



In Care of You

A NEWSLETTER FOR CAREGIVERS FROM GREENE COUNTY COUNCIL ON AGING

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2025

WHEN SOMEONE CAN NO LONGER DRIVE

Age and/ or medical conditions are not reasons to question driving skills, but age- related impairments may affect a drivers competency. Health conditions such as MS, Parkinson's, poor hearing, failing eyesight, flexibility limitations or slower reaction time can impact driving skills.

Examples of unsafe driving include:

- Driving below the speed limit
- Disobeying traffic signals
- Getting lost on familiar routes
- Slow reaction time to events
- Inattention to other cars, bicylists, or pedestrians

How do you communicate your concerns with the impaired driver? It starts with accepting the fact that the life of the care receiver – and others – may be in danger when he or she is behind the wheel. Sharing your concerns will be difficult -but it is crucial. Most drivers view driving as a source of independence and connection to friends and social activities.

Having a family meeting to state your concerns to the driver may be beneficial. Be prepared with information on alternative modes of transportation. You may ask the driver's physician to discuss with the driver the risks of continuing to drive.

When discussing driving concerns:

- Include the driver in the discussion.
- Discuss driving concerns as early as noted - and often.
- Keep written records of observations of unsafe driving. Share these with the driver, other family members or healthcare professionals.
- Begin conversations early with someone who has been diagnosed with dementia. Determine their wishes regard driving as cognitive skills decline.
- Speak with a healthcare professional about driver competency screenings in your area.

IF the driver does stop driving, it will require an adjustment due to the lack of independence. They may experience a sense of loss of connection with friends and the community. They may fear they will be an extra burden on the caregiver, who now must provide transportation to destinations. There may be a strain on the relationship between the impaired driver and the person who started the discussion about concerns; though everyone is more safe because of it.

For information about courses available locally:

Call AARP Ohio State Office 1-866-389-5653 Or aarp.org/families/driver_safety

Hartford Financial Services Group ~ Family Conversations with Older Drivers. "We Need to Talk" is a free guide for older drivers and their families concerning the decision to continue driving: thehartford.com/talkwitholderdrivers



Anticipatory Grief

Anticipatory grief is the deep sorrow one feels when faced with a significant change or loss before it occurs. Typically, anticipatory grief is felt when a loved one has a terminal or progressive illness and death is expected. Anticipatory grief is about what has been and what will never be while attempting to enjoy the time left with a loved one. Most people think grief only happens after a death has occurred, but that's not the case.

Family members of individuals with dementia often grieve for years. The individual they knew is no longer there. Grief is felt from the time of diagnosis until the time of death. This grief may be hard to discuss with anyone. You may have guilt over your feelings, especially if you have a sense of relief at the thought of your loved one's passing. This is normal; it's okay for you to want their "suffering" to be over and the unpredictability of daily life to resolve. Still, the difficulty of talking

about it can make you feel even more alone in your grief. Anticipatory grief is real, and part of the emotional process of accepting the inevitable outcome.

Symptoms of Anticipatory Grief may include:

- Feelings of anger, denial, anxiety, depression, hopelessness, loneliness;
- Forgetfulness;
- Caregiver exhaustion (mental and physical);
- Guilt due to looking forward to the end of their suffering and your exhaustion.

Suggestions for dealing with Anticipatory Grief:

A counselor is a safe person to talk to about these complicated and unexpected feelings. Your doctor or nurse practitioner may also be helpful, or may assist with finding a counselor.

It may help you to talk with your loved one, if possible, about any unresolved issues. Asking for and/or granting forgiveness is helpful in resolving grief.

Find a support group. Speaking with others that are suffering with or have suffered anticipatory grief will help with your recovery. It is freeing to speak about your feelings out loud, in a place where others do not pass judgement.



We hope you enjoy this publication, and welcome your comments and ideas for future issues.

Let us know if you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, which is published every other month.

Support Groups

- 1st Monday of the month at 6pm, First Presbyterian Church, 314 Xenia Ave, Yellow Springs
- 1st Wednesday of the month at 11:30 am, GCCOA Xenia office
- 2nd & 4th Tuesdays at 9:30 am, Peace Lutheran Church, 3530 Dayton-Xenia Rd, Beavercreek

Weekly Radio Segment: Partners in Caregiving every Thursday soon after 6pm, WBZI—FM 100.3 AM 1500
Also available online: gcco.org/radio