



Caregiver News – 8/2022



9 Strategies to Help a Parent Who Refuses Care

Elizabeth Pope

<https://www.care.com/c/stories/5583/strategies-parents-who-refuse-care/>

Start by prioritizing problems, taking it slow and accepting your limits when it comes to helping a loved one age well.

Your mother resists in-home helpers, insisting you can wait on her. Your frail father won't stop driving. Your aunt denies the need for a personal care aide, in spite of her unwashed hair and soiled clothes. Your grandmother refuses to move to an assisted living facility "because it's full of old people."

Sound familiar? Nothing is harder for a family caregiver than an elder loved one who refuses needed help. "This is one of the most common and difficult caregiving challenges that adult kids face," says Donna Cohen, Ph.D. a clinical psychologist and author of "The Loss of Self: A Family Resource for the Care of Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders."

Before pushing your mother too hard to accept help, try to understand her fears about aging, says Cohen: "Many older people see themselves as proud survivors. They think 'I've been through good times and bad, so I'll be fine on my own.' Plus, they don't believe their children understand the physical and emotional toll of age-related declines."

A senior in the early stages of cognitive impairment may be the most difficult to deal with. "Your angry father or agitated mother is aware of this miserable change in their brain they don't quite understand," Cohen adds. Calm reassurance will help them cope with a frightening loss of function.

It's normal for family caregivers to experience rage, helplessness, frustration and guilt while trying to help an intransigent older loved one, says Barbara Kane, co-author of "Coping with Your Difficult Older Parent: A Guide for Stressed-Out Children." "You may revert to the same coping mechanisms you had during adolescent power struggles with your parent – screaming, yelling or running out of the room," she says. "You need to understand what parental behaviors trigger your emotional response and realize you have other choices." (Kane advises considering seeing a therapist yourself if necessary to deal with a difficult parent.)

Here are nine strategies to help you overcome the objections of a recalcitrant loved one:



This program is supported by Senior Resources – Agency on Aging with Title III funds made available under the Older American's Act.

- 1. Start Early** – Ideally, families have relaxed conversations about caregiving long before a health crisis. Look for opportunities to ask questions like, “Mom, where do you see yourself getting older?” or “How would you feel about hiring a housekeeper or driver so you could stay home?”
- 2. Be Patient** – Ask open-ended questions and give your loved one time to answer, says Care.com Senior Care advisor Mary Stehle, LCSW. “You can say, ‘Dad, what’s it like to take care of Mom 24 hours a day?’” It may take several conversations to discover the reason your mother, a meticulous housekeeper, has fired five aides in a row simply because they neglected to vacuum under the dining room table.
- 3. Probe Deeply** – Ask questions to determine why an elder refuses help – then you can tailor a solution, Kane says. “Is it about a lack of privacy, fears about the cost of care, losing independence or having a stranger in the house?” says Kane. To build trust, listen with empathy, and validate rather than deny your loved one’s feelings.
- 4. Offer Options** – If possible, include your parent in interviews or in setting schedules when hiring in-home care, says Stehle. Let them choose certain days of the week or times of the day to have a home health aide come. Emphasize an aide will be a companion for walks, concerts, museum visits and other favorite activities.
- 5. Recruit Outsiders Early** – “Sometimes it’s easier for a parent to talk to a professional rather than a family member,” says Cohen. Don’t hesitate to ask a social worker, a doctor or nurse, a priest or minister – even an old poker buddy – to suggest your parent needs help.
- 6. Prioritize Problems** – Make two lists, says Cohen, one for your loved one’s problems and another for the steps you’ve already taken – and where to get more help. “If you don’t categorize your efforts, caregiving becomes this huge weight,” says Cohen. Writing down and numbering by priority can relieve a lot of stress.
- 7. Use Indirect Approaches** – If your father has dementia, offering less information may be more effective at times, suggests Stehle. “You could let your parent know the aide is someone very helpful who can take your father on walks, fix him meals, and help him throughout the day. You don’t need to explain every aspect of care the aide will provide before the relationship has been formed. This may make your loved one feel less threatened.”
- 8. Take it Slow** – Weave a new aide in gradually, says Kane. Start with short home visits or meet for coffee, then bring the aide along to the doctor’s a few weeks later. “You leave early on some pretext, letting the aide accompany your parent home.”
- 9. Accept Your Limits** – As long as seniors are not endangering themselves or others, let them make their own choices, says Cohen. “You can’t be at your parent’s side all the time. Bad things can happen, and you can’t prevent them,” she says. “You need to accept limits on what you can accomplish and not feel guilty.” It may sound unfeeling, but maybe going a day or two without meals is just the reality check an elder needs to welcome a badly needed helping hand.



Sip in Summer



Our mission is to provide access to information and service to empower adults to live with dignity. We are a private non-profit organization serving 56 towns in Eastern Connecticut.

Some of our services include:

Connecticut's program for Health insurance assistance, Outreach, Information and referral, Counseling and Eligibility Screening (CHOICES), Enhanced Benefits Checkup and Benefits Enrollment Centers, Caregiver Respite and Supplemental Services, Statewide Respite Care Program (for Alzheimer's and other dementias), Veterans Directed Home and Community Based Services Program, Multi-disciplinary M-Teams, Money Follows the Person (MFP) Nursing Home Transition Coordinators, Congregate Housing Resident Services Coordination, Chronic Disease and Diabetes Self-Management Programs (Live Well!), Senior Living Expos, Nutrition Education and More!

We are mostly water!

Water is a key element and the largest constituent of the human body, averaging about 60% of body weight. As we get older, body water content decreases, the risk for dehydration increases, and the consequences become more serious:

- Water supports normal metabolism
- Water is the main ingredient in blood
- Water carries out wastes by the kidneys
- Water regulates body temperature
- Hydration reduces risk of kidney stones & urinary tract infections
- Adequate hydration maintains healthy cognitive function and mood



How much is enough?

Fluid needs vary from day to day and person to person. The general recommendation for fluids is at least 6 to 8 cups or 48 to 64 ounces daily. If you are losing excess fluids through sweat or urine due to illness, exercise/physical activity or diuretic use (water pill), your fluid needs are increased. Rule of thumb: drink 4 ounces every 15 to 20 minutes during periods of excess loss.

Focus on drinking small, frequent amounts of fluid throughout the day rather than waiting to feel thirsty. Water is the best option for hydration, but any fluids (except alcohol) count towards the daily requirement.

Key to Survival

The maintenance of a correct water balance is essential to good health. Since there is no way to store water in the body, the water we lose needs to be replaced, and humans cannot survive more than a few days without water.



One simple way to enjoy water is with fruit infused water. Not only does pretty fruit floating around in your glass make sipping away all day a feast for the eyes (and belly), but then number of health benefits are astounding. Here are a few refreshing ideas that taste great, look great, and make you feel even better. Or be creative and make up your own. Enjoy!



CONNECTICUT PARK PASSES

Connecticut residents are no longer required to pay a parking fee at CT State Parks and Forest recreation areas. Therefore, we no longer sell Season Park passes for CT registered vehicles.

CHARTER OAK PASS (LIFE USE)

The Charter Oak Pass provides access to several State Parks and is available free to Connecticut residents, 65 years of age or older.

The pass is accepted for the Charter Oak pass holder when visiting Gillette Castle, Dinosaur or **Fort Trumbull** State Parks. All other visitors, however, will be required to pay the appropriate fee.

Please note that each pass is issued to a specific person and can only be used when presented by that individual. The passes are non-transferable. They are not valid for camping or special events having separate admission charges and may not be used for commercial purposes.

A Charter Oak Pass may be obtained in person at the following locations (Proof of age and residency required):

| Western Connecticut | Eastern Connecticut |
|---|--|
| DEEP State Parks Division 79 Elm Street, Hartford Monday-Friday 9:00-3:00 860-424-3200 | DEEP Eastern District H.Q. 209 Hebron Road, Marlborough Monday-Friday 9:00-3:00 860-295-9523 |
| DEEP Western District H.Q. 230 Plymouth Road, Harwinton Monday-Friday 9:00-3:00 860-485-0226 | DEEP Marine Headquarters 333 Ferry Road, Old Lyme Monday-Friday 8:00-4:00 860-434-6148 |
| Dinosaur State Park West Street, Rocky Hill 9:00-4:30 Closed Mondays 860-529-5816 | Fort Griswold Battlefield St. Park Park Avenue, Groton (Memorial Day through Labor Day) Wednesday-Sunday 9:00-5:00 860-445-1729 |
| Sherwood Island State Park Summer Months Only at Ticket Booth Exit 18 off I-95, Westport Monday-Friday 8:00-Sunset 203-226-6983 | Harkness Memorial State Park 275 Great Neck Road, Waterford Monday-Friday 9:00-3:00 860-443-5725 |
| | Hammonasset Beach State Park 1288 Boston Post Road, Madison P.O. Box 271 Monday-Friday 9:00-3:00 203-245-2785 |

To obtain a Charter Oak Pass by mail:

Send a LEGIBLE photocopy of your current CT drivers license or other legal proof of age and residency to:

DEEP Charter Oak Pass
State Parks Division
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106-5127
Phone: 860-424-3200

CONNECTICUT PARK PASSES

Connecticut residents are no longer required to pay a parking fee at CT State Parks and Forest recreation areas. Therefore, we no longer sell Season Park passes for CT registered vehicles.

DISABLED VETERANS PASS (LIFE USE)

The Disabled Veterans Pass provides access to the State Parks and Forests listed below, and is available free to Connecticut residents who have a service connected disability.

The pass is accepted for the Disabled Veteran Pass holder when visiting Gillette Castle, Dinosaur or Fort Trumbull State Parks. All other visitors, however, will be required to pay the appropriate fee.

Please note that each pass is issued to a specific person and can only be used when presented by that individual. The passes are non-transferable. They are not valid for camping or special events having separate admission charges and may not be used for commercial purposes.

A Disabled Veteran Pass may be obtained in person at the following locations (Proof of residency and service connected disability status required):

| Western Connecticut | Eastern Connecticut |
|---|--|
| DEEP State Parks Division 79 Elm Street, Hartford Monday-Friday 9:00-3:00 860-424-3200 | DEEP Eastern District H.Q. 209 Hebron Road, Marlborough Monday-Friday 9:00-3:00 860-295-9523 |
| DEEP Western District H.Q. 230 Plymouth Road, Harwinton Monday-Friday 9:00-3:00 860-485-0226 | DEEP Marine Headquarters 333 Ferry Road, Old Lyme Monday-Friday 8:00-4:00 860-434-6148 |
| Dinosaur State Park West Street, Rocky Hill 9:00-4:30 Closed Mondays 860-529-5816 | Fort Griswold Battlefield St. Park Park Avenue, Groton (Memorial Day through Labor Day) Wednesday-Sunday 9:00-5:00 860-445-1729 |
| Kellogg Environmental Center Office of Communications and Education 500 Hawthorne Avenue, Derby Tuesday-Saturday 9:00-4:30 203-734-2513 | Fort Trumbull State Park 90 Wallbach Street, New London (Memorial Day through Labor Day) Wednesday-Sunday 9:00 – 5:00 860-444-7591 |
| | Harkness Memorial State Park 275 Great Neck Road, Waterford Monday-Friday 9:00-3:00 860-443-5725 |
| | Hammonasset Beach State Park 1288 Boston Post Road, Madison P.O. Box 271 Monday-Friday 9:00-3:00 203-245-2785 |

To obtain a Disabled Verteran Pass by mail:

Send a LEGIBLE photocopy of your current CT drivers license or other legal proof of residency AND your VA card or VA Benefits Letter indicating a service connected disability to:

DEEP Disabled Veteran Pass, State Park Division
79 Elm Street, Hartford, CT 06106-5127

For more information please call 860-424-3200.



Free COVID- 19 Vaccination Clinic
Ages 6 mos. & up
1st dose, 2nd dose, & Boosters

Saturday, July 30th
11:00am-4:00pm
Marcus Plaza/Shoprite
Plaza
624 W. Main ST- Norwich

WALK-INS WELCOME, NO APPOINTMENT REQUIRED

Please bring a health insurance card and photo ID if you have them, but it is **not necessary** to have health insurance or ID to receive the vaccine. No one will be turned away for lack of insurance or ID .



**GRIFFIN
HEALTH**

Mobile MAT Van



Monthly in Jewett City

2nd Tuesday: 10am-Noon

4th Tuesday: 2-4pm

Roving Main Street

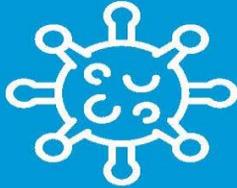
*For more information:
text/call 860-336-9412*

Available Services:

- Easy Access to Suboxone Treatment
 - Wound Care Kits
- Overdose Prevention Resources & Materials [Fentanyl test strips, safe(r) use kits & more]
 - Narcan Kits & Training
 - Safe Sex Supplies
- Linkage to Recovery Support(s) [housing, clothing, employment, transportation food, etc.]
- Treatment Referrals [detox, IOP, Methadone, etc.]
 - Peer Support Services



Stop The Spread



1

Wear A Mask

Keep the covering on your face while out in public.



2

Stay 6 Feet Apart

Keep space between yourself and everyone...everyone.



3

Wash Your Hands

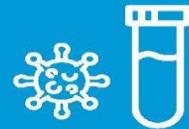
Scrub hands with soap and water for at least twenty seconds.



4

Get Tested

Even if you have no symptoms, testing helps stop the spread.



www.ct.gov/coronavirus



We hope you find this month's edition of our Caregiver of Children newsletter informative.

Senior Resources currently produces a monthly caregiver of children newsletter. We are looking for feedback on any ideas you may have for future editions.

Please contact Sally Huck with any ideas/suggestions or if you wish to be removed from our mailing list.

Sally Huck: SHuck@seniorresourcesec.org or 860 887-3561 x 126.

To read previous editions of this newsletter please visit:
www.SeniorResourcesEC.org/stay-informed/grandparent-newsletter