



# Caregiver Coaches

NETWORK TRAIN EQUIP

Caregiver Coaches Manual  
A Guide in Counseling the Caregiver

## Abstract

In this document, one will find various hints regarding how to approach situations. This is, by no means, the complete answers to each situation are nearly guaranteed to be unique. Use this as a starting point for formulating guidance to the caregiver being counseled.

## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	2
Introduction.....	4
Alzheimer's and Dementia Resource Service.....	5
Dealing with the Behavioral Symptoms of Your Loved One's Dementia.....	5
Caregiver Support.....	5
Doctor Visit Checklist.....	7
Before the Visit.....	7
During the Visit.....	7
After the Visit.....	7
Scams and Fraud .....	8
Senior Care Referral Services.....	9
Transportation.....	10
Just for Seniors.....	10
NewView Oklahoma.....	10
RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) of Central Oklahoma.....	10
Veterans Affairs (VA) Caregiver Support Program.....	11
Vision.....	12
NewView Oklahoma.....	12
Resources.....	13
Tips and Tricks.....	14
Garbage bags.....	14
Life Hacks for Memory Boost.....	15
Life Hacks for Caregivers.....	16
Life Hacks in the Kitchen <sup>13</sup> .....	16
Life Hacks for Helping with Cognitive Abilities.....	17
Life Hacks for Mobility.....	17
Life Hacks in the Bathroom.....	18
Life Hacks for Bathing and Dressing.....	19
Life Hacks for Encouraging Exercise.....	20

## Introduction

The following are different subjects of what could be called a typical need to a caregiver. These various subjects are taken from many resources. Those resources are listed in the footnote where possible. The content of these sections is subject to change on the referenced source. The webpage is listed in the footnote for future use.

## Alzheimer's and Dementia Resource Service

### Dealing with the Behavioral Symptoms of Your Loved One's Dementia<sup>1</sup>

As a family caregiver of someone with dementia, you feel overwhelmed. You feel deep sadness. You feel unprepared to deal with your loved one's dementia because you don't understand what's causing it and you just don't know what you can do about it.

It's shocking, confusing, and upsetting when "dad starts to rant and rave" or when mom "talks to people who aren't there." Let yourself off the hook: you are not expected to know how to deal with these behaviors.

We hope we can help you get through some of the panicked helplessness you felt when these symptoms first started appearing with your loved one. We want to help bring you more bright moments of joy with your loved one even as their dementia progresses.

We want to help you better understand some of the symptoms that can come with dementia and what can be done about them. Yes, it may surprise you, but something can be done to address certain symptoms and reduce them.

Please follow the link to continue with this subject on the author's website

<http://caregiveraction.org/what-to-expect-1>

### Caregiver Support<sup>2</sup>

Being a caregiver brings both expected and unexpected challenges. A common saying is "There is safety in numbers" applies when talking about caregiving. Support groups provide to the caregiver a safe place to discuss problems and share experiences with others. Experiences for one may solve a problem for another. There are caregiver support groups across the metropolitan area.

---

<sup>1</sup> From Caregiver Action Network Family Caregiver Toolbox Lighting Your Way  
(<https://www.caregiveraction.org/lighting-your-way>)

<sup>2</sup> From Sunbeam Family Services Caregiver Support Groups page from the website  
<https://sunbeamfamilyservices.org/caregiver-support-groups/>. Email [seniorengagement@sunbeamfamilyservices.org](mailto:seniorengagement@sunbeamfamilyservices.org)  
or call (405) 609-6551.

## Caregiver Coaches Manual

Below are some groups.

<p>Guthrie Support Group Guthrie Community Church 512 E. Seward Rd., Guthrie, OK 73044</p> <p>2nd and 4th Saturday of every month 9-11 a.m.</p>	<p>OKC Support Group Tabitha Baptist Church 1219 NE Grand Blvd, Oklahoma City, OK 73117</p> <p>2nd Wednesday of every month 12:00-1:00 p.m.</p>
<p>Moore Support Group Fresh Start Community Church Moore, OK 73160</p> <p>3rd Thursday of every month 12-1:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Parkinson's Foundation at <a href="#">Chesapeake Plaza</a> 309 N. Eastern Ave. 720 Wilshire Blvd. OKC, OK 73116</p> <p>2nd Friday of every month 11 a.m.-12 p.m.</p>
<p>OKC Support Group Sunbeam Family Services 1100 NW 14th St. OKC, OK 73106</p> <p>1st Thursday of every month 12-1:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Alzheimer's Association Caregiver Support Group Bethany Library 6700 NW 35th St, Bethany, OK 73008</p> <p>hmagley@cox.net</p>

## Doctor Visit Checklist<sup>3</sup>

You may want to accompany your care recipient to doctor's appointments. This way, you and your care recipient can work together as members of the health care team and ensure that you both understand the recommended medical course of action. This is an especially important role if your care recipient is cognitively impaired.

Here is a checklist to help you make the most of your doctor's visit:

### Before the Visit

- Write down all questions or any concerns you might have so you don't forget them. This will help you state them clearly. Regardless of how insignificant you feel the doctor may think it is—ASK!
- Identify current symptoms. Use the following handy symptom-reporting guide.
- Update the patient file and medication list. Be sure to include all medications, over the counter drugs and supplements.
- Call to confirm appointment

### During the Visit

- Bring the updated medication list
- Clearly report all of your loved one's symptoms; don't try to diagnose the problem.
- Ask your questions and record the answers
- Record doctor's instructions
- Discuss recommendations
- Verify follow-up

### After the Visit

- Review your notes
- Check prescriptions
- Discuss the visit
- Update your calendar
- Call for test results

---

<sup>3</sup> From Caregiver Action Network Family Caregiver Toolbox Checklist  
(<https://www.caregiveraction.org/doctor-visit-checklist>)

## Scams and Fraud <sup>4</sup>

The world is full of those that would rather have your money or property than to earn it the legal way. The Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office offers free online videos presented in partnership with Metro Tech, an educating center. These monthly videos are on a wide selection of subjects that address scams and fraudulent activities that impact everyone. The caregiver should stay educated in this area to head off potential predators.

Follow the following link to view the current calendar (March 2023). If you are interested in a live seminar/course, click the "Register" button to get your name on the list. You won't be disappointed.

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.metrotech.edu/business-training/courses-training/crime-prevention>



## Senior Care Referral Services<sup>5</sup>

Finding appropriate senior care solutions can be confusing and complicated. There are many questions to answer and often times there are forms to fill out and decisions to be made up front. We help you navigate the system with a structured but simplified process and walk with you along the journey. Our goal is to provide you with information so that the anxiety is minimized through the entire experience. Just call 405-509-6311 and Senior Care Referral Services of Oklahoma can provide you with the a wide range of expertise.

---

<sup>5</sup> From the Senior Care Referral Services page <https://www.seniorlivingok.com/>

## Transportation

There are many options regarding transportation. The options range from free transportation to participating doctor appointments to pay-as-you-go transportation for seniors. Here are a few of those options.

### Just for Seniors<sup>6</sup>

Just for Seniors provide several paid services that include transportation to/from doctors (including sitting in with the patient while talking with the doctor), grocery shopping and errands.

### NewView Oklahoma<sup>7</sup>

NewView Oklahoma provides rides to and from their medical clinic to those in need of transportation. This is a free service.

### RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) of Central Oklahoma<sup>8</sup>

Since 1994 RSVP Provide-A-Ride has offered low-income adults age 60+ free transportation to medical appointments throughout Oklahoma County. Please contact April Lucas at 405-605-3106 or email [april.lucas@rsvpokc.org](mailto:april.lucas@rsvpokc.org). We love serving you!

---

<sup>6</sup> From the Just for Seniors website <https://justforseniorsok.com/services/>.

<sup>7</sup> From the NewView Oklahoma website <https://nvoklahoma.org/>.

<sup>8</sup> From the RSVP website <https://rsvpokc.org/need-a-ride-2/>.

## Veterans Affairs (VA) Caregiver Support Program<sup>9</sup>

The Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) Caregiver Support Program (CSP) offers clinical services to caregivers of eligible and covered Veterans enrolled in the VA health care system. CSP is a national program with local offices and teams located within VA facilities. The program's mission is to promote the health and well-being of family caregivers who care for our Nation's Veterans, through education, resources, support, and services.

CSP carries out its mission through two programs:

Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS)

([https://www.caregiver.va.gov/Care\\_Caregivers.asp](https://www.caregiver.va.gov/Care_Caregivers.asp))

- Services: Skills training, mobile support, one-on-one coaching, group support and coaching, self-care, peer support mentoring, telephone support, online programs, and referrals to available VA and community resources.
- Visit the CSP Teams/Caregiver Support Coordinators Locator.
- Eligibility: PGCSS is available to caregivers of Veterans enrolled in VA health care who served in any era.
- How do I apply: PGCSS Frequently Asked Questions? □ [Learn more about PGCSS](#)

Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC)

([https://www.caregiver.va.gov/support/support\\_benefits.asp](https://www.caregiver.va.gov/support/support_benefits.asp))

- Services: Education and training, health insurance (if caregiver is otherwise uninsured), mental health counseling, monthly financial stipend, respite care and other services.
- Eligibility: For Veteran and family caregiver eligibility requirements, please visit eligibility requirements. □ HOW DO I APPLY: o Apply online: Online application PCAFC. o By mail: Download and print VA Form 1010CG.

In person: Bring your completed VA Form 10-10CG to your local CSP Teams/Caregiver Support Coordinators. o [Learn more about PCAFC](#)

Differences between the two programs can be found by following the link:

<https://caregiver.va.gov/CAREGIVER/pdfs/FactSheets/CSP-Compare-Chart-508.pdf#>

---

<sup>9</sup> Website associated with the VA is a Veterans Affairs (VA) Caregiver Support Program (<https://caregiver.va.gov/>)

## Vision

### NewView Oklahoma<sup>10</sup>

New View Oklahoma, a company started in 1949, is a wonderful company that provides services to low- and no-vision qualified patients. People that qualify, receive free medical evaluation for vision issues. Those with low vision that cannot be corrected with glasses, surgery or medication qualify for rehabilitation working to keep independence. To research further, visit their website at <https://nvoklahoma.org/>.

---

<sup>10</sup> From the start page of NewView Oklahoma's website (<https://nvoklahoma.org/>).

## Resources<sup>11</sup>

There are lists of resources on the internet from a wide variety of sources. Included below is a list of categories of resources at the time of this writing. These resource categories have many resources for each category. Visit the website <https://savvysenior.org/seniorresources.htm> for the details of each resource.

- Aging Organizations and General Interest
- Assistive Devices and Senior Gadgets
- Caregiving and Support Services
- Computer and Internet
- Employment
- End of Life Issues
- Finances and Retirement
- Grandparenting and Intergenerational Family
- Government Resources and Assistance
- [Health Resources](#) ◦ General Health and Medical Care ◦ Mental Health, Alzheimer's and Dementia ◦ Medication ◦ Dental ◦ Hearing ◦ Vision ◦ Sleep
- Nutrition and Exercise
- Housing, Long Term Care and Universal Design
- Insurance
- Legal Issues and Resources
- Leisure, Learning and Personal Growth
- Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security
- Older Drivers and Transportation
- Relationships and Online Dating
- Research and Statistics
- Travel
- Volunteering
- State and Local Resources

---

<sup>11</sup> From the Senior Resources page of the Savvy Senior website  
(<https://savvysenior.org/seniorresources.htm>)

## Tips and Tricks

The following are different tips and tricks that have been found to be of some value. The source of the life hack or tip is noted for each entry. These life hacks are of some value to the caregiver. The content of these sections is subject to change on the referenced source. The webpage is listed in the footnote for future use.

### Garbage bags<sup>12</sup>

When moving, a closet full of clothes can be cumbersome to move from one place to another. Individual pieces of clothing tend to fall off their hanger. Simply slip a garbage bag over a large group of clothes from bottom to top. This will keep the items together and will be easy to relocate to their new closet.



---

<sup>12</sup> From Get Packing: 40 Stress-Reducing Moving Hacks That Will Make the Transition Easier  
(<https://morehackz.com/movinghack>)

## Life Hacks for Memory Boost

### Use your smartphone to take a picture of where you parked

By using your smart phone to take a picture, one should make sure that some sort of landmark (a building, a particular tree, a street sign, etc.) is in frame of the picture. This will aid in jogging the memory when returning to the car. Once the car is located, it is suggested to delete that

### Get colored covers for the tops of your keys

After a few times of use, the colors will become nearly automatic when attempting to locate the correct key for the door. For example, blue for the front door, green for the inside garage door and so forth.

### Remember new people's names by repeating the name out loud

Repeating the name three times at the first introduction is an old salesman's trick that has been used for many years. After at least three uses of the name to remember, the brain begins to lock in that name into your memory. For example, after you are introduced to someone, use his or her name in your initial greeting, such as, "Nice to meet you, Sally."

### Use brain training apps on your smartphone

There are several applications or "apps" for smartphones these days to help improve your memory. Some of these include Lumosity, Brain Trainer, Eidetic and Cognifit Brain Fitness.

### Include foods in your diet known for their memory-boosting power

Over the years, research has shown that certain foods help boost the brain's ability to recall. Vitamin D and Vitamin B12 are specific nutrients that will help.

- Vitamin D can be found in cod liver oil, salmon, swordfish, tuna fish, orange juice fortified with vitamin D, dairy and plant milks fortified with vitamin D, sardines, beef liver, egg yolk and fortified cereals.
- Vitamin B12 can be found in beef, liver, chicken, fish and shellfish such as trout, salmon, tuna fish, and clams, fortified breakfast cereal, low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese as well as eggs.

## Life Hacks for Caregivers

### Life Hacks in the Kitchen<sup>13</sup>

1. Wrap rubber bands around each of your glasses. It will improve your grip and help prevent breakage.
2. Keep rubber gloves on hand to help you open difficult jars. The traction and grip of the rubber gloves will give you an extra boost for twisting off tight lids.
3. Wet a sponge, put it in a Ziploc bag and then freeze it to make a quick ice pack that won't leak.
4. Put non-skid liners under your kitchen rugs to avoid slips and falls.
5. Get an extension grabber to help you reach items that are in high-up cabinets with ease, and put only lightweight items higher up to make them easier to grab.

### Life Hacks in the Bathroom<sup>13</sup>

6. Install a bar in your shower and/or bathtub to help you lower yourself and stand back up in the tub as well as stabilize yourself and help prevent slips in the shower.
7. Replace your current toilet seats with comfort-height seats that are higher than traditional ones. These make it easier for you to sit down and stand back up without strain.
8. Use non-slip mats on the bathroom floor and in the tub and shower. Since bathrooms collect water more frequently than other rooms, slip prevention is key!
9. If memory is an issue, ensure hot and cold water are properly marked by using a blue and red dot (paint or even nail polish works) on the appropriate side.
10. Get a shower chair to use in the bathtub or the shower if you have trouble standing for long periods of time.

### Life Hacks While Out Shopping<sup>14</sup>

1. Before you go grocery shopping, use your smartphone to take a picture of your refrigerator and/or pantry. You can refer to this as you are shopping to see what's missing.
2. Instead of a purse, consider using a fanny pack for your shopping trips. You can keep it closer to you to prevent theft, and you won't accidentally leave it or forget it somewhere.
3. Consider home grocery delivery. There are many grocery stores that will let you shop and then deliver your groceries for you, or you can even check out online ordering services.
4. Check packages for easy-open options, especially for over-the-counter medicines; check to see if the package is childproof, and if so, look for one without childproof caps.
5. Buy pre-chopped produce and pre-bagged salads to cut down on the time, strain and risk of having to cut in the kitchen.

### Life Hacks for Staying in Shape

1. Use a chair to do sitting jumping jacks by sitting in place while raising your arms and moving your legs in a jumping-jack motion.

---

<sup>13</sup> From 50 Life Hacks For Seniors And Caregivers (<https://caregiverconnection.org/life-hacks-seniorsand-caregivers>)

<sup>14</sup> From 50 Life Hacks For Seniors And Caregivers (<https://caregiverconnection.org/life-hacks-seniorsand-caregivers>)



2. Use soup cans as lightweight dumbbells to do easy lifting exercises with your arms.
3. Do knee-bend exercises while keeping your balance by using the back of a chair.
4. Use an elastic exercise band wrapped around your feet while seated to help build upper body strength with rowing moves.
5. Use a stability ball for a simple workout with a chair.

### Life Hacks for Helping with Cognitive Abilities

1. Engage seniors with memory-building games. You can either buy a pre-made set of memory cards or make your own cards personalized to the life of the person you're caring for, with matching photos of loved ones, pets and items in the home.
2. Take pictures of the contents of storage containers and tape them to the outside of the containers so your senior can easily identify what's inside.
3. Create a guessing box with a variety of items inside, such as easy-to-handle and soft, non-harmful objects, and ask your senior to guess what they are.
4. Limit choices when asking questions to cut down on confusion. Rather than asking an open-ended question that offers a wide range of possible responses, give your senior a specific set of choices in response. This can be done when asking about what clothes he or she wishes to wear, or what foods he or she wishes to eat.
5. Music is said to help concentration, so try playing some classical music by Beethoven, Bach, Chopin or Mozart to both relax and stimulate cognitive function.

### Life Hacks for Mobility

1. Attach key rings to the ends of zipper pulls to provide a larger surface to grip and ease of movement for seniors to keep their autonomy while dressing.
2. Attach any small throw rugs to the floor with double-sided adhesive tape to help prevent slips and falls.
3. Reorganize storage areas like cabinets and pantries so that the most-often-used items are located at arm's length or lower down. Put rarely used items in the harder-to-reach spots to optimize storage space.
4. Place foam stoppers on any doors that automatically lock or close automatically. This will help prevent accidental lockouts as well as accidents with doors closing on fingers and hands.
5. Use childproofing items such as bumpers for sharp furniture covers and drawer locks for drawers with dangerous or hazardous items that the person you are caring for should not have unsupervised access to.

### Life Hacks in the Bathroom

1. Use spice racks installed on the wall to help organize various bottles and containers. These can be installed at arm's length so that they are easy to reach and can provide easy access to the most-used items in the bathroom. It also helps keep clutter off the sink area.
2. Use a nonskid stool if there isn't already a stool or chair installed in the tub or shower to help with bathing tasks.



3. Ensure nightlights are in place at nighttime in the bathroom as well as hallways leading to the bathroom. This helps with safe nighttime bathroom trips and avoids illumination with harsh light that can disturb getting back to sleep.
4. If the senior uses a bar of soap, put it inside a pantyhose stocking to provide a sheer netting that allows for use of the soap while minimizing slipping. This also helps prevent the soap bar from sliding away if it drops.
5. Use a foam kneeling pad, such as those used for gardening, to help alleviate the strain on your knees if you have to frequently bend down for bathtub assistance or other bathing tasks.

## Life Hacks for Bathing and Dressing

1. Let the person you're caring for keep control and dignity by framing your language in ways they will respond to positively. For example, "You tell me if you want help," is a good phrase to insert when you are giving a bath or dressing.
2. Dry shampoo can be a great option if washing hair with water is a difficult task that cannot be undertaken on a frequent basis.



3. Clothing with Velcro or zippers is much easier to manage than clothing with buttons. Replacing buttons where possible with options like Velcro or zippers makes it possible for the person you're caring for to get dressed more easily and thus keep more autonomy.
4. Lay out clothing in the order that it needs to be put on to cut down on confusion and help the person you're caring for maintain independence and control. For example, you could start by placing items on the bed with the first item on the far left and the subsequent items moving toward the right. The important thing is to help the person you're caring for understand the order and then establish this as a set routine.
5. Placing a small hand towel over the rubber bath mat in the shower or tub can give the person you're caring for an additional focal point and added cushioning to help as they enter and exit the shower or tub.

## Life Hacks for Encouraging Exercise

1. When weather permits, take a daily walk with a specific goal in mind that can be accomplished during the walk. For example, you could establish that you will count all the blue cars you see, or the number of traffic lights. This gives a cognitive workout as well as a physical one.
2. Play “catch” with a large and light mobility ball. You could start out facing each other, close enough to pass the ball back and forth, and take one step back each time one of you receives the ball. Make a goal of a set number of steps to reach, or continue until passing or throwing the ball is no longer feasible.
3. Use a whiteboard calendar with magnets on the refrigerator to list one exercise or physical activity to work on every day, and when the task is complete, mark it with a different colored dry erase marker as completed.
4. Take a “treasure hunt” walk using a predetermined list of things to find during the walk and a smartphone camera to document each item. By printing out the pictures, and perhaps having each treasure hunt list theme-based, these walks could be made into a series of photo albums!
5. Turn household tasks into exercise activities, such as raking leaves, putting away groceries or other physical tasks around the house.