



GAIA CARES



GAIA CARES ABOUT ... DEMENTIA & FAMILY RESPONSES [PART ONE]

MORAG MACLEOD, Q.C., PRESIDENT

Caring for a loved one with dementia poses many challenges for families and caregivers. Diminished mental capacity from conditions such as Alzheimer's and other diseases are often progressive, making it increasingly difficult for sufferers to remember things, think clearly, communicate, and take care of themselves. This can cause mood swings and personality and behavior changes. This column provides some practical strategies for dealing with the challenges of caring for a person with dementia. For family caregivers, often the biggest challenges are the personality and behavior changes that occur. These need creativity, flexibility, patience, and above all, compassion. Try not to take things personally and maintain your sense of humor *(continued on next page)*

CURRENT & UPCOMING EVENTS

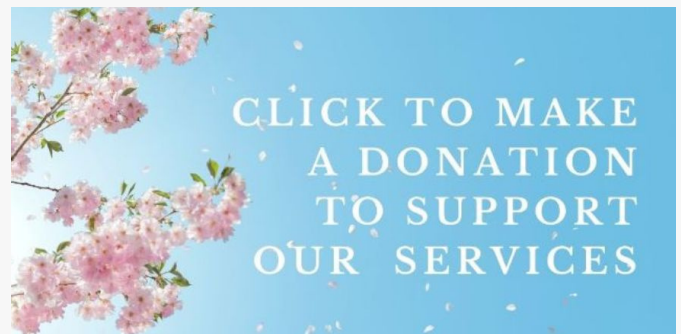
Sep 8
5 Common Myths on Food (Cantonese)

Sep 9, 16 & 23
Community Ambassador Online Training (Cantonese)

Sep 14
Peer Support Group (Cantonese)

Sep 14 - Oct 14
Chair Yoga Beginner (Cantonese)

To register or learn more, visit
gccws.ca/upcoming_events
phone 778-223-7236 or
email info@gccws.ca



Start with these ground rules:

1. you cannot change the person. They have a brain disorder that shapes who they have become. Trying to control or change the behavior, will most likely be met with resistance and be unsuccessful.

2. we can change our own behavior and the physical environment. Changing our behavior can result in a change in our loved one's behavior. Try to accommodate, rather than control, the behavior. For example, if your loved one wants to sleep in their chair, make them more comfortable there;

3. check with their doctor. Behavioral problems may have an underlying medical cause. For example, your loved one may be in pain or experiencing a side effect from medication. In some cases, like incontinence or hallucinations, there may be other medication or treatments that can help;

4. people with dementia typically can't tell us what they want or need. They might do something, like constantly take all their clothes out of the closet, and we wonder why. It may be that they feel a need to be busy and productive. Consider what need the person might be trying to meet with their behavior and, when possible, try to accommodate them;

5. it is important to understand that behavior usually occurs for a reason. It might be something someone did or said, or a change in the physical environment, that triggered the behaviour.

Disrupting the patterns that we create may help change behaviour. Try a different approach or a different consequence when dealing with troubling behaviours;

6. remember that what works today, might not tomorrow. The progression of the disease, and the many factors that influence difficult behaviors, mean that solutions today may need to be modified tomorrow, or may not work at all. The key to managing difficult behaviors is being creative and flexible in your strategies to address them;



7. you are not alone, there are many others caring for someone with dementia. Find support groups, organizations, and services that can help you. At Gaia, we're here for you. Recognize that, just like the loved one you are caring for, you will have good days and bad days. Develop and practice good self-care strategies for coping with the bad days and remember that your mood will affect your loved one too.

GAIA CARES IN THE NEWS: TRAIN-THE-TRAINER



MEDIA COVERAGE:

RICHMOND NEWS | [LINK](#)
SING TAO DAILY | [LINK](#)

The Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program (NHSP) is a federal grants and contributions program that fund initiatives that make a difference in the lives of seniors and their communities. Gaia Cares is proud to introduce its new community-based program, **Train the Trainers**, funded through the New Horizons for Seniors Program.

Train the Trainers aims to combat rising issues of elder abuse in the Chinese community. To do so, the program recruited eight senior volunteers from the community and trained them to become peer leaders to spread awareness about elder abuse. The volunteers were tasked with sharing knowledge with friends and family, with follow-up interviews enabling the volunteers to share their thoughts and experiences. It is important that people of all ages understand what elder abuse is and to take steps to

prevent abuse in the future. By training these eight volunteers, Gaia Cares aims to ensure the Chinese community is aware of what actions or situations constitute abuse against the elderly.

Due to Chinese culture and sensitivity of the topic, it can be difficult for individuals to come together to share their thoughts and concerns about elder abuse. Train the Trainers gave volunteers this opportunity by asking them during the training to openly discuss how they felt about the topic, and to share those feelings with friends and family. Volunteers were able to learn more about elder abuse's impact on the community and gain a better understanding of the complexities of elder abuse. To listen to their discussion, check the taped interviews on Gaia Cares' YouTube channel.

Train the Trainers was a big success and a valuable experience for Gaia Cares. In addition to fighting back against a growing issue, Gaia Cares had an opportunity to further develop its volunteer program. If you are interested in volunteering, we are currently recruiting Cantonese seniors who are 55 or older to join our **Gaia Cares Community Ambassador Online Training Program**. Seats are limited, so come sign up soon at https://gccws.ca/upcoming_events to learn how to become empowered and age-smart in your community. Gaia Cares is grateful to all its volunteers for their hard work and helping to fight back against elder abuse.

FEATURED PROGRAM: SMART DIET SHARP BRAIN

As we age, many of us will experience a higher risk for health-related issues. These risks can cause anxiety and stress in seniors, lowering their quality of life. But did you know that by properly managing your diet, you can decrease the chances of having diseases or other health-related issues? Gaia Cares plans to share this message with the Chinese community through the **Healthy Eating and Living Series**. The series consists of a variety of webinars that teach participants about the importance of a healthy diet and lifestyle and simple ways to achieve them.

On August 4th, Gaia Cares hosted the newest addition to the **Healthy Eating and Living Series**, the **Smart Diet Sharp Brain** webinar. The brain is one the most important organs in our body but can deteriorate as we age. Smart Diet Sharp Brain aimed to resolve this worry by demonstrating different methods of maintaining brain health. With almost 60 participants joining the webinar, participants were taught about healthy nutrients, exercises, and recipes that protect and support the brain. The speakers, Teresa Lau and Joeie Zheng, were passionate and each had their own story to share on how they changed their health and lifestyle during the hardest parts of their lives.

Through this webinar, Gaia Cares aims to help others make healthy lifestyle changes for themselves and for the wellbeing of their loved ones.



The webinar highlighted the importance for people of all ages to ensure they are eating healthy. By maintaining a healthy diet and lifestyle, you can decrease the chances of major health issues, and be able to spend more time with loved ones to create more happy memories for the future. There is a genetic component to who develops dementia, but that does not mean it is impossible to decrease your chances of developing it. Ensure that your diet incorporates a healthy balance of the necessary nutrients such as protein, glutamic acid, tyrosine, and phenylalanine, and do daily exercises such as stretches or going on walks. These lifestyle changes can not only improve your body's strength, but also release chemicals in your brain to improve your mood and relieve stress. By doing so, you will decrease the chances of developing health issues such as dementia, allowing you to age comfortably with your loved ones.