



Special Holiday Edition *Here for you during the holidays*

2022

Dear Caregiver,

Hello!

Holidays aren't joyful for everyone. When you're a caregiver, struggling to cope with losses, changes, and expectations, holidays can be especially stressful. Explore this special holiday issue of our newsletter for tips, article, quick and easy holiday dinner recipes, a five minute relaxation/meditation video (it's really soothing), and of course, the caregiver resources that ElderSource offers.



I welcome your feedback about this issue and your content suggestions for future issues.

I can be reached at Rachel.Weinstein@MyElderSource.org. Please know that, in what can be an isolating and lonely experience as a caregiver, support is available through ElderSource and within the community. We are here to help you and to connect you to that support. Thank you for ALL you do every day!

*Rachel Weinstein, M.S.Ed.
Community Outreach and Coalition Coordinator*

Getting through the holidays can be a full-time job

Here come the holidays!

As a caregiver, you might be experiencing mixed emotions. Happy memories of the past can be accompanied by worries about the extra demands that holidays bring to your time and energy. The holidays can still



be meaningful and enriching times for the whole family. For your family member living with Alzheimer's, modifying cherished family traditions can be reassuring and enjoyable. By adapting family traditions, you will help all family members feel a sense of belonging and connection. Here are some ways to take care of yourself during the holidays:

Tip #1

Reduce Stress - Be Realistic About your Abilities and Responsibilities

- Identify, set, and communicate your boundaries with others.
- Ask for help with chores and tasks when needed.
- Schedule breaks. Visit with other family members while allowing your person living with dementia to do the same.
- Give yourself permission to take some time off from caregiving.
- It's okay to say "no." You don't need to attend every social invitation.

Tip #2

Prepare your Family Member with Dementia for Holiday Activities

- Talk about and show photos of family members who will be visiting and familiarize them with anyone new who might be providing care during this time.
- Play familiar seasonal music and serve favorite holiday foods.
- Schedule down time.

Tip #3

Prepare Other Family Members

- Help manage expectations by educating visitors about the impact of dementia.
- Provide tips and suggestions to help improve communication.
- Stress that the meaningfulness of moments spent together matter more than what the person remembers or says.

Tip #4

Adapt Traditions

- Have gatherings in a familiar location and at time that is best for your person living with dementia.
- Limit the number of people present and meet smaller groups at different times.
- Stick to a schedule for gatherings.
- Plan for activities that everyone will enjoy and can participate in.

Tip #5

Holidays at Home

- Keep an area that is quiet, calming, and contains your person's favorite snack and drinks.
- Avoid confusing items like artificial food, edible decorations, etc.
- Keep decorations simple. Avoid flashing lights and decorations that make a lot of noise.
- Run through a safety checklist. Remove throw rugs, clutter, and cords on the floor.



Need some calm? Try just 5 minutes of "Mindfulness Meditation" . Ahhhhh!



Time is precious when you're a caregiver.

Check out these 55 Last-Minute Christmas Dinner Ideas!

[Click Here for Time-Saving Recipes](#)

Many of us are feeling financial strain in this economy. Fortunately, the greater Jacksonville area offers some fantastic events at no charge

[Click Here to View Free Holiday Events](#)



Words of wisdom from a caregiver about surviving the holidays...

Caregiver Survival Tips for the Holidays

By Lisa J. Shultz

I have been taking care of one parent or the other for many years now. I find the holidays stressful in and of themselves. But as a caregiver, the holiday season can seem particularly difficult. Navigating the holidays puts more work on an already exhausting list of responsibilities. Holidays also bring up grief as memories surface of a previous Thanksgiving or Christmas where my dad was still alive or my mom was vibrant. Each of my parents made fabulous meals in the past. Now I must be the one to put a celebration together and I've realized I can't be both a fabulous hostess and family caregiver. I would like to share with fellow caregivers a few tricks I have tried or want to try in the future to ease the holiday season in regards to food.

1. Don't try to do it all. Many grocery stores offer to bake the turkey and pumpkin pie for you. You can also order side dishes to go with it. Perhaps let the grocer do the majority of the work this year!
2. Accept an invitation to eat at someone else's house. You may only be asked to bring one dish to share.
3. Find a restaurant that is open for that holiday and make a reservation.
4. If your loved one is at an assisted living facility, eat your meal there together.
5. Eat something totally different than you usually do such as Chinese food. This choice might be a temporary break in your routine or the beginning of a new tradition.
6. Take a night or trip away from home around the holidays. This excursion might be for you alone to replenish your energy or you may include the family for a special get-away or meal together. Some hotels decorate beautifully at Christmastime.
7. Just skip a special meal this year. Head to the movie theater and enjoy a film.

And here are a few suggestions to consider if you are feeling overwhelmed:

1. Christmas cards-It is okay to just send out an email blast instead or skip a year.
2. Take a break on gifts or just buy a few gift cards and hand them out. Let the family know that you aren't shopping this year and want to keep it super simple.
3. Enjoy an experience such as a play, concert or special dinner with friends and family instead of gift giving.
4. If you like parties, go. But if it seems too much, politely decline and let the hostess know that you appreciate the invitation and hope to join them next year.
5. Treat yourself to a spa day or massage as a gift to yourself!
6. Curate your decorations to keep it simple. Perhaps it is time to give

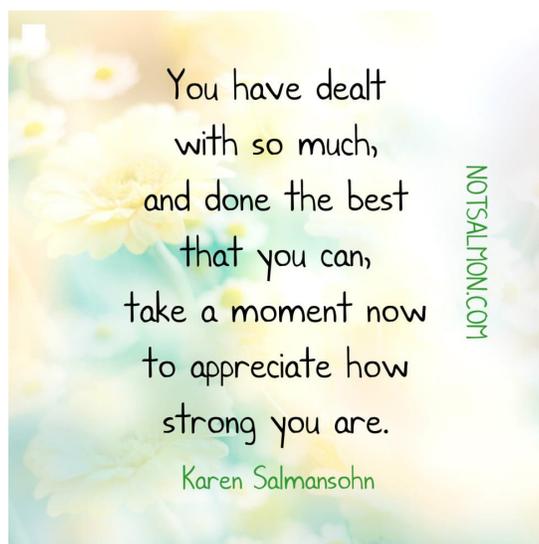
some away, or don't decorate. Just visit a mall or lights display and leave the decorations in their boxes this year.

7. Breathe and have faith that you don't have to do it all or do it all the way you always have. It is okay to begin new traditions and create new memories.

Lisa J. Shultz is the author of *Chance to Say Goodbye: Reflections on Losing a Parent* and *Lighter Living: Declutter. Organize. Simplify.*

“To the world, you may be one person,
but to one person you may be the world.” — Dr. Seuss

For all you do as a caregiver...



Don't Forget!

**ElderSource has many resources to support you as a caregiver.
Take a look below to find one that's right for you.**



**TCARE IS A FREE PROGRAM TO
SUPPORT CAREGIVER BURNOUT**

Thanks to a generous grant from the Florida Blue Foundation, ElderSource now offers a new caregiver support program called TCARE, which stands for **Tailored Caregiver Assessment and Referral System Program**. How can TCARE help?

- Reduces your stress and provides strategies for reducing root causes of caregiver burnout.
- Creates a care plan just for you that offers support and improves your effectiveness as a caregiver.
- Connects you with resources that best meets your needs.

- Promotes aging in place and may delay nursing home placement for your loved one.

To Learn More Call: 904-391-6621

Email: caregiversupport@myeldersource.org

or

Visit: ElderSourceTailoredCare.com

[Support Resources](#)

Virtual Caregiver Support Group



Virtual Caregiver Support Group

ElderSource hosts a Virtual Caregiver Support Group making it possible for caregivers to connect face-to-face in real time with other caregivers using today's technology.

Any caregiver living in Northeast Florida can sign up; however the group will be focused on those who feel they cannot leave their loved one to attend a support group but would benefit

from participating in one.

[Click here to learn more or to register!](#)



24/7 Helpline

The Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline is available around the clock. Through this free service, specialists and master's-level clinicians offer confidential support and information to people living with the disease, caregivers, families and the public.

[Click here to visit alz.org for more resources.](#)



The Caregiver Space

A community forum created by and for caregivers in any circumstance. Join the Facebook groups specific to your

caregiving situation to receive daily support and encouragement from other caregivers.

TheCaregiverSpace.org

