

Dutchess County Office for the Aging's

AGING NEWS

For the week of March 18th

HOW TO TALK TO SOMEONE WITH HOARDING – DO'S AND DON'TS

In last week's column we discussed the difference between common household clutter and a situation of possible hoarding and/or squalor. That column and other back issues are available at dutchessny.gov/agingnews.

The following is based on "How To Talk To Someone With Hoarding," by Cristina M. Sorrentino, PhD, LCSW, of the Boston University School of Social Work:

DON'T

- **Use judgmental language.** Like anyone else, individuals with hoarding will not be receptive to negative comments about the state of their home (e.g., "What a mess!"). Imagine your own response if someone came into your home and spoke in this manner, especially if you already felt ashamed.
- **Use words that devalue or negatively judge possessions.** People who hoard

are often aware that others do not view their possessions and homes as they do.

They often react strongly to words that reference their possessions negatively,

like “junk.”

- **Let your non-verbal expression say what you’re thinking.** Individuals with compulsive hoarding are likely to notice non-verbal messages that convey judgment, like frowns or grimaces.
- **Make suggestions about the person’s belongings.** Even well-intentioned suggestions about discarding items are usually not well-received by those with hoarding.
- **Try to persuade or argue with the person.** Efforts to persuade individuals to make a change in their home or behavior often have the opposite effect—the person instead talks themselves into keeping the items.
- **Touch the person’s belongings without explicit permission.** Those who hoard often find it upsetting when another person touches their things.

DO

- **Imagine yourself in the hoarding client’s shoes.** How would you want others

to talk to you to help you manage your life?

- **Match the person's language.** Listen for the individual's manner of referring to his/her possessions (e.g., "my things", "my collections") and use the same language (i.e., "your things", "your collections").
- **Use encouraging language.** In communicating with people who hoard about the consequences of hoarding, use language that reduces defensiveness and increases motivation to solve the problem (e.g., "I see that you have a pathway from your front door to your living room. That's great that you've kept things out of the way so that you don't slip or fall. The thing is that somebody who might need to come into your home, like a firefighter, would have a pretty difficult time getting through here. They have equipment they're usually carrying, and firefighters have protective clothes that are bulky. It's important to have a pathway that is wide enough ... In fact, safety codes state that [insert wording about egresses], so this is one important change that has to be made.")
- **Highlight strengths.** A visitor's ability to notice a person's strengths helps forge a good relationship and paves the way for resolving the hoarding problem (e.g., "I see that you can easily access your bathroom sink and shower.")
- **Focus first interventions on safety and organization** and later work on

discarding. Discussion of the fate of the person's possessions will be necessary at a later point.

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OFA HOME DELIVERED MEALS IN THE NEWS (In Case You Missed It)

The Office for the Aging's Home Delivered Meals program (www.dutchessny.gov/ofanutrition) was featured recently in a Spectrum News story. [Click here to watch.](#)

To learn more about volunteering for Home Delivered Meals and OFA volunteering, visit www.dutchessny.gov/ofavolunteering or email bjones@dutchessny.gov.

STILL A FEW "MATTER OF BALANCE" CLASS SPOTS LEFT

If you're a Dutchess County resident over age 60 and would like to join an Office for the Aging "A Matter of Balance" fall prevention class, there's still a few spots left in the session that's beginning the week of March 25th in Millbrook.

"A Matter of Balance" cannot accept walk-ins, so the specific class venue and times are provided upon registration in the class. Contact OFA at 845-486-2555 for details - or stop by the OFA Successful Aging presentation taking place at 1:30 on Tuesday, March 19th at the Millbrook Free Library (3 Friendly Lane). [Use this link to register](#) and let us know you'll be there. We'll be covering a lot of ground in addition to fall prevention.

A Matter of Balance (MOB) is specifically designed to reduce the fear of falling and improve activity levels among older adults (age 60+) living in Dutchess County. The program includes eight two-hour classes presented to a small group of 8-12 participants led by trained coaches. The program enables participants to reduce the fear of falling by learning to view falls as controllable, setting goals for increasing activity levels, making small changes to reduce fall risks at home, and exercise to increase strength and balance. The curriculum includes group discussions, mutual problem solving, role-play activities, exercise training, assertiveness training, and a few homework assignments.

Participants learn about the importance of exercise in preventing falls and practice exercises to improve strength, coordination, and balance. Participants also conduct a home safety evaluation and learn to get up and down safely. Class size is between 8-12 participants.

UPCOMING “FRIENDLY CALLS” ORIENTATIONS

If you're interested in becoming a volunteer caller for OFA's "Friendly Calls" program, we have plenty of orientation sessions on the March calendar, and a little bit beyond. Most orientations take place at OFA unless otherwise indicated below. Orientations typically last 40-60 minutes. Pick one, and contact OFA at 845-486-2555 to set up your orientation:

- **Wednesday, March 20th**, 1:30pm at the Office for the Aging
- **Monday, March 25th**, 10 am at the Office for the Aging

If none of those work with your schedule, contact Friendly Calls Program Manager Linda Edgar at 845-486-2548 or ledgar@dutchessny.gov, and we may be able to work out something that fits your schedule.

If you're part of a workplace or civic organization that would like an onsite Friendly Calls orientation, contact Linda Edgar as noted in the previous paragraph. If there's a meeting room with a TV that has an HDMI connection, that's all we need to bring the orientation to you.

SAVE THE DATE – WEDNESDAY, MAY 8TH – CAREGIVER CONFERENCE IN HYDE PARK

Caregivers looking for help on being the best caregiver they can be while maintaining their own well-being will want to set aside **Wednesday, May 8th** for the free annual "Caregiver Conference." It'll be held at a new venue this year: the Wallace Center, on the grounds of the Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site in Hyde Park.

Reservations are scheduled to get underway one month before the conference, on April 8th.

The event begins with sign-in at 8:30 a.m. and continues until 2 p.m.

There will be plenty of time for your questions and concerns, and dozens of experts and vendors will be on hand with answers and solutions. A continental breakfast and lunch are included.

The conference is organized by the Office for the Aging, the Alzheimer's Association Hudson Valley Chapter; Hudson Valley Hospice; Parkinson's Disease Support Group of the Mid-Hudson Valley; and community members Cathy Regan and FaLisia Cotten-Swain.

Other news:

[The medications listed in this article](#) don't mix well with driving.

[There may be reasons other than aging](#) behind one's need to frequently get up in the middle of the night to use the bathroom.

[Six "superfoods"](#) for a strong, healthy heart.

[Your protein needs change](#) as you age.

Former Mets/Yankees star [Darryl Strawberry is recovering from a heart attack](#) suffered just before his recent 62nd birthday.

This week's birthdays:

3/16: Rock singer [Nancy Wilson](#) (Heart) (70)

3/17: Singer/songwriter/Hudson Valley resident [John Sebastian](#) (80)

3/18: Pianist/composer [John Kander](#) (97)

3/19: NFL coach [Andy Reid](#) (66)

3/20: Actor/director [Hal Linden](#) (93 and still performing)

3/21: Soul singer [Russell Thompkins Jr.](#) (The Stylistics) (73)

3/22: Actor/singer/starship captain [William Shatner](#) (93)

The Bad Joke!

Somebody asked me the name of the inspector in the "Pink Panther" movies. I have no clue, so I need help.