

## **Hebrew Health Care Speakers Bureau Topics**

### **Myths about Memory Loss-**

Does Aspartame cause Alzheimer's? How about aluminum pots and pans? Can doing crossword puzzles prevent it? Is it a normal part of aging? As awareness about memory loss and Alzheimer's disease increases, more myths and partial-truths have confused the public than ever before. Find out what we really know about the aging brain and Alzheimer's, and current research theories on causes and treatments for this devastating disease.

### **Strategies for Maintaining a Healthy Memory-**

No one can remember each little detail of every experience in her lifetime. Our brains are actually designed to forget! But what level of forgetfulness is normal, and are there ways to maximize brain function? This workshop will provide practical strategies to keep memory sharp, as well as to recognize problems that hinder memory function. Presented with humor and essential self-care tips, participants will gain fundamental information for maintaining a healthy memory.

### **Stages of Memory Disorders-**

This workshop reviews the stages of cognitive, behavioral and functional change associated with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. The brief Cognitive Rating Scale (BCRS), the Functional Assessment Staging Tool (FAST) and the Global Deterioration Scale (GDS) were developed by Dr. Barry Reisberg and colleagues at NYU. These measures provide some of the best insight when anticipating needs. With this knowledge, carers can help individuals with dementia remain as independent as possible within their stage.

### **Crash Course in Alzheimer's-**

Originally developed for private duty carers, this seminar provides basic information about Alzheimer's disease and related disorders. The content focuses on simplified information about brain changes and typical symptoms people experience such as short term memory loss, sundowning and functional loss. Managing behaviors and the importance of activities is emphasized, along with coping with stress and how to communicate changes.

### **Be a Healthy Caregiver-**

In this workshop, participants learn about the signs of caregiver stress, how to cope with emotions such as guilt and resentment, and the Caregiver Bill of

Rights. Adapting relationships in care giving is reviewed to support caregivers who struggle with new responsibilities. Supportive services and care options are explored.

## **Holiday Survival Tips-**

A once-treasured time of year, the holidays can present challenges for caregivers of people with chronic illness. This seminar reviews some tried and true strategies that other caregivers have developed to cope with changes and emotions. Participants find renewed joy in family gatherings and holiday traditions.

## **Communication Strategies that Work!-**

Do you feel frustrated when a loved one asks you the same question over and over? Does “she’s doing this on purpose” ever run through your mind? This workshop explores how communication abilities change, as well as techniques to improve interaction with persons with dementia. You can enhance your personal relationship with these simple steps to improve communication.

## **Successful Management of Challenging Behaviors”-**

Since behavior modification usually does not work when someone has dementia, managing behaviors is especially challenging. Finding the meaning of the behavior is an essential concept. No matter the care setting, the model presented in this workshop will guide you to minimize behavior problems and encourage positive interactions.

## **Reality Orientation vs. Validation Approaches-**

“Mrs. Smith, I don’t think your parents are alive since you are 97 years old!” We used to teach carers to use reality orientation, but found that these sorts of statements left confused people in tears, traumatized or less trusting of their carers. Validation approaches help carers identify the underlying emotion by stepping away for a logic perspective, to enter the world of the person with dementia. Simple strategies help carers enhance self-esteem and build trust, while helping a confused person feel more safe and comfortable.

## **Humor as a Coping Strategy-**

“A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a downcast spirit dries up the bones.” (Prov. 17:22). The effects of caregiver stress and burnout are well documented. It is also well known that humor is an effective coping strategy and can actually improve emotional and physiological health. Many people dealing

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with Alzheimer's disease are concerned that humor may not be appropriate, or might be harmful to individuals with dementia or their stressed out caregivers. This presentation will address how and why it is essential for Alzheimer's caregivers to develop a lighthearted perspective and how they can integrate humor into their lives.

## **The Continuum of Care: Options for Older Adults in Connecticut-**

As the cohort of "elderly" changes, the needs for care settings have also seen incredible change. In past decades, older adults had few options if they needed care: nursing home or home care (if it was available in their area). This workshop reviews care options for older adults in Connecticut, including regional availability, funding sources and how to determine what care is needed.

## **10 Keys to Successful Aging**

It is a well-known fact that America is becoming increasingly dominated by older Americans. What is less clear is what the quality of life will be for these older people—that is, how successfully they—and we—will age. Quality of life can vary greatly from individual to individual, and often depends largely on how prepared and willing someone is to face his or her own aging. Learn ways in which you can help people you love—and yourself—to live successfully at any age.

## **Choosing a Long Term Care Facility**

It's not an easy decision. No one wakes up in the morning and says "I want to go live in a nursing home." But sometimes, frail older adults, and their families, have to make this tough choice because it is the best way for them to continue to live safely, and receive the care and supports they need. So, how do you choose the right place for yourself, or for your mother, father, uncle, brother? There are many different long term settings available today; and there are good tools available to help choose the one that will best meet your needs.

## **A Place to Call Home**

**Home.** Few words can summon stronger feelings than the simple word "home." All of us strive to make our homes safe, comfortable, reassuring and pleasant. But as we age, our needs may change; and the place we have called "home" may no longer meet those needs. Knowing what you need to consider in making your home right for you, places to go for help, planning for the long term future of your aging, rather than the short term, fitting your planning into your financial capabilities—all of these things will help assure that your home will continue to

be a haven for you.

## **Strategic vs. Reaction Planning**

We talk about “knee-jerk reactions” in a negative way, and most of us understand that, when it comes to our professional and personal lives proactively planning and anticipating will make us more successful than simply reacting, or “waiting to see.” But how do we break the cycle of reaction and become more strategic in the way we live our lives—professionally or personally? Learn some tools to help you do just that—and to take better control of your work environment and/or your personal life.

## **Long Term Care Across the Continuum—it’s More Than a Nursing Home**

It used to be that when age and frailty made it hard for people to manage on their own; their only choice was “the old folk’s home.” No more. Today, there are 21<sup>st</sup> century options for services and supports that can help people live successfully in their communities longer, and with better quality of life, than ever before. In this presentation, people will learn what a “continuum of care” really is, and how to gain access to needed services.

## **Re-Creating Relationships with Your Aging Parent**

How many times have we heard adult children say “it feels like I’m the mother now to my mom now”? As our parents age, we often find ourselves taking on more and more responsibilities for helping to meet their needs, and falling into a parental role with the people who raised us. How can we avoid losing the relationship we had in light of changing roles? How can we improve relationships that were troubled, now that we are grown, and our parents look to us for support? Who can help us with these difficult issues? These and other questions central to changing relationships with aging parents will be explored.

## **Steps to Healthy Eating**

Eating for good health and still enjoying mealtime is a challenge for many seniors. “Steps to Healthy Eating” will outline some ideas to help make good choices each day to help in controlling high blood pressure, heart conditions, diabetes and managing your weight. We will look at nutrients we all need more of (fiber!) and things to watch out for (too many calories).