



Re-Membering Matters at Mille Lacs

Like Us on



## Caregiver's Coping with Alzheimer's

Re-Membering Matters at Mille Lacs has been working on bringing awareness to northern Mille Lacs communities and educating the community to help lessen the stigma that surrounds Alzheimer's and other dementia related diseases. Another area the ACTion team has been working on is bringing awareness for caregiver support and local resources available in our community.

Re-Membering Matters at Mille Lacs put together an area resource brochure that has been distributed throughout the communities. The brochure may also be found on the Mille Lacs ACT on Alzheimer's community page at [www.actonalz.org/mille\\_lacs](http://www.actonalz.org/mille_lacs).

An organization in the Mille Lacs area that offers advocacy, resources, information and referral is Family Pathways. This organization offers caregiver support and connects individuals and families to the resources and support that are available in the local area. You can reach the Mora Family Pathways Senior Services Coordinator at 320-364-1115. Family Pathways, Anita Sparks, Caregiver Consultant, welcomes your questions and works closely with area agencies and other organizations to guide you to the assistance you need in resources. Anita is a notary assisting those in needing Health Care Directives and Power of Attorneys. Some caregiver tips Anita would like to share:

Symptoms of Caregiver Stress:

- Denial, Anger, Social withdrawal, Anxiety, Depression, Exhaustion, Sleeplessness, Irritability, Lack of concentration, Health problems

Alzheimer's Association. Take care of yourself: 10 ways to be a healthier caregiver. Available at:

[http://www.alz.org/national/documents/brochure\\_caregiverstress.pdf](http://www.alz.org/national/documents/brochure_caregiverstress.pdf)

10 Ways to Cope with Behavior Changes

- Remain flexible, patient and calm
- Explore pain as a trigger
- Respond to the emotion, not the behavior
- Don't argue or try to convince
- Use memory aids
- Acknowledge requests, and respond tot hem
- Look for reasons behind each behavior
- Consult a geriatrician (to identify causes related to medications or illness)
- Don't take the behavior personally
- Share your experiences with others

Behaviors: What causes dementia-related behavior like aggression, and how to respond. Alzheimer's Association. Available at:

[http://www.alz.org/national/documents/brochure\\_behaviors.pdf](http://www.alz.org/national/documents/brochure_behaviors.pdf)

10 Steps to Combat Caregiver Burden:

- Recognize behavior
- Seek community resources
- Become an educated caregiver
- Find support
- Proper care
- Manage stress level
- Learn to accept change
- Support yourself
- Make regular doctor visits

Take care of yourself: 10 ways to be a healthy caregiver, Alzheimer's Association. Available at:

[http://www.alz.org/national/documents/brochure\\_caregiverstress.pdf](http://www.alz.org/national/documents/brochure_caregiverstress.pdf)

## Taking Action:

Re-Membering Matters at Mille Lacs ACT on Alzheimer's action team has received a grant extension from January 1 through March 31, 2016. The team will continue with Community Education Presentations, Dementia Friends Training and focus on making area businesses more dementia friendly through the Dementia Friendly @ Work training created by ACT on Alzheimer's. This 30-minute training is an educational session for staff of business and service organizations and all other community settings. The training focuses on understanding dementia and taking action to create an environment that is safe, respectful, and welcoming for people living with dementia. The Dementia Friendly @ Work training helps organizations heighten their awareness of dementia and equips them to respond warmly and effectively when serving people living with dementia and their care partners. The trainings will take place at the place of business at a time convenient to those interested in becoming a Dementia Friendly business.

A new tool for caregivers will be available. The *Caregiver's Guide to Wandering* is a tool for caregivers to help prepare them with loved ones in case there is a need for a search or rescue. ACT on Alzheimer's has 1000 copies to share with ACT on Alzheimer's communities. Anita Sparks, with Family Pathways, will be receiving some copies as well and hope to get some copies for Kathy Statz's support group.

On March 30th, Gail Kulick and Roger Tramm will be presenting from 1-2 pm in the IREC community room on important financial bank account information for those caring for loved ones, the importance of having a Power of Attorney, Wills, etc. This presentation will take place after Soup & Pie, all are welcome.

## Upcoming Events:

Action Team meeting: Feb. 16<sup>th</sup>  
1:00 pm @ the ROC in Onamia

Action Team meeting: Mar. 15<sup>th</sup>  
1:00 pm @ the ROC in Onamia

## Family Pathways Caregiver Support Group

Tuesdays, February 2 - March 8

Time: 1:00 - 3:30 pm

Place: IREC West Conference Room

- Professionally facilitated
- Exchange ideas and Information
- Share struggles and the demands of care giving
- Learn about resources
- Focuses on caregiver
- Confidential

To register or questions, contact  
Anita Sparks at 320-364-1115 or  
[anitas@familypathways.org](mailto:anitas@familypathways.org)

## Getting Connected:

ACT on Alzheimer's  
<http://www.actonalz.org/>

ACT on Alzheimer's/  
Mille Lacs  
[http://www.actonalz.org/mille\\_lacs](http://www.actonalz.org/mille_lacs)

Alzheimer's Association  
<http://www.alz.org>

Re-Membering Matters at Mille  
Lacs Facebook Page  
<https://www.facebook.com/rememberingmattersatmillelacs>

## **“Telling Others About an Alzheimer Diagnosis**

When you learn that someone you care about has Alzheimer’s, you may hesitate to tell the person that he or she has the disease. You may also have a hard time deciding whether to tell family and friends. Once you are emotionally ready to discuss the diagnosis, how will you break the news? Here are some suggestions for talking about the disease with others.

### **Respect the person’s right to know**

- You may want to protect the person by withholding information. But your loved one is an adult with the right to know the truth. It can be a relief to hear the diagnosis, especially if the person had suspected he or she had Alzheimer’s disease.
- In many cases, people who are diagnosed early are able to participate in important decisions about their healthcare and legal and financial planning.
- While there is no current cure for Alzheimer’s, life will not stop with the diagnosis. There are treatments and services that can make life better for everyone.

### **Plan how to tell the person**

- Talk with doctors, social workers and others who work with people who have Alzheimer’s to plan an approach for discussing the diagnosis.
- Consider a “family conference” to tell the person about the diagnosis. He or she may not remember the discussion, but may remember that people cared enough to come together. You may need to have more than one meeting to cover the details.
- Shape the discussion to fit the person’s emotional state, medical condition and ability to remember and make decisions.
- Pick the best time to talk about the diagnosis. People with Alzheimer’s may be more receptive to new information at different times of the day.
- Don’t provide too much information at once. Listen carefully to the person. They often signal the amount of information they can deal with through their question and reactions. Later, you can explain the symptoms of Alzheimer’s and talk about planning for the future and getting support.

### **Help the person accept the diagnosis**

- The person may not understand the meaning of the diagnosis or may deny it. Accept such reactions and avoid further explanations.
- If they respond well, try providing additional information.
- The person with Alzheimer’s may forget the initial discussion but not the emotion involved. If telling them upsets them, hearing additional details may trigger the same reaction later.

- Reassure your loved one. Express your commitment to help and give support. Let the person know that you will do all you can to keep your lives fulfilling.
- Be open to the person's need to talk about the diagnosis and his or her emotions.
- Look for nonverbal signs of sadness, anger or anxiety. Respond with love and reassurance.
- Encourage the person to join a support group for individuals with memory loss. Your local Alzheimer's Association can help you locate a group. To find an Association near you, please call 1.800.272.3900 or go to [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org).

### Telling family and friends

An Alzheimer diagnosis doesn't only affect the person receiving it. The lives of family members and friends may also drastically change.

- Be honest with family and friends about the person's diagnosis. Explain that Alzheimer's is a brain disease, not a psychological or emotional disorder.
- Share educational materials from the Alzheimer's Association. The more that people learn about the disease, the more comfortable they may feel around the person.
- Invite family to support groups sponsored by your local Alzheimer's Association.
- Realize that some people may drift out of your life, as they may feel uncomfortable around the person or may not want to help provide care.
- Alzheimer's disease can also impact children and teens. Just as with any family member, be honest about the person's diagnosis with the young people in your life. Encourage them to ask questions."

1.800.272.3900 | [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org) © 2007 Alzheimer's Association. All rights reserved. This is an official publication of the Alzheimer's Association but may be distributed by unaffiliated organizations and individuals.  
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Onamia High School NHS members recently participated in a Dementia Friends training sponsored by Re-Membering Matters at Mille Lacs ACT on Alzheimer's action team. A Dementia Friend is someone who participates in a one-hour Dementia Friends session. A Dementia Friend learns a bit about what it's like to live with dementia and then turns that

understanding into action. Anyone of any age can be a Dementia Friend. This group of Dementia Friends will now decide how they want to go forth and take action as a group to help bring awareness to the community. Any one interested hosting a Dementia Friends training may contact Kathy Young at [320-676-1050](tel:320-676-1050).

**ACT on Alzheimer's is a volunteer driven statewide collaboration preparing Minnesota for impacts of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.**



**Action Community contact:**  
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