Caring for Adult Loved Ones

By Lori Strom

Are you responsible for the care of an aging loved one? Do you anticipate you’ll provide elder care while you work in the future?

Today, in the United States, 30 million households are providing care for an adult over the age of 50—and that number is expected to double over the next 25 years. For many Americans, life at 40, 50 or even 60 years old will include care for an aging parent or relative. As the nation grows older, the need for caregiving will be as common as the need for child care.

The “average” U.S. caregiver is a 49-year-old woman who works outside the home and spends nearly 20 hours per week—the equivalent of another part-time job—providing unpaid care to her parent for nearly five years. One study found that 20% of all female and 16% of all male workers in the United States are family caregivers.

At MSU, the average employee age is 47 years old; 37% of staff and faculty are 46-59 years of age; 15% of MSU employees are aged 60 plus. This means that more and more MSU employees will be taking on caregiving responsibilities over the next several years.

If you are an elder caregiver, the MSU WorkLife Office is here to support you as you provide quality care to your loved ones and achieve success in your work at MSU. Whether or not they live in your home, you may be responsible for the health and financial affairs of a parent, grandparent, spouse or domestic partner. MSU understands this can be very stressful. Finding appropriate resources and information can help to reduce the stress of caregiving. There is help. The MSU WorkLife Office can provide you with information, consultation, and resources to support you and your family.

The following services are available at the WorkLife Office:

- Consultation and personal support
- Information and referral
- Eldercare listserv to connect to others
- Connection to resources for elders living near campus
- Connection to resources for long-distance caregivers
- Perspectives on Aging Series—Free classes held over the lunch hour (January 25 & February 8, 2017)

Contact the WorkLife Office at (517) 353-1635 to set up an individual consultation.

Endnotes
1 National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC) and AARP, Caregiving in the U.S. 2009 (Bethesda, MD: NAC, and Washington, DC: AARP, November 2009). Funded by the MetLife Foundation.
2 Gallup, Inc., More than One in Six American Workers Also Act as Caregivers.
3 Ibid.
Navigating Family Dynamics During the Holidays

Family gatherings, especially during the holidays, can bring up tensions that have been developing for years, or new tensions can arise from various life transitions. For instance, the birth of children, new marriages or divorce, a family member coming out as LBGTQ, a family history of violence, or differing political views can all contribute to tension during family gatherings. Below are tips for navigating these tensions. (Tips have been adapted from a workshop hosted by the previous MSU Women’s Resource Center on November 19, 2015 and included panelists: Lori Strom, Rob Hill, and Zain Shamoon).

1. Open Dialogue
   - Talk with respect
   - Use active listening
   - Avoid lecturing

2. Self-Care & Safety
   - Safety first
     Your safety is a priority. If you feel that a situation is not safe, have a plan for leaving the situation. Call a friend, or professionals such as the police, if you need help.
   - Care for you
     Take a walk, bring a book to read, or watch TV if you need to momentarily disengage.

3. Action Plans
   - Brainstorm solutions
     If an elder needs care, or family members need support, brainstorm a plan together as a family. Also, honor the person’s request for independence.
   - Write a plan
     Mutually agree on who is doing what and how to move forward together. Set a follow-up date for reviewing the plan.

All icons have been downloaded from www.flaticon.com.

DID YOU KNOW?
WorkLife Office Social Media & Events Calendar

You can stay up to date on all of the WorkLife Office Initiatives on our website and social media accounts. For a complete listing of upcoming WorkLife events, visit our website: https://worklife.msu.edu. Interested in receiving weekly e-mails about upcoming programs and events? Join the WorkLife Listserv, by sending an e-mail with the subject line “WorkLife Listserv” to: worklife@msu.edu. Be sure to indicate your name and e-mail address. While you’re at it, be sure to follow us on social media!

Join us on Facebook:
Search: MSU WorkLife Office

Follow us on Twitter:
www.twitter.com/MSUWLO
Calendar of Events @ a Glance

For a full listing of events and details, visit https://worklife.msu.edu.

December 1
12:00PM—1:00PM: Tax Changes and Planning. MSU Federal Credit Union-Farm Lane Branch Community Room (4825 E. Mt. Hope Road, East Lansing). Co-sponsored with the MSU Federal Credit Union.

5:30PM—8:00PM: Family Caregiver Forum. Delta Township District Library (5130 Davenport Dr., Lansing). Co-sponsored with AARP.

December 6
6:00PM—7:00PM: Tax Changes and Planning. MSU Federal Credit Union-Farm Lane Branch Community Room (4825 E. Mt. Hope Road, East Lansing). Co-sponsored with the MSU Federal Credit Union.

December 7
12:00PM—1:00PM: Understanding Your Credit Report and Score. MSU Federal Credit Union-Farm Lane Branch Community Room (4825 E. Mt. Hope Road, East Lansing). Co-sponsored with the MSU Federal Credit Union.

1:00PM—3:30PM: Family Caregiver Forum. Delta Township District Library (5130 Davenport Dr., Lansing). Co-sponsored with AARP.

December 15
6:00PM—7:30PM: Alzheimer’s Association: Know the 10 Warning Signs. MSU Federal Credit Union-Farm Lane Branch Community Room (4825 E. Mt. Hope Road, East Lansing). Co-sponsored with the MSU Federal Credit Union.

December 23, 26, 30 & January 2
Michigan State University closed.

ACADEMIC WOMEN’S FORUM

SPRING SEMESTER 2017 DATES

Tuesday, January 17, 2017 (The Daring Way)
Tuesday, January 31, 2017 (Skill Building)
Tuesday, February 14, 2017 (Skill Building)
Tuesday, February 28, 2017 (The Daring Way)
Tuesday, March 14, 2017 (Skill Building)
Tuesday, March 28, 2017 (The Daring Way)
Tuesday, April 11, 2017 (Skill Building)
Tuesday, April 25, 2017 (The Daring Way)

All sessions are from 3:30PM-5:00PM @ the MSU Main Library.

Visit https://worklife.msu.edu for more details.

Looking for help with:
- Eldercare
- Pet care
- Childcare
- Home maintenance

As a Michigan State University staff or faculty member, you have free access to services provided by Care.com. Visit www.care.com/msu to sign-up with your MSU NETID today!

95% of MSU users would recommend Care.com to their colleagues.