



Carers 4 Carers

Finding support through supporting each other

September 2023

September marks the beginning of meteorological Autumn. It's a time of new beginnings for many in our families and communities with the start of the new school year. So it's also an ideal time to think afresh about many things that might lie ahead.

Caring for my mother, who went blind in her final years, was often a time of devising strategies to enable her to cope with living alone. She was, herself, very organised and thought ahead about what would be needed 'if' or 'when'. She kept a bag packed ready for emergency hospital admittance and when she died, I knew exactly where to find everything. It made life easier for me. In the last of our series on keeping records, I'm thinking about what can be helpful when admittance to hospital is necessary, either planned or as an emergency.

Life after bereavement will be different for everyone. Caring may have robbed the carer of enjoying their own interests and had an adverse effect on their own health. It is now eight years since my husband passed away. You never forget, you may never get over the loss but you will in time learn to cope and make a life for yourself. For me, it is also a time to do many of the things I couldn't do before and many of you will know that I love to travel. I am determined to make the most of 'my' time. Derek would have wanted that. A medical emergency this summer, which has prevented me from doing what I had planned, has reminded me to 'make hay....' Do what you can, while you can. This might be for you, it might be for you and your loved one. Grab those good days when they occur and make some wonderful memories for cloudier days. During my husband's last year, I created a 'Happiness is..' page in my journal. Top of the list were '..when my husband is having a GOOD day' and '...when we are able to go out and do things together'.

OUR MONTHLY MEETINGS

Carers4Carers meets on the **fourth** Friday of the month, except in December, when it's the second Friday. We meet at Kineton Village Hall, Mill Street, Kineton, CV35 OLB, 10.30 a.m. until 12 noon. We start with time for coffee and chat and then the main part of our meeting will start at about 11 o'clock. It is not necessary to book in advance for either the Carers' Group or the Companionship Group. However, if you'd like to know more or would like to introduce yourself before joining us for a meeting, you are welcome to get in touch by phone or email.

Friday 22nd September— N.B. the date; there are 5 Fridays this month and we meet on the 4th! If you are faced with a medical emergency, would you know what to do? This month we have a visit from the Red Cross who will go through some of the essential things to know.

Friday 27th October—this will be another meeting without a speaker. However, we will be welcoming Sophie Hilleary, the High Sheriff of

Warwickshire who is keen to meet those who attend volunteer support groups during her year. Anita will be on hand with some of her lovely TLC mini-massages and we'll finish the morning with some music.

Friday 24th November—yes, that time of year is close so both carers and companions will be having fun with some Christmas crafting.

Friday 8th December—seasonal meeting.



Carers4Carers is part of the network of Omega Support Groups Reg. Charity No. 1120322

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KEEPING RECORDS

In our last couple of newsletters, Lisa and I have written about how keeping records is so important. In the last of this series, I want to talk a little more about the sort of information that may be useful to staff in hospitals and nursing homes and being prepared.

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I have already mentioned that my mother kept a bag packed ready in case of an emergency hospital appointment. It made my life so much easier; all I had to do was grab it. I also knew exactly where to find details of her funeral plan. As I had been her power of attorney for many years, I knew her wishes any way, but it did help. In my mother's case, she retained her full capacity until the end but when you're ill, you don't always want to be at the receiving end of a barrage of questions by hospital staff. At the other extreme, my husband's cognitive capacity deteriorated as a result of his Parkinson's and I was the main source of information. He did, however, always manage to answer the question 'are you allergic to anything?' with a resounding 'Pop Music' !

I never managed to have a bag packed ready, but I did have a packing list which helped. As my husband's capacity decreased, I was asked to complete a 'This is me' leaflet designed by the Alzheimers Society, to provide information on personal likes, dislikes etc. However, I found the form either didn't provide enough space—try fitting his list of medication onto one line—or didn't ask questions about things that I thought were also important. Ever the rebel, I designed my own list and then I could put all the things that I thought were important in it.

Now, I've always been one for making up little books. It can make a dreary task fun and it can be, for me, relaxing. You don't have to; that's just me! This information can go on a couple of pieces of paper, perhaps a small notebook to leave by the bedside that can be added to; the format is what is easy for you. It is important that it's clearly readable, so if you are able to type over something handwritten, that might help. This is the sort of information I put in that little book:

- A photograph on the front, one from his earlier days when he was acting the fool. It summed him up, brought some humanity to a serious situation but was still very clearly 'Derek'
- Full name, address, my contact numbers and what he liked to be called
- Details of doctor and surgery, list of recent events e.g. a fall and its affects
- A list of health conditions and medications, including times, doses and how to be taken
- Details of hallucinations, what he saw and his reactions
- Details of food and drink and necessary presentation e.g. fork mashable and thickeners.
- Favourite foods and drink and dislikes and allergies
- Mobility issues—what he could and couldn't do and how I helped him
- Toileting and continence needs
- Clothes he was comfortable in; Glasses and hearing aids
- A potted history of his family and those closest to him, a little about his working life, how we met and married and brief details of the things that interested him most.

This might sound like a volume and a half. It wasn't, but it gave nursing and care staff an insight into their patient and, on good days, they were able to encourage him to talk about things that were close to him. I was told by staff both at the hospital and the two nursing homes where he spent time that the information was invaluable and enabled them to get to know Derek much more quickly.

HASTINGS HOUSE MEDICAL CENTRE

Community Information and Flu Event

Friday 22nd September from 9am to 4pm

Wellesbourne Village Hall



Information and representatives from:

- Dementia support
- Carers groups
- Moore and Tibbets Solicitors
- Blood pressure and advice
- Energy Advice.....and much much more!

Flu vaccines will be available on the day!

Heidi, our wonderful community nurse, is again organising a Community Information and Flu Event. It will be her last as she looks forward to retiring in December. Please note this is the day of our next meeting but as it continues into the afternoon, why not call in afterwards. Carers4Carers will have a table there although it will not be manned until the afternoon.

HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT CAFÉ MUSE?

Café Muse is a workshop run by professional musicians from the Orchestra of the Swan. It's a dementia-friendly Music Café. It's a fun and friendly place where participants can make new friends, enhance their emotional wellbeing, reduce feelings of loneliness and, above all feel valued. It includes refreshments and a light lunch.

Our nearest Café Muse is held at the Stratford Methodist Church in Old Town where there is a car park. On street parking for blue badge holders is free. The Café will be on the 2nd Thursday of the month, from 12th October from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The workshops are supported by the Stratford Town Trust and there is no charge.

Members of the orchestra say, "Music has such a powerful role in supporting people at whatever stage of their dementia journey. It is such an amazing experience to see people come alive with the music; join in, tap their feet, sing along and really get involved with the sessions. We are so pleased to be able to bring our professional musicians to these homes & cafés and know that our players are gaining a great deal from the experience too."

If you would like to book a session or find out more, please phone 01926 350028



CONGRATULATIONS ANITA—she's done it again!

Those of you who know Anita will be delighted to learn that, for the third time, she is a Gold winner in this year's British Hair and Beauty Awards. Of course we knew she could do it! Anita will be with us again at our October meeting, relaxing us with her gentle hands.



IMPORTANT CONTACTS AND LINKS



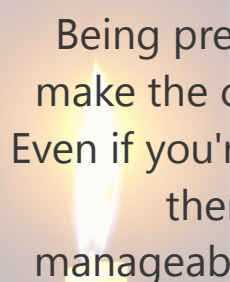
- **Caring Together, Warwickshire**, the carer support service for Warwickshire carers. Phone 0800 297 5544 or visit www.caringtogetherwarwickshire.org.uk
- For consumer complaints, consumer help and advice or to report an issue to Trading Standards, please contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133.
- For consumer or business help and advice, including details of an approved trader scheme, please visit our website: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/tradingstandards>
- Advice on scams and rogue traders: Report fraud directly to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 0800 223 1133. More advice available at: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/doorstepsellers ; www.actionfraud.police.uk/.
- Healthwatch Warwickshire— www.healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk ; 01926 422823 (9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays) and email info@healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk
- **Silverline**—available 24/7 as well as a befriending service www.thesilverline.org.uk/ . Email: info@thesilverline.org.uk or phone 0800 4 70 80 90
- Warwickshire County Council: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/ 01926 410 410 . For social media go to www.facebook.com/WarwickshireCountyCouncil or search 'Social Media' on the website for details of dedicated links such as Instagram and Twitter.
- **Searchout Warwickshire**—the replacement for the Warwickshire Directory can be found at <https://searchout.warwickshire.gov.uk/>
- **Act on Energy**— for information about energy efficiency and hardship support. Phone 0800 988 2881 or visit actonenergy.org.uk/
- **Samaritans**— phone 0116 123. Information about others ways of getting in touch can be found at <https://www.samaritans.org/>

BOOKING YOUR TRANSPORT TO OUR SEPTEMBER MEETING

Please let us know if you would like a seat on the Back&4th community bus by **Friday 15th September**. If you're not sure whether you can come, it's still worth ringing up and booking a seat. It's easier to cancel it later if necessary than squeeze it in last minute. Use the phone number or email address below to let us know and we'll be in touch the following week with a pick-up time. We request a small contribution towards the cost for those able to pay it.

POSITIVITY CORNER

A time to reflect and perhaps to smile



Being prepared does not make the crisis disappear! Even if you're ready, it's still there, only in more manageable proportions.

Barbara Salsbury