



Finding the Balance -

January 2012

Caring for Yourself As You Care for Others

Living a Well-Balanced Life

Finding your balance is not always easy. Many of us are juggling too many things—family life, work, caregiving, our own health and well-being. We are always in motion, practicing some fancy footwork, trying to keep everything rolling along while constantly juggling what must be done and what you like to do.

The challenge is to maintain the balance that brings you peace of mind and the ability to accomplish what needs to be done. We know what it feels like when we've lost that delicate balance. Many of us have experienced the physical and emotional consequences. Overload. Burnout. Stress. Illness. Tears and more tears.

As the new year begins me might resolve to live a well-balanced life. This gift to ourselves in turn benefits those relying on us for friendship, care and love.

Here are a few tips for a well-balanced life:

1. **Take care of yourself (Note—this is #1!)**

Ignoring your own health and needs is a risk to your own well-being. How well can you care for someone else if you are stressed-out, burnt-out and ill? Start the new year by giving yourself permission to nurture yourself. Try to eat well and get some exercise. Be sure to keep your own medical appointments. And don't forget to allow yourself those "daily pleasures" - be it reading, taking a walk, listening to music, or soaking in a long hot bath.

2. **Know your priorities**

One day you find you have too many things to juggle, you drop a ball or two, and suddenly it all comes crashing down. Let's just admit we can't do everything—especially all on our own. What is important to you? What needs to be done? And what do you want to do? What can you let go of? Do you need to set your boundaries? How can you get help?

3. **Expect the unexpected**

Caregivers know firsthand how life can change in a flash. Life by its very nature is uncontrollable. Schedules and plans help us navigate through most days. But there are always bumps in the road, and having a back-up plan is helpful. Try not to stress out and get upset over those minor jolts. Learn to roll

The key to keeping your balance is knowing when you've lost it.
Anonymous



Central Vermont
Council on Aging
(CVCOA)
Senior Helpline
1-800-642-5119
www.cvcoa.org

If you prefer to receive your newsletter by email or you would like to be removed from the mailing list, please contact:
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802/ 476-2671

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Worried about your elder eating lunch when you aren't home to prepare it? Try home-delivered meals, also known as Meals on Wheels.



For more info, call our Senior Helpline at 1-800-642-5119 or your local senior center. Or visit the center and enjoy a hot meal and company!

Alzheimer's Awareness Day at the Statehouse on January 20th
8 am - 2 pm

The Governor's Commission on Alzheimer's Disease is seeking caregivers who would like to share their stories and challenges. If interested in attending or presenting to the legislature, contact Martha Richardson, Executive Director of the Vermont Alzheimer's Association at 802-316-3839.

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with the punches when the uncontrollable events happen—be it a burned dinner or the repairman who doesn't show up on time. Easier said than done, but if we take it in stride its better for our well-being.

However, serious crises happen—your loved one's health takes a serious change, you lose your job, you face a financial blow. The crisis needs to be faced and there may be no “rolling with the punches.” And it can sap your time and energy. But you still need perspective and balance.

4. **Adopt a positive mindset**

Begin each day with intention to make the most of it. Remind yourself you are doing the best you can. Don't beat yourself up when things don't go well. Holding on to anger or harboring negative feelings hurts more than it helps. Fix what can be fixed, apologize where necessary, and let the rest flow away.

5. **Refer back to # 1. And consider using some of the programs and services listed in this newsletter. Commit to finding your balance.**

(This article is adapted from <http://essentiallifskills.net/wellbalancedlife.html>)

Looking to Hire Some Help?

Have you decided it's time to hire some help to provide respite, personal care or homemaker services? Here are some resources to aid you in your search:



- **Homecare Providers List**—a list of private agencies and home health agencies that provide service in the towns served by CVCOA. This list can be found on our website at <http://www.cvcoa.org/in-home-help.html>. While agencies charge a higher hourly rate than someone you hire directly, background checks have usually been conducted.
- **Vermont Direct Care Worker Registry**—an online listing of individuals you can hire directly. The registry is sponsored by the State of Vermont. The Registry can be found at <http://www.rewardingwork.org/State-Resources/Vermont.aspx>. First time users need to set up an account. Where it asks for payment, click on “free account with password” and enter 123856. Families are responsible for interviewing and hiring. There are links to helpful tips on hiring paid caregivers as well as to the proper state agency to conduct background checks.

If you don't have internet access or need help finding these resources, call the Senior Helpline at 1-800-642-5119.

One kind word can warm three winter months. — Japanese Proverb



CVCOA Will REACH OUT to Dementia Caregivers

CVCOA has received a grant to offer REACH OUT, a home-based support program for adults caring for a loved one with dementia. This is a research proven way of helping caregivers and we're most excited about the opportunity to help those caring for their loved ones with dementia.

Case managers will provide home and phone visits over a 6-month period that will focus on:

- ◆ Education about dementia, caregiving & stress
- ◆ Home safety
- ◆ Caregiver health
- ◆ Relaxation
- ◆ Coping with dementia behaviors
- ◆ Enhancing social support



Caregivers will work with case managers to identify problems and to learn problem-solving techniques. Together they will create action plans to resolve those problems. **Caregivers who have participated in REACH OUT have reported a reduction in stress and depression.**

For more information call Jeanne Kern, CVCOA Family Caregiver Support, at 476-2671.

The Basics: Memory Loss, Dementia, and Alzheimer's Disease

This free workshop sponsored by CVCOA is for anyone who would like to know more about Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

The workshop's information includes:

- Symptoms of Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia
- How Alzheimer's effects the brain
- Causes and risk factors
- How to find out if it's Alzheimer's disease
- Stages of the disease
- Treatment
- Hope for the future
- Ways the Alzheimer's Association can help

The Basics will be held at the Greater Randolph Senior Center, 6 Hale Street, on Monday, March 26, 1:00 - 3:00 pm. Anyone interested in having lunch at the center before the workshop is encouraged to call 728-9324 for a reservation.

Early Onset Support Group

Project Independence Adult Day Services in Barre offers a support group for family caregivers whose spouse has been affected by dementia, Parkinson's, stroke or other disease or disability at an early age. The support group meets the first Monday of the month at 4:30 pm. Next meeting is February 1st. For more information contact Carol Griffith at 476-3630.



Need a break from caregiving? Want to take some time for yourself?

CVCOA offers two family caregiver respite grants. Funds may be used to hire substitute care, including personal care, companionship or home-maker services, or pay for adult day services.

Dementia Respite Grant offers up to \$1000. The person being cared for must have a physician's diagnosis of Alzheimer's or other progressive dementia, live in the CVCOA service area, & be financially eligible.

Family Caregiver Respite Grant offers up to \$500. The person being cared for must be 60+, need help with at least two activities of daily living, & live in the CVCOA service area.

For more information & to apply, contact the Senior Helpline at 1-800-642-5119 or visit our website at www.cvcoa.org



Family Caregiver Support Program
59 N. Main Street, Suite 200
Barre, Vermont 05641

Senior Helpline 1-800-642-5119 **Central Vermont Council on Aging - Options for Seniors & Caregivers**



CVCOA Offers Powerful Tools for Caregivers

Are you helping a parent, spouse or friend? Are you raising your grandchildren? Are you caring for someone who lives at home or with you, in a nursing home, or across country? **Powerful Tools for Caregivers** is for you.

Powerful Tools is an educational series designed to provide you with the tools you need to take care of yourself. This program helps family caregivers reduce stress, improve self-confidence, communicate feelings better, balance their lives, increase their ability to make tough decisions and locate helpful resources.

Classes consist of six sessions held once a week. Interactive lessons, discussions and brainstorming will help you take the “tools” you choose and put them into action for your life.

You will receive a copy of *The Caregiver Helpbook*, developed specifically for the class. A donation of \$20 to help defray the cost of the book is suggested but not required to attend the class.

For more information or to register, contact Jeanne Kern at jkern@cvcoa.org or 802-476-2671. Class size is limited and pre-registration is required.

Feeling stretched
as a caregiver?

Join us for
Powerful Tools
for Caregivers

Wednesdays,
February 1 - March 7
3:00 - 4:30 pm

CVCOA office in Barre