



# Caregiver's Digest

May is here! It's a beautiful time to celebrate Spring and celebrate moms.

As we move forward together during the coronavirus pandemic, we are reminded that Spring is a time of renewal, a time to try something new. We have a few new tips to stay connected while social distancing and for navigating familial relationships when caregiving.

And, of course, this month we want to salute moms--where would we be without them. Sometimes, when overwhelmed with the challenges in life, we just need to hear comforting words and encouragement to remind us that we will get through this tough time.

We have found some age-old wisdom (and some new ideas) to share.

- **Connecting from a Distance**
- **Working with Family Dynamics**
- **Mother's Sage Advice**
- **May Mind-Crunchers**



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### May Activity Calendar

#### Caring for Yourself while Caring for Someone Else Webinar

**May 6 at 1 pm**

Forum hosted in conjunction with the Alzheimer's Association

#### **Mother's Day - May 10**

Call 714-577-8005 to schedule a call with your loved one.

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## Successful Connections

You may find yourself asking how do you connect with your loved one when you can't be with them? Thanks to technology, this has never been easier! While a quick video chat may seem like a simple fix, when working with memory loss, there are a few things you will need to consider.

1. Schedule phone calls during your loved one's best hours.
2. Be aware of your tone of voice, the emotional content of the conversation and your rhythm.

- Instead of a question, start your conversation by sharing a favored memory. Keep it light.
- Try to match their tone so they feel your empathy.
- State your name or use a nickname they may have used when you were a child.
- Limit each statement to a few words and give them time to search for recognition/answer.

3. On video chats, you can show pictures of family or places to cheer up resident.

- Show pictures to trigger chats about activities or memories.
- Take your loved one on a brief tour of your space to share something new.

## Every Family Has a Story

Families can be our biggest supporters or sometimes our severest critics. When the family has to rally together to care for a loved with Alzheimer's, opinions abound and tensions may increase.

Working through family dynamics can be stressful--especially as it relates to decisions for care. When you need to band together, here are a few things to remember:

- **There is no such thing as a perfect caregiver.** The primary caregiver has the right to the full range of human emotions, and sometimes they are going to be impatient or frustrated.
- **Have a plan, and a backup.** If the primary caregiver does get sick, have a plan for care. (It doesn't hurt to also have a back-up plan to that plan.)
- **Strive for an atmosphere of cooperation within the family.** Communicate with everyone in the family and distribute responsibility equally; don't try to "spare" family members from stress.
- **Listen carefully.** If a family member says hurtful things, listen for the emotion behind the words rather than the words themselves.
- **Remember support is not control.** We can support and encourage our family members, we can't make hard demands and expect everyone to agree.

Ever wish there was a road map to get everyone on the same page?

Daniel Sewell, MD, Professor of Clinical Psychiatry at UC San Diego, shared some potential remedies for navigating challenging family situations at a past Town Hall Forum. Take a look at an [excerpt of his presentation here](#).

Another aspect to consider is how we manage stress during this time of unknowns. Anxiety can put a strain on family communications, the CDC has put together a great resource to help cope during this unprecedented time. [Review the resources here](#).

## Mom's Advice- there's nothing like it

Her little pearls of wisdom seemed to make everything better because they were always filled with love. When we recited it back to our own kids, we really appreciated their healing qualities. Moms have a way of getting to the heart of the matter.

In honor of Mother's Day, we thought we would share with family caregivers some of mom's sound advice.

**Think good thoughts.**

**Don't sweat the small stuff.**

**This too shall pass.**

Do you remember other advice? Please share with us on [Facebook](#).



## **May Mind-Crunchers**

Q: What question can you never answer yes to?

A: Are you asleep yet?

Q: Imagine you're in a room that is filling with water. There are no windows or doors. How do you get out?

A: Stop imagining!

Q: Why do bees hum?

A: Because they don't know the words.

Q: I have branches, but no fruit, trunk or leaves. What am I?

A: A bank

Q: What building has the most stories?

A: The library.

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