Stress and the Family Caregiver

GUEST EDITOR'S MESSAGE
Helping Families Cope
Karen Knutson, MSN, MBA, RN

Applying the Stress, Appraisal, and Coping Framework to Geriatric Care Management
by Carmen L. Morano, Ph.D., LCSW and Barbara Morano, MSW, LCSW

Care Management Eases the Emotional Burden of Caregivers with Dementia Relatives in a Retirement Community Setting
Karen Knutson, MSN, MBA, RN

The Professional Care Manager as a Family Caregiver: Blessing or Burden?
Rona S. Bartelstone, BCD, LCSW, CMC, C-ASWCM

Intervening in Financial Exploitation of Vulnerable Adults
Patricia Gross, Ph.D., ABPP-CN, Carolinas Healthcare System
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For many years care managers have been recognized for their pioneering attitude toward family caregiving. As members of a growing professional organization, we can feel good about the work we have done. And as the population ages and more Americans live at a distance, we will increasingly be negotiating services and coordinating care for clients with complex chronic medical conditions at the same time providing emotional support to family caregivers wherever they live.

This issue of the Geriatric Care Management Journal highlights family caregiving. What exactly do family caregivers find stressful? What seems to help? What is it that we do as care managers that is especially important? Selected articles have been chosen to provide more understanding of the complexities of family caregiving. Hopefully you will find new insights and approaches to integrate into your practice.

The first article, “Applying the Stress, Appraisal, and Coping Framework to Geriatric Care Management,” by Carmen Morano and Barbara Morano uses a stress, appraisal, and coping model to provide an excellent theoretical professional framework. The model demonstrates how appraisal of stress and coping have a direct and indirect effect on life satisfaction for the family caregiver. A case study applies the stress model to care management.

The second article “Care Management Eases the Emotional Burden of Caregivers with Dementia Relatives in a Retirement Community Setting” reports results from a descriptive study. Stage 1 of the study, “Better Outcomes for Clients with Dementia in a Retirement Community Setting,” was published in the Fall 2004 issue of the GCM Journal. Findings from stage 2 of the study suggest that care management eases the emotional burden of family caregivers and identifies which activities require the most amount of time and support.

In her article, “The Professional Care Manager as a Family Caregiver: Blessing or Burden,” Rona Bartelstone takes us down the road of professional care manager turned family caregiver. With a deep and genuine understanding, Rona shares the many lessons to be learned from her own caregiving experiences. She implores us as care managers to help caregivers reduce the sense of burden and help find their blessings.

Neuropsychologist Patricia Gross has written a thought provoking article on a growing problem of exploitation as age-associated illnesses often cause frailty and dementia. “Intervening in Financial Exploitation of Vulnerable Adults” describes the financial crimes that are on the up-swing. Older adults have more concentrated wealth than ever before and the victims of financial abuse may have few family or friends. Families want people they can trust. Dr. Gross describes the care manager's role in intervening and assisting the client or the family in obtaining law enforcement and legal assistance. A case study illustrates how the care manager can help.