

# Caregiver Connection

Called to CARE<sup>®</sup>  
A program of Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center

A publication that connects caregivers with resources, support and each other

May/June 2019

## Caregiver Cafés

**May 16 & June 20, from 2 to 3:30 p.m.**

The Soul Center at Beth El Congregation  
8101 Park Heights Ave., Pikesville, MD 21208

**Info./Register:** rachels@bethelbalto.com or  
410-484-0411 ext. 1103

**May 29 & June 26, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

Schmidt Conference Room  
Alpha Commons Building, 4th floor  
Johns Hopkins Bayview campus  
5300 Alpha Commons Dr., Baltimore, MD 21224

**Info.:** 410-550-8018 (*no registration is required*)

**May 7, from 12 to 2 p.m.**

Z-HAP at the Oliver Senior Center  
1700 N. Gay Street, Baltimore, MD 21213

**Info.:** 410-550-1660 or 410-375-7504

## Upcoming Events

### Lunch & Learn: Horticulture and Nature Connection for Caregivers

*Spring into caregiving by exploring how to integrate horticulture and nature into everyday activities.*

**May 2, 12 to 1 p.m.**

Norman Library, Asthma & Allergy Center  
Johns Hopkins Bayview campus  
5501 Hopkins Bayview Circle

**Register:** 410-550-1660

### 2019 Family Caregivers Conference

*Cruising Through Caregiving: Beginning to End*

**May 22, 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.**

Morgan State University  
University Student Center, 2nd floor  
4307 Hillen Rd., Baltimore, MD 21251

**Register:** eventbrite.com (Search for “2019 Family Caregivers Conference”)



## Supporting a Spouse Through a Health Challenge

If you have suddenly been put into the role of caregiver, what should you do—and how can you stay strong while you do it? Psychiatrist and caregiver health researcher **Peter Rabins, M.D., MPH**, co-director of the geriatric psychiatry and neuropsychiatry division at The Johns Hopkins Hospital, recommends these strategies.

**Listen and share time.** Assure your spouse that you love and support him or her. Listen if your spouse wants to talk, or just spend quiet time together. If possible, keep sharing routines that have been part of your life together. After a serious diagnosis, you both may cherish these everyday traditions more than ever.

**Get informed.** “The more you know, the better,” Rabins says. “It’s OK to start with the Internet, but make sure you find reliable websites that provide accurate, up-to-date medical information. Ask health care providers questions, too.”

**Talk to practitioners together.** “Work together, beforehand, to create a list of questions. This gets the two of you talking about your concerns, your worries and areas where you need more information. If there’s not time to discuss all of your questions, ask if a nurse or physician’s assistant can help, if you can meet at another time, or if you can discuss your concerns by phone or email.” Rabins suggests.

**Sidestep nagging.** A well spouse’s support and encouragement can help a partner stay on track, but this new role can also trigger frustration on both sides. The well spouse may feel stressed; the ill spouse might not appreciate nagging.

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## Supporting a Spouse Through a Health Challenge (cont'd.)

“For some people, it’s useful to put some of the burden for deciding what’s most important back in the hands of health care practitioners,” Rabins says. “Ask about diet, medications and other daily needs. That way, instead of saying to your partner, ‘You must take all of your pills,’ you can say, ‘I asked the doctor and she said it’s most important to take these medications on a strict schedule, but it’s OK to take this one a little later.’”

**Accept help.** Let well-wishers lighten your load so you can focus on your ill spouse and get needed rest and support for yourself. “If you’re feeling exhausted or overwhelmed, tell the doctor, nurse or hospital social worker,” Rabins says. “Sometimes well spouses are surprised by the home services covered by insurance. You might get help bathing and dressing your spouse, or your spouse may qualify for occupational or physical therapy that will show him or her and you how to make things easier in your home.”

## COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



The goal of the LGBT Health Resource Center is to provide LGBTQ individuals and their families with access to expert health information and resources that will enhance wellness and quality of life.

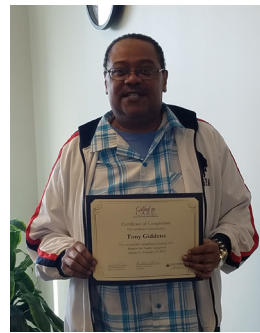
Among the Center’s most impactful programs is Elder Pride, which is designed to help address the critical issues faced by older lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender adults and their caregiving networks to navigate current and future needs. Services include:

- One-on-one counseling and support groups
- Monthly lunch-and-learn workshops and educational seminars
- Referrals to aging services and linkages to medical care, financial and legal issues
- Supportive resources for informal caregivers who identify as LGBT or care for someone who is LGBT

You do not need to be a patient of Chase Brexton to take advantage of Elder Pride services.

To learn more, email [lgbt@chasebrexton.org](mailto:lgbt@chasebrexton.org) or call **410-837-2050**.

## VOICE OF THE CAREGIVER: TONY GIDDENS



**Tony Giddens** cares for his 78-year-old mother, who was diagnosed with diabetes and memory loss. Below, he talks about what Called to Care resources he found helpful.

### **As a caregiver, what is the biggest challenge for you?**

It’s hard to help my mother because she is in denial about her memory loss. She is resistant to getting help and taking care of herself.

### **How do you take time for yourself?**

Caregiver 101 helped me be conscious about the importance of taking care of myself. I enjoy spending time with close friends and my mother, and I like going to the casino and visiting the waterfront in Washington, D.C.

### **What resources have you found helpful? What advice would you give to other caregivers?**

I found Caregiver 101 to be very helpful. It allowed me to be around other people who have the same frustrations. I also attend different local conferences on Alzheimer’s disease and dementia.

I would suggest that other caregivers be open to the possibility that their loved one may be sick and need more care. They should seek out medical help, and start preparing before things get bad.

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