

# We Care

Newsletter



## Welcome to the December issue of the **We Care** Newsletter



### Help! The Holidays are Coming!

*By Cheri Burcham, Family Life Educator, University of Illinois Extension*

The holidays will soon be here. Who can hardly wait for the shopping, decorating, wrapping gifts, baking, visiting with loved ones, mailing cards, attending holiday events, etc....Whew! No wonder the holidays can cause so much stress! Holidays have a great meaning in our lives and are great for helping us re-connect with loved ones, friends and traditions we hold dear, but it can also bring a lot of stress into our lives that can make some of us wish we can just skip them for a year or so.

I've recently done a little "research" on ways to bring those stress levels down over the holidays and enjoy them the way they're meant to be. Four reoccurring messages kept popping up in all the literature:

1. Set realistic goals for what you can accomplish each day. Don't set yourself up for failure by expecting to complete too many goals in too little time.

**The Care Connection**  
at  
**Shepherd's Center Central**  
promotes and supports the advancement of skills, good health, and resilience of caregivers for older adults.

*Shepherd's Center Central is a not-for-profit community-based organization that empowers mid-life and older adults to live healthy, engaged and independent lives.*

**[www.sccentral.org](http://www.sccentral.org)**  
**816-444-1122**

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2. Remember to build down time into your schedule. We can all get very grouchy when tired, so build in at least 15 minutes of alone time with no distractions. Just getting in a good stretch of taking a short cat nap can be refreshing.

3. Simplify! It's ok to use paper plates this year instead of the good china or to buy the rolls instead of making them from scratch.

4. Don't abandon healthy habits. You continue to need daily exercise and adequate rest-especially during the holidays when everyone tends to overeat and overindulge.

Other ideas for keeping stress at a minimum this holiday season include:

1. Modify your holiday cooking habits. Try making casseroles and/or meals that you can freeze ahead of time. Freeze sugar cookies ahead of time and save the decorating for later. Host a potluck style dinner instead of cooking everything yourself.

2. Trade off holiday shopping time with another family. Babysit each other's children so you can have quality time to shop.

3. Delegate duties and don't try to do everything on your own.

4. Set differences aside and accept family members and friends as they are. Holiday times may not be the right time to bring up grievances and try to solve past issues.

5. Learn to say "no" - or at least "I need to think about it."

And finally, always keep your sense of humor! Maintain your sense of humor during the holidays keeps things light and puts a different perspective on situations that can emerge.



## Link for Care

your connection to service providers in the greater Kansas City Area

[Like us on Facebook](#) 

### We have More Info to Share

Remember...The Care Connection at Shepherd's Center Central is here to help anyone who is concerned about an aging parent, loved one, neighbor, or friend who needs referrals to resources, care planning, practical advice, guidance in balancing work and family, or stress relief.

The Kansas City Caregiver Support Line provides resources and referrals for caregivers of older adults. Call 816-444-1122

[Click for info on: Care Connection](#)

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## This Month's Tip

### Beat the Winter Blues

Winter blues strikes people of all ages; it can cause depression and lack of energy and interest that lasts all winter long. This problem is especially difficult for people who are at home much of the time during bad weather and the cold winter months.

Here is a list of tips to help beat the blues:

### **Keep the Mind Active**

Although you may not be as physically active in the winter as during the rest of the year, keep your mind active by participating in mental exercises. Games such as crossword puzzles or Sudoku, jigsaw puzzles or another hobby, are excellent ways to pass the time. Play a game of solitaire. Reading books, magazines or journal articles and the newspaper is also a good way to keep the mind active.

### **Get Regular Exercise**

Even if you cannot get outside, find ways to be active in your home. Walk around the house as you are able. Chair exercise is also an excellent way to strengthen your arms if you are unsteady on your feet.

### **Eat Healthy**

Foods with too much sugar or caffeine can make you feel jittery or alter your mood. Many of these foods will provide a fast rush of energy and then a quick drop, leaving you feeling worse than before. Foods such as pasta and other carbohydrates often leave a person feeling tired and sluggish, which adds to the winter blues. Be sure you are drinking plenty of water even if you are not thirsty.

### **Be Social**

Even if you cannot get out of the house for days at a time, interact with others as much as you are able. Call family and friends on the phone, chat with other caregivers for support and friendship.

## **Easy Holiday Recipes**

### **Honey Roasted Carrots**

1 lb baby carrots  
3 tablespoons olive oil  
3 tablespoons honey  
salt and pepper to taste

Directions: Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.

Line a baking sheet with foil and spray lightly with non-stick cooking spray. In a bowl, mix together carrots and olive oil until carrots are all covered. Spread the carrots in a single layer on the baking sheet. Drizzle the honey over the carrots and sprinkle salt and pepper on top. Bake uncovered, turning once, until just tender (about 25-30 minutes).

Serves 4-6.

### **Slow Cooker Ham**

Spread about 1 1/2 cups of brown sugar on the bottom of the slow cooker crock. Place the ham flat side down into the slow cooker - you might have to trim it a little to make it fit. Use your hands to rub the remaining brown sugar onto the ham. Cover, and cook on Low for 8 hours.



## **Pretzel Treats**

1 bag Pretzel Twists, Squares, Or Circles (9 Ounce Bag)

1 bag Candy Kisses (12 Oz. Bag)

1 bag (12 Oz. Size) Christmas M&Ms

Spread pretzels out on a cookie sheet, and place one Hershey's Kiss on top of each pretzel. Place sheet in the oven at 275 degrees for 3 minutes-just long enough for the Kisses to get soft. Remove from oven, and immediately press a single M&M on each. Refrigerate until serving.

## **Mark Your Calendar for Upcoming Events**

### **DEALING WITH DPOA, HANDLING FAMILY CONFLICTS & OTHER LEGAL MATTERS**

Understanding Advanced Health Care Directives can be difficult enough, but when an individual changes his/her mind, legal matters can be very tricky. Issues discussed include: Health Care Power of Attorney, Living Wills, DNR and the documents needed in order to make sure the wishes of the patient are carried out.

***Wednesday, December 2, 12 Noon - 1 PM***

***Landon Center on Aging, 3599 Rainbow Blvd, Kansas City, KS***

***To register or for more information call 913.588.3094***

### **MEDITATION FOR THE HOLIDAYS**

Nourish your soul this holiday season. When the external pressures cause us to worry, take time to explore the meaning of this season of gratitude, generosity and renewal through meditation and guided imagery. Enter the season with a calm and grounded mind and body!

***Wednesdays, Dec. 2-16, 6 - 7:30 PM***

***8900 State Line Road, Suite 240, Leawood, KS 66206***

***To register, call 913.574.0900***

### **SELF-COMPASSION: A GIFT TO OURSELVES AND TO OTHERS**

Research suggests that people who find it easy to be supportive and understanding of others often score low on self-compassion tests. They get down on themselves for not "measuring up." Research also suggests that accepting our human imperfections may lead us toward improved health. People who score high on tests of self-compassion seem to have less depression and anxiety and tend to be happier and more optimistic. This interactive group addresses the importance of treating ourselves with compassion.

***Tuesdays, Dec. 8 and 15, 2:30 - 4 PM***

**8900 State Line Road, Suite 240, Leawood, KS 66206**

**To register, call 913.574.0900**

### **MEET THE KanCare OMBUDSMAN**

The Ombudsman helps KanCare/Medicaid members and Kansas consumers with concerns about getting the services they need.

**Wednesday, December 9, 12 Noon - 1 PM**

**Landon Center on Aging, 3599 Rainbow Blvd, Kansas City, KS**

**To register or for more information call 913.588.1746**

### **HOLIDAY BLUES**

Discover some of the basic ways of coping with the Holiday Blues. Learn the ten tips to enjoy the holiday season. Being alone doesn't equate to being lonely.

**Wednesday, December 16, 12 Noon - 1 PM**

**Landon Center on Aging, 3599 Rainbow Blvd, Kansas City, KS**

**To register or for more information call 913.588.3094**

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## **Consider a Planned Gift. Please donate.**

Please consider making a charitable bequest to Shepherd's Center of Kansas City Central in your will. Legacy gifts provide future support for charity. Any individual, at any time, can create a legacy gift. It can be as easy as naming a charity on the beneficiary form of a savings, checking or pension account, or through a more complex instrument such as a trust.

To make a bequest to SCC, simply include these words in your will:

"I give to Shepherd Center of Kansas City Central, a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation, located in Kansas City, MO, \_\_\_% of my estate for general purposes."

To create a residual charitable bequest, use these words:

"All the rest, residue and remainder of my estate, both real and personal, I give to Shepherd Center of Kansas City Central, a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation, located in Kansas City, MO, for its general purposes."

Visit us at [www.sccentral.org](http://www.sccentral.org). Call us at 816-444-1121.

