

# Adult Day Self-Care Newsletter

December 2021

## Winter is On the Way

It's natural to feel a little bit like hibernating in the winter months. We spend less time outside as the days shorten and the weather turns cold. We are less likely to bump into our neighbors—and less likely to recognize people we know when they're all bundled up! Those of us who enjoy winter sports like ice skating, skiing, and sledding may have more opportunities to socialize as we gather at rinks, pond, ski slopes, and community sledding hills. The winter holidays also provide a chance to come together with family and friends. However, like in 2020, get-togethers this year may be complicated by worries about getting sick. Families caring for a person with memory loss have additional challenges. Someone with dementia may be unable to leave home or may have difficulty tolerating the noise and activity of visitors. Caregivers may be unable to participate in their favorite winter events and traditions due to their responsibilities at home. Adult Day Centers provide critical support at this time of year, as they do all year long. In addition to the regular schedule of activities and outreach, Adult Day Centers can share winter-specific tips. These might include suggestions for staying connected, dealing with holiday stress, and managing sundowning (which may be worse in winter) and cold weather safety. For example, older people, especially people with dementia, may have increased difficulty regulating their body temperature, which can cause additional health risks in cold weather.

## Risk of Falling and Fear of Falling

Another winter health risk is falling on slippery surfaces. While this risk may be greater for older people who are unsteady, it's a risk for anyone. Some preventative strategies include balance exercises like yoga and tai chi, using handrails, and wearing "ice creepers" on shoes or boots outdoors.

Being afraid to fall also is a risk factor. Fear of falling may increase with age, causing people to restrict their activities. This may increase their risk. Some simple questions can help assess fear of falling, [as described by Dr. Alan Jette](#), an expert in this area, and treatments are available. The [Matter of Balance](#) program, based on Dr. Jette's work, is offered in NJ in some areas and training for program staff can be arranged.

*Note:* Some [experts](#) suggest that sundowning worsens in wintertime in northern areas, based on seasonal variations in internet searches for information on the topic.



Thank you, Monica!

We would like to give a public shout out to Monica Townsend, who is moving on to a new phase in her career. Many of you know Monica as the Training and Consultation Specialist and presenter for many of our virtual training events. We know you'll join us in wishing her the best!

## Winter Activities

As always, when planning group activities, it's important to recognize and appreciate differences among participants at the Adult Day Center. People may have different types of dementia, and different cognitive and physical limitations. In addition, their interests may differ. Some may enjoy crafts or music; others may dislike mess or sing-alongs.

When considering activities related to winter holidays, remember that the people who attend your Center may have had different holiday experiences and traditions. If possible, it can be helpful to consult with family members to learn about what days they celebrate and what they do when they're together.

**Get Physical!** Include exercise and stretching throughout the day especially before lunch and near the end of the day. Having physical activity at the same times each day helps structure the day for everyone. Incorporate something seasonal, like tossing "snowballs" into a laundry basket. Soft stuffed snowballs or giant white pom-poms can work well, but balled up printer paper could work, too.

**Music:** People often remember music long after other memories fade. For most people, music can be soothing or energizing, depending on the choice of tune. For example, something from George Winston's [December](#) album will be calming, while Jingle Bells can make you move, especially when performed by the [cast of Glee](#).

**Sensory Activities:** Think beyond the smell of pumpkin spice and pine needles. There's cocoa and peppermint for taste. A super soft fake fur hat or a ball of fake fur yarn is wonderful to touch. Bells are fun to hear and jingle bells come in many sizes and tones. For the eyes, 'tis the season for sparkles and lights—consider the glow of battery-powered "candles"!



visit our website [www.care2caregivers.com](http://www.care2caregivers.com) for information on caregiver support groups

## Stay Tuned!

COPSA is planning some exciting new developments for 2022!

**New Training Catalog:** If you missed it, we have updated our list of trainings that we offer and have added quite a few new options. Please check it out—you can [download it](#) from our website.

**Website:** We are in the process of developing a new section of our website that will focus on Adult Day Centers. You will be able to access all past issues of our newsletter, training resources to support your staff, and summaries of relevant research. We welcome suggestions for resources and information that would be most useful.

**Caregiver Webinars:** We will continue our monthly educational sessions online. While these are geared towards family caregivers, the topics are often beneficial for Adult Day staff. We also appreciate you sharing the webinar flyers with the families of the people served by your Center.

As always, you can access the Self-Care resources on our website for free.

**Self-Care for Professional Caregivers**  
[www.care2caregivers.com/self-care](http://www.care2caregivers.com/self-care)

### Upcoming Caregiver Education

#### Managing the Holiday Season: Caregiver Strategies for Coping, Connecting and Self-Care

In addition to all of the extra tasks and obligations, caregivers may also experience increased anxiety, grief and stress which can lead to depression. With a few simple strategies, caregivers can take back the joy of the season. **Click here to register:**  
<https://rutgers.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJEocOyprDMrGd1atZd-LPQIpLhTYscVmb70>

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or call Care2Caregivers at 890-424-2494.

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