



Scan the QR code to the left or visit seniorcommunity.org/donate-socs to donate with a credit or debit card, including recurring donations.

You may also donate by check made out to "Senior Community Services" and mail it to Senior Community Services, ATTN SOCS, 10201 Wayzata Blvd., Suite 335, Minnetonka, MN 55305.

Other ways to donate

If you're still working (or have family members or friends who are), find out if the company has a **matching gift program** or lets you set up **automatic donations** from a paycheck.

Are you a **Thrivent** member?

Direct your Thrivent Choice® dollars to Senior Community Services.



Founded in 1950, Senior Community Services is a nonprofit with a mission to empower people as they age and a vision to reimagine aging by serving compassionately, connecting communities, and supporting independence.