

# NEWSLINES

Jointly funded by the Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders and the New Jersey Division on Aging Services, Department of Human Services

**M**onmouth County's Division on Aging, Disabilities and Veterans Services provides information about the services, programs and resources available to county residents 60 years of age and older, people with disabilities and their caregivers as well as veterans.



Call or stop by the offices at the Human Services building on Kozloski Road in Freehold, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. No appointments are necessary.

## Email or Snail Mail?

If you would prefer to receive your copy of "NewsLines" electronically, let us know by calling 732-431-7450 and we'll put you on our email list.

**Monmouth County Division on Aging,  
Disabilities and Veteran Services**

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# NEWSLINES

OF THE DIVISION ON AGING, DISABILITIES AND VETERAN SERVICES



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LATE SUMMER 2014

## Caring for a Loved One with Dementia

If you are caring for someone with dementia, chances are better than sixty percent that they will, at some point, wander and get lost. It can happen at any point in the disease. Even in the early stages of dementia, an individual can become disoriented and confused for brief periods while driving or walking. Therefore, it pays to be as prepared as possible to prevent a potentially dangerous situation. Some of the warning signs that your loved one may be at risk for wandering include:

- Asking about "going home" even when they are at home.
- Getting lost while driving.
- Restless behavior, pacing, repetitive movements.
- Asking about the whereabouts of family and friends (past and present).
- Trying to fulfill former obligations such as going to work.

Some tips to prevent wandering:

- Have a daily routine.
- Structure is helpful particularly at those times of day when the person is most restless.
- Provide supervision. Don't leave someone alone who may wander and get lost.
- Keep car keys out of sight.
- Avoid busy places like malls and supermarkets which can be disorienting to someone with dementia.
- Camouflage doors and door knobs (by painting doors and walls the same color, putting up curtains on doors, child-proof locks and knobs.
- Install devices that signal when a door or window is opened.

If a person does wander, begin search and rescue efforts immediately. Ninety-four percent of people who wander are found within 1.5 miles of where they disappeared. Keep a list of people to call in an emergency, have a recent photo and medical information to give to the police, keep a list of places where they may wander including past jobs, former homes, places of worship, restaurants, etc. Consider having an ID bracelet on your loved one.

Finally, Monmouth County offers a tracking bracelet which can be worn as a watch. In the event someone goes missing, the County Sheriff's Office can send out a team to find and return your loved one home. This is offered free of charge to anyone with a diagnosis of dementia. Call 732-431-7450 for more information about **Project Lifesaver**.

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PERMIT NO. 207

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## COPING WITH TRAUMATIC EVENTS

**T**rauma can affect both your body and your mind. A traumatic event might be a personal tragedy such as being in a car crash or losing a loved one. It could be a public tragedy such as the Boston Marathon bombing or a natural disaster. Just seeing or hearing about devastating events can feel distressing, even if you aren't personally involved.

People respond to crises in different ways. It's common to feel sad, vulnerable or anxious. But if you continue to feel afraid and upset weeks or months later, consider seeking professional help. You may have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or depression. These conditions can affect people of any age.

Children are especially sensitive to violent events or disasters. They may feel intensely hurt or frightened and find it difficult to recover. Like adults, kids need emotional support from loved ones. They may also need medical care and counseling.

The National Institute of Health's newly updated webpage at [www.nimh.gov/health/topics/coping-with-traumatic-events](http://www.nimh.gov/health/topics/coping-with-traumatic-events) can help you learn more about how trauma can affect you and what to do when problems persist. The page links to videos and information about PTSD, depression and related conditions. You will also be able to find tips for helping children and teens cope with violence and disasters.

## "TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH"

**S**CAN is now offering, as one of its new signature programs, "Take Control of Your Health," a six-session community workshop which gives people with chronic conditions and/or their caregivers the skills, knowledge and confidence to take a more active role in their health care. Workshops are led by certified peer leaders and are FREE. Participants receive healthy snacks, "Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions" reference book and, upon completion of the program, a certificate and relaxation CD.

"Take Control of Your Health" participants learn strategies for managing symptoms, working with health care professionals, setting weekly goals, problem-solving, relaxing, handling difficult emotions, eating well, and exercising safely and easily. It encourages a positive approach to self-management of chronic health conditions. This program is intended to complement, not replace, professional health care services. The program, developed by Stanford University, is evidence-based, meaning it has produced positive results for people who complete it.

Participants report the following benefits:

- Improvements in physical activity, stamina and pain control.
- Better communication with their health care providers.
- Reduced doctor and hospital visits.

"Take Control of Your Health" is sponsored by the NJ Department of Human Services and funding was made available to SCAN by the Monmouth County Office on Aging. SCAN (Social Community Activities Network), "where active adults meet to be informed, empowered and inspired," is located in Monmouth Mall and has been providing education and resource services for the last 25 years.

## CAREGIVER CORNER

### When Your Loved One Refuses Help

**M**ost people would rather help someone else than receive help themselves. Here's a list of suggestions to keep in mind if your loved one refuses your help.

- Remember that change is difficult for everyone.
- Introduce changes slowly. Give them time to accept the idea. Admitting you need help is an admission that you are losing your abilities. Denial is the great protector.
- If at first you don't succeed, try again. Often if you wait 15 minutes and try again, your help will be accepted.
- Assure the person that they have a say in decisions about their care. You wouldn't like someone else to make all your decisions without consulting you.
- Offer a trial period. They may be willing to try a home health aide for two months, especially if they know they can change their mind later.
- Sometimes people are more willing to accept in-home help if it is presented as being for the caregiver, for instance someone to help you keep the house clean or do the heavy work.

Remember, the person has the right to refuse help. You must weigh your responsibility as a family member or friend with the person's right to make their own decisions.

In extreme cases when a person is at serious risk and refuses any attempts at help, seeking legal advice regarding a guardianship may be a last resort.

*"Originally written and published by the Aging and Adult Services Administration Department of Social and Health Services, State of Washington. Reprinted with permission."*

