



Resourceful Thinking

Vol 20 No 4
July / August 2015

TECHNOLOGY & AGING; AGING IN PLACE

TECHNOLOGY'S IMPACT ON AGING & CAREGIVING

Technology is moving very rapidly! Not so long ago (it seems) we had no Internet. We had no cell phones. Home computers were introduced and became the norm, then came the laptop, then came the I-Pad. Smart phones can do almost anything. Apps for our mobile devices and tablets, web conferencing, telehealth services – Wow!

Podcasts (according to Miriam-Webster) are programs made available in digital format for automatic download over the Internet, and can be video or audio. Educational programs, entertainment programs, books – all types of information are available – at YOUR fingertips. A few examples:

www.blogtalkradio.com,
and www.CareGiving.com.
You can do a search at the App Store on your smart phone. Basic information about podcasts is available at www.howtopodcasttutorial.com/what-is-a-podcast.htm.
And, of course, you can just

Google “podcast” and see what comes up!

Skype and Facetime have given us video capability when communicating with our loved ones. Remote access video cameras enable us to keep an eye on our more dependent care receivers and their caregivers.

The Alzheimer's Association has introduced us to Comfort Zone which is a comprehensive web-based location management service whereby families can remotely monitor a person with cognitive impairment by receiving automated alerts when a person has travelled beyond a preset zone. (www.alz.org/comfortzone)

Assistive devices are improving and making activities of daily living less difficult for those with challenges. Power chairs are more easily operated with touchpads and other controls for those with limitations.

Telehealth capabilities help us track chronic conditions and avoid health issues. Telehealth is the use of technology to deliver health care, health information or health education at a distance.

Common applications include: teleradiology, in which test results are forwarded to another facility for diagnosis; continuing professional education, including presentations by specialists to general practitioners; and home monitoring, a supplement to home visits from nursing professionals. (www.hrsa.gov/index.html)

Digital medication reminders can help a loved one take medications correctly.

Those of us who are professional caregivers (ie: social work & nursing) are seeing more options for on-line Continuing Education training, and family caregivers also have more options for on-line training. We can connect with people around the world. We can search for products to see what options may best fit our needs. And we can do it anytime day or night!

Technology is developing at an amazing rate. There are so many products and services that can help with healthy aging, aging in place and caregiving.

The report published by The Center for Technology & Aging, University of California (Berkeley) “The

New Era of Connected Aging” discusses our emerging technologies and the impact on aging. (www.techandaging.org/ConnectedAgingFramework.pdf)

The National Alliance for Caregiving offers us “Catalyzing Technology to Support Family Caregiving”.

(www.caregiving.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/Catalyzing-Technology-to-Support-Family-Caregiving-FINAL.pdf)

Time’s article “Why Family Caregivers Won’t Do What’s Best for Aging Parents” addresses teaching a care receiver how to use technology.

(www.time.com/money/3867432/caregivers-aging-parents-technology)

WVU’s Center for Excellence in Disabilities has a wealth of information on assistive devices and resources.

(www.cedwvu.org/)

We need to pay attention and not lose the humanity of personal contact, and we also must be attentive to the intricacies of technology. Be aware that cognitive impairment, visual decline or eye disease, and manual dexterity are a few things that can impact the success of technology with a care receiver.

Are you researching options for assistance? It is important to be aware of the accuracy of the information. See what’s available, but then make a call and talk to a human.

What about scams? Have you had the email from the President of Nigeria that wants to give you money? (You only

have to send a few thousand dollars to clear the way for your big winnings!) Has Social Security called and asked for your Social Security number? (Social Security KNOWS your SSN!!! Don’t fall for this one!) What about the financial institution that sends you a very legitimate looking email telling you your account needs updated. (Do you even HAVE an account with them??) Hit the ‘delete’ key! Just as technology can make some things much less difficult, technology can also set up the unsuspecting, overly-trusting or cognitively impaired person for exploitation. Technology has opened a huge door that enables abuse.

Be a wise consumer. Explore what equipment, devices or apps will best benefit you AND your care receiver. Check prices. Some technology is very expensive. What is your goal? Will technology help you achieve that goal? Is it too complicated for you or your care receiver? Are the controls too small? Is it worth the investment?

The world of information technology is burgeoning, and advances are being made so quickly. It’s difficult to keep up!

My husband often tells me that I need to come into the 21st century. It’s a complicated journey but I’ll get there. Join me!

AGING IN PLACE: WHAT TO CONSIDER

I’ve worked in geriatrics for many years, and one common element is the

desire to age in place. We don’t want to leave our homes. Often the desire to remain at home is trumped by our declining health. What should we consider? *Does our home ‘fit’ our needs? Can we maintain our home and yard? Are repairs needed? Are updates needed for furnaces, water heaters, plumbing, etc? Can we get to the laundry area in the basement? Could you use a wheelchair in your home, if necessary? If not, is home modification or remodeling possible? We need to consider affordability with remodeling as well as the layout of the house.

*Can we get supportive services to assist? Do you have access to in home assistance, home delivered meals and other programs?

*What about transportation? We may have to give up driving as we age, and if that happens, are you close to a bus line? Is there a cab service? Does the senior center or other transportation program service your area?

*Can you get to your health care providers?

*Are taxes and other upkeep costs affordable?

*Is there a social support network?

*Is the neighborhood safe? Rundown?

*Is technology available to help you remain in place?

There are many considerations. Sometimes we find that the answer is not the one we want to hear or face. We may need to downsize. We may need to move closer to family. It may not be feasible to fix up the house to accommodate our changing physical

needs. When you are looking at your changing needs, consider the above. Make a list of considerations. Start to explore options for you or your family before you are faced with a crisis decision!

NEWS ALERT!!!

Our Northwestern Area Agency on Aging has notified me that the U.S. Senate passed the Older Americans Act Reauthorization on July 16, 2015. The Older Americans Act (OAA), originally enacted in 1965, supports a range of home and community-based services, such as meals-on-wheels and other nutrition programs, in-home services, transportation, legal services, elder abuse prevention and caregivers support. These programs help seniors stay as independent as possible in their homes and communities. In addition, OAA services help seniors avoid hospitalization and nursing home care, and, as a result, save federal and state funds that otherwise would be spent on such care. (www.ncpssm.org)

2015 WALK TO END ALZHEIMER'S

WOW!! It's almost time for the the Wheeling Walk to End Alzheimer's! The 7th Annual Walk is scheduled for Saturday, October 10 at Wheeling Park. Registration begins at 8:30 am and the Walk event begins at 9:45 am. You can go to www.alz.org/wv and follow the links for the Walk to End Alzheimer's to

register. **CATCH THE PASSION** and join us at the Walk! We will have door prizes, food and silent auction items.

FUNDRAISER:

August 22, Peg's Run organized by the Elm Grove Charity Riders starting at the Elm Grove Eagles. Sign-ups start at noon and the run starts at 1:00 pm. For those who don't ride, come about 4 and enjoy food and fun for a great cause! Call 304 559-5322 or 304 547-1798 for more information.

Contact Kelli at the WV Alzheimer's Association (800 272-3900) for more information on the Wheeling Walk! By the way, Walks are held across the United States and in many countries! You can locate the Walk that is in your area, and support the cause! **OR** – you can donate to a Wheeling Walk team and the funds will go toward our Wheeling Walk!

BELMONT COUNTY CAREGIVER DINNER

The 5th Annual Belmont County Caregiver Dinner will be held on September 15, 2015 at Undo's in St Clairsville Ohio. The dinner will run from 6pm – 8pm with registration beginning at 5:15 pm. The Area Agency on Aging Region 9 is asking for nominations for Caregiver of the Year. The criteria are:

*the caregiver must be an adult who is providing care or has provided care for a family member or friend of any age, and the caregiver

must be a current resident of Belmont county, OH;
*care is not job related (hired through an agency or volunteer organization)

*the person being cared for may reside at home, in a facility or be deceased but if the care receiver is deceased, the care must have been provided within the past two years. For more information on the dinner and/or to nominate a caregiver, contact Laurel DuBeck at 800 945-4250. Exhibits are available for participants and entertainment is provided.

CAN WE HELP YOU?

We at Altenheim Resource & Referral Services serve anyone in need of assistance with aging and caregiving issues, regardless of location. Consultation, information and referrals are provided without charge and remain confidential. We offer programs that are free for the community and also offer inexpensive workshops for professionals. You may need to leave a message since there are just two of us to cover the office but our phone system is not complicated! If you need to leave a message, you just speak after the tone. Call us. We'd be happy to help you!

Let us be
Your Gateway to Senior
Care!

Our Hours:
Monday – Friday
8am – 4pm