

## Fall is in the Air

By Michelle DiBuduo, Executive Director of VCRC



Michelle DiBuduo

As autumn settles in and leaves begin to turn vibrant hues, we find ourselves reflecting on the progress we've made and the journey ahead. With your incredible support, we've achieved so much this year, and we're excited to share our latest updates and opportunities with you.

The number of volunteers in our Long-Term Care Ombudsman program has improved since the pandemic (up to 45 now from 15).

Even though this posed a significant challenge, we still managed to visit over 300 long term care facilities each month. Thanks to the unwavering commitment and resilience of our staff and those dedicated volunteers who do step in to help, our work continues to thrive.

The OASIS Adult Program is running at full capacity. We assist over 75 families every month, with an average of 22 participants joining us every day for lively and engaging activities. This fuels our hope of

expanding the OASIS program to provide a safe place for even more families. Stay tuned for more updates as we grow.

Serving nine counties, our Caregiver Resource Center provides assistance to over 1,022 families as they navigate their caregiver journey. We offer over 46 classes a year and 13 monthly support groups while providing personalized one-on-one guidance.

As we approach Open Enrollment for Medicare Beneficiaries, our registered and knowledgeable staff and volunteers are gearing up to assist clients from October 15th through December 7th. Last year alone, they helped over 2,054 members, saving them over \$1,439,364. Please contact our office with any questions you may have regarding the programs and assistance we offer. We are here to help!

I can't emphasize enough how each donation you give, every volunteer hour you offer, and all your words of encouragement provide invaluable assistance to us in serving the many needs of families across the Central Valley. We hope this fall brings you warmth and joy. Thank you for being an essential part of our community. Together, we're creating lasting change.

## Just a Spoon Full of Sugar!

By Kevin Alvey, MA, MFCC, Program Manager, Caregiver Resource Center

I don't like musicals, I've never liked musicals, I know that statement rubs some people the wrong way, but no one more than my wife and daughter. My mom too loved musicals and I remember back to a time where there was only one television in our home and what we watched was not often decided by the middle child in the family. Through the encouragement of my family I have been exposed to more Julie Andrews than you can imagine. For better or for worse, the lyrics to "A Spoonful of Sugar" are imbedded in my psyche and I can't get the idea out of my mind how this relates to communicating with loved ones that are experiencing cognitive impairment.

Memory loss or impairment is not something we can control, it isn't intentional, but sometimes we become irritated when we must repeat ourselves and carry out the same difficult conversation time and time again. Dementia and other memory loss is uncontrollable, you can't control the deficits in memory. Sometimes it leaves a sour taste in our relationships.



You can't control the deficits, but there is one thing you can control, your reaction to it....a spoonful of sugar, or sour medicine.

For people with dementia, their disability is memory loss. They may not remember yesterday or last week, but if we act in an aggressive manner toward them, they feel the immediate emotion of negativity. If we become upset or angry, we bring in the emotion or experience (immediate memory) of "sour medicine".

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**Our Newsletter is Now Paperless!**

Please visit our website to sign up for the future digital newsletters so you can stay informed and so we can stay in touch with our local caregivers. [www.valleycrc.org](http://www.valleycrc.org)

## Holiday Stress

By Charity Tokash, Education Development Coordinator

Holidays can be such a joy to spend with family. However, it can also be a stressful time of year. Making sure everything is clean before everyone gets there, preparing food, arranging activities, and getting presents can be overwhelming for anyone. Especially those who are family caregivers. Here are some tips to help with the stress:

Sometimes we need to let go. We can let go of the guilt, let go of traditions that just do not fit the new dynamic of the family, and delegate tasks to other family members. Continue the traditions that still work and aim for good, not perfect.

Start new traditions with the family. Tell stories from past holidays, keep the holiday simple, take breaks, add some self-care time, adjust your expectations, and cherish the moments are just a few examples of new traditions. There are a lot of things you can do

to start new traditions that can include sending letters to military families, making blankets to donate, having a bake day, decorating the Christmas tree, having a cocoa movie night, having a potluck, or even donating gifts to those less fortunate.

Another thing you can do to help you through the holiday stress is to connect with your community. You can attend church, support groups, and community events. Consider asking for help from your community and family by preparing a list of things they can do to support you through your caregiving journey.

By adjusting to what the family does, you can help enjoy the holiday season in a new perspective. It is okay to make the adjustments and hand off the responsibilities to the next generation.



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## Spoonful of Sugar (cont.)

By our actions and words, we can have some control in the situation by adding sour medicine or sugar to the interaction, it's our choice. Our loved one responds in the moment to the energy we bring. Expecting them to be reasonable or to follow your logic is unrealistic. We shouldn't correct, contradict, blame or insist. Strong reminders are rarely kind, they reinforce the negativity of our loved one's condition repeatedly.

Remember, people living with dementia say and do normal things for someone with memory impairment. When she hides the remote it isn't an attack on your television watching behavior, it might be putting

something in a safe place, so it doesn't get lost. Locking the door, forgetting you are on the outside isn't trying to keep you from entering, it's keeping the house safe.

Try to respond in planned, careful, and productive ways. Here are some suggestions:

- Give short, one sentence explanations. Repeat instructions or sentences the same way.
- Agree with them or distract them to a different subject or activity.
- Accept the blame when something's wrong (even if it's fantasy).
- Leave the room, if necessary, to avoid confrontations.
- Be patient and cheerful and reassuring.
- Go with the flow.
- Give them a choice- Do you want to go now, or in two minutes?

Practice forgiveness often, for you and them as well. Remember, "just a spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down, in a most delightful way."

OUR LOVED ONE RESPONDS IN THE MOMENT TO THE ENERGY WE BRING. EXPECTING THEM TO BE REASONABLE OR TO FOLLOW YOUR LOGIC IS UNREALISTIC.



## When Abuse Tarnishes The Golden Years

Abuse doesn't discriminate against age — and an unsettling number of older Americans are in abusive relationships that either begin in or persist into later life.

No one deserves abuse, and no matter what your situation, there are ways to find help. It is never too late to report the violence and talk to someone about it.

### Why Now?

Abuse can begin later in life or start earlier and continue into later years. There are many causes for late onset domestic violence, including stresses resulting from retirement, disability, shifting roles for family members and sexual changes. Older men and women are also more likely to experience domestic violence at this age if they enter a new relationship later in life.

### What Does This Look Like?

In addition to the known symptoms of domestic abuse, frequent and more severe injuries, confusion and disassociation are characteristics of late onset domestic violence. Social workers, police and medical

professionals find these elderly-specific indicators to be difficult to diagnose because they often occur in one form or another without the presence of domestic abuse.

### Why Is It Underreported?

There are lots of reasons people don't report abuse in their later years of life. Retirement and disability often render elderly individuals financially unstable and they may fear losing health care benefits or falling into poverty or homelessness. If they do rely on their partner for caretaking and support they may have fewer options after leaving.

Because of generational norms, some older women feel that speaking out about domestic violence would be "airing dirty laundry," and prefer to keep their personal lives private. In addition, many individuals are anxious about leaving a partner late in life with the concern that they may spend the rest of their days alone.

### How Can You Help Someone You Know?

Many domestic violence campaigns and services don't address late onset domestic

violence and instead focus mainly on people between 18 and 45 years old. This limits the availability of assistance for older people. Fortunately, specific resources do exist. Adult Protective Services (APS) in all states serve abused older victims.

Do you know someone who may be experiencing abuse at the hand of their partner? Since there are unique reasons many older Americans don't report abuse, speaking up if you notice red flags could be the support someone needs to begin to get help.

It's never too late to reclaim your life.

### Further Resources

NCEA: National Center on Elder Abuse | Administration on Aging  
Eldercare Locator (Also available at 1-800-677-1116)

"Late Life Domestic Violence: What the Aging Network Needs to Know" from NCEA (pdf)

National Adult Protective Services Association

### SOURCE:

<https://www.thehotline.org/resources/domestic-abuse-in-older-adults/>

## It's Hispanic Heritage and Native American Heritage Month – HICAP serving all communities!

By Crystal Tate, HICAP Program Manager

As we observe Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 - October 15), and Native American Heritage Month (November), we are reminded of what a great opportunity this is for HICAP (Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program) to increase awareness of Medicare benefits and services for Hispanic and Native American communities.

Hispanic Heritage Month and Native American Heritage Month is a time to highlight the history, achievements, and contributions of these community members. It is also an important moment to address the barriers that are faced when it comes to accessing Medicare services and benefits. Did you know that Hispanic seniors often face barriers to accessing Medicare benefits due to language, lack of awareness and economic challenges? Did you also know that Native American seniors face significant health disparities when accessing Medicare benefits because they may live in rural or isolated areas?



**HICAP is here to help!** During Hispanic Heritage Month and Native American Heritage Month and beyond, HICAP is focusing on:

- **Bilingual Outreach and Education:** We're providing information about Medicare programs such as the **Low-Income Subsidy (LIS)** and **Medicare Savings Programs (MSP)** in both English and Spanish.
- **Partnering with Hispanic and Tribal community Organizations:** We're providing HICAP's services with Hispanic and Tribal community partners ensuring that seniors can access the benefits they deserve.
- **Community Outreach:** HICAP engages with the Hispanic and Tribal communities by attending target outreach events and health fairs to bring awareness of what HICAP has to offer to the Medicare beneficiaries.
- **Bilingual Services:** HICAP provides Medicare counseling appointments in Spanish and other languages when needed.

BY WORKING TOGETHER WITH COMMUNITY LEADERS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND INDIVIDUALS, WE CAN BRIDGE THE GAP AND ENSURE THAT MORE PEOPLE ARE ENROLLED IN PROGRAMS THAT HELP THEM SAVE ON HEALTHCARE COSTS AND RECEIVE MEDICARE BENEFITS.

By working together with community leaders, organizations, and individuals, we can bridge the gap and ensure that more people are enrolled in programs that help them save on healthcare costs and receive Medicare benefits.

If you or someone in your family or community could benefit from non-biased Medicare counseling services, now is the perfect time to connect them with HICAP as open enrollment is just around the corner on **October 15th - December 7, 2024**. Please call us today to schedule your appointment with one of our own highly qualified registered counselors. Happy Hispanic Heritage Month and Happy Native American Heritage Month!

## Setting the Scene for Success

By Meghan Velasquez, OASIS Program Manager

As fall approaches, our holidays and booked schedules will be following shortly behind. This busy season, full of family gatherings and friends getting together, can fill many with excitement and joy but it can also add a layer of anxiety and stress. When caring for someone with memory loss, a lot of change can happen between visits and holidays.

So how do you prepare your family for the changes and ensure the holidays are a success?

Communication. Letting your family know how things have changed and progressed since the last time they have seen your loved one can help eliminate any surprise factors. There are many ways you can keep family members up to date:

- Phone call
- Email
- Group text
- Mailed letter

Another component to consider and acknowledge is that not everyone will know how to interact or engage with your loved one and the changes that have occurred. So, to help limit any uncomfortable moments and be sure that your loved one feels included in the festivities, give your friends and family tips on how to be successful. If your loved one likes to look at old photos and reminisce, be sure to let everyone one know and have albums set out and accessible. If they have limited words or not able to communicate verbally, guide your family and friends on how to engage. Encourage them to be the story tellers while your loved one listens.

A few other simple activity ideas to help keep your loved one a part of event and assist family and friends in engaging with them would be:

EVEN IF YOUR LOVED ONE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND THE COMPLEXITY OF THE GAME, THEY CAN STILL LAUGH AS EVERYONE ELSE PLAYS, SIT AT THE TABLE AND ROLL THE DICE, OR HOLD THE CARDS AND PLAY ON SOMEONE'S TEAM



- **Physical Games-** this helps get younger children engaged and interacting as well
  - Corn Hole
  - Horse Shoes
  - Ladder Ball
  - Catch (with a medium or large softer ball)
- **Music-** have your loved one's favorite music playing in the background. Can even use details about the music as conversation topics
- Short walk in the front or backyard
- **Table Games-** Even if your loved one doesn't understand the complexity of the game, they can still laugh as everyone else plays, sit at the table to roll the dice, or hold the cards and play on someone's team
  - UNO
  - 21
  - Family Feud
  - Pictionary
  - Yahtzee
  - Bunco
  - Word Search

Sometimes it is a matter of feeling a part of something bigger and simply enjoying being surrounded by laughter and love of family and friends. Being sure everyone is aware of the changes your loved one is experiencing can help them process and prepare before they come leaving more room for fun, laughter and special moments the day of.

## OASIS Adult Day Program Spotlight

By: Meghan Velasquez, Program Manager

OASIS is more than just a place to drop off your loved one for respite. Although it does give caregivers a much-needed break, it is so much more. It has become a sanctuary to those with memory loss. It is a place of purpose for those who have lost it and a reason to get out of bed each day for those who have struggled to find cause.

OASIS Adult Day Program is a hidden gem of Fresno, where older adults with memory loss can come and engage in fun and meaningful activities, building new friendships in a safe and supervised environment. It is open Monday through Friday, at an affordable rate with a variety of scheduling options. There is no shortage of laughter and fun, where participants are able to engage at their own pace based on their own abilities. Long term topics are brought into short term conversations and talked about over a cup of coffee or around the table. Participants are encouraged to keep their mind and bodies engaged and moving, with no shortage of patients and support from our staff.

If you are caring for someone with memory loss, diagnosed or just suspected, don't hesitate to call. Reach out, get a tour and schedule your free trial day. This could be your first step in taking control back during such a trialing time. Know that you don't have to do this alone.



### OUR MISSION

Valley Caregiver Resource Center offers a comprehensive array of services designed to assist elders and their families master the challenges that accompany the aging process.

As long-standing advocates and collaborators in preserving the health and quality of life of others, our aim is to promote personal and community well-being.



# October is Resident's Rights Month

By Susan Bussean, Program Manager: Fresno-Madera Long Term Care Ombudsman Program

Residents of nursing homes are guaranteed rights by the federal Nursing Home Reform Law. The law requires nursing homes to “promote and protect the rights of each resident” and stresses individual dignity and self-determination. Residents of Residential Care for the Elderly (RCFE/Assisted Living facilities) have similar rights, although different because this type of facility is not a health care facility. Below are highlights of resident rights for nursing home residents:

## Right to a Dignified Existence

- Be treated with consideration, respect, and dignity, recognizing each resident's individuality
- Freedom from elder abuse, neglect, exploitation, and freedom from physical or chemical restraints
- Quality of life is maintained or improved, and equal access to quality care
- Exercise rights without interference, coercion, discrimination, or reprisal
- A homelike environment, and use of personal belongings, where possessions are secure and not misappropriated

## Right to Self-Determination

- Choice of activities, schedules, health care, and to participate in resident council meetings and family council meetings
- Reasonable accommodation of personal needs and preferences
- Participate in developing and implementing a person-centered plan of care that incorporates personal and cultural preferences, including the right to request, refuse, and/or discontinue treatment, and to select their own personal physician and providers
- Choice about designating a representative to exercise his or her rights

## Right to be Fully Informed

- The type of care to be provided, risks and benefits of proposed treatments, any changes to the plan of care, or in the resident's medical or health status
- Rules and regulations, including a written copy of residents' rights
- Contact information for the long-term care ombudsman program and the state survey agency
- State survey reports and the nursing facility's plan of correction
- Written notice before a change in room or roommate
- Notices and information given in a language or manner he or she understands (Spanish, Braille, etc.)

## Right to Raise Grievances

- Present grievances without discrimination or retaliation, or the fear of it
- Prompt efforts by the facility to resolve grievances, and provide a written decision upon request
- To file a complaint with the long-term care ombudsman program or the state survey agency

## Right of Access to

- Individuals, services, community members, and activities inside and outside the facility
- Resident's personal physician, state survey agency representatives and long-term care ombudsmen services
- Visitors of his or her choosing, at any time, and the right to refuse visitors
- Personal and medical records
- Assistance if sensory impairments exist
- Participate in social, religious, and community activities

## Rights Regarding Financial Affairs

- Manage his or her financial affairs
- Information about available services and the charges for each service
- Personal funds of more than \$100 (\$50 for residents whose care is funded by Medicaid) deposited by the facility in a separate interest-bearing account, and financial statements quarterly or upon request
- Not be charged for services covered by Medicaid or Medicare

## Right to Privacy

- Regarding personal, financial, and medical affairs
- Private and unrestricted communication with any person of their choice
- During treatment and care of personal needs

## Rights During Discharge/Transfer

- Right to appeal the proposed transfer or discharge and not be discharged while an appeal is pending
- Receive 30-day written notice of discharge or transfer that includes: the reason; the effective date; the discharge; appeal rights and process for filing an appeal; and the name and contact information for the long-term care ombudsman program
- Preparation and orientation to ensure safe and orderly transfer or discharge
- Notice of the right to return to the facility after hospitalization or therapeutic leave

If you, or someone you know has questions or concerns and needs assistance with interpretation or a violation of any resident's rights, please contact the Fresno-Madera Long Term Care Ombudsman Program at (559) 224-9177.



## OUR PROGRAMS

**Caregiver Resource Program:** Get free help in finding resources if you're caring for seniors who need help with daily living activities or caring for anyone suffering from conditions such as a traumatic brain injury, dementia, stroke, or Alzheimer's.

**OASIS Adult Day Program:** Oasis is a licensed daytime care program for seniors in various stages of dementia or Alzheimer's. We are dedicated to creating an inviting and stimulating environment with opportunities for social interaction with every visit.

**HICAP:** Whether you are new to Medicare, currently on Medicare, or a victim of Medicare fraud...the Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program(HICAP) can help! Fresno and Madera HICAP is a State Health Insurance Program that provides free, confidential, and unbiased one-on-one counseling services for Medicare beneficiaries of all ages.

**Long-Term Care Ombudsman:** Our mission is to advocate for the dignity, quality of life and quality of care for all residents in long-term facilities.





POETRY CORNER



# Hands

For a while he cradles his head in his hands.

When he removes them, he has been crying.

I ask what's wrong.

Through muffled sobs he says, "I'm losing who I am.

I don't know what I'm doing."

I hold back my tears. There can't be two of us.

I try to reassure him.

But I resent this. All of this.

Too many times I react when I need to respond.

I am angry.

I am human.

I should ask for forgiveness.

But he won't remember why.

Looking outside he sees the family of quail skitter by  
and he points to them, smiling.

"Every morning they walk by there." And they do.

Later we go outside to watch the deer and the turkeys.

"They are part of our property," he explains.

They comfort us.

He appreciates the sun and then points to the clouds.

"Look at their shapes. Look how the wind has played  
with them." And I look.

Simple moments in nature where life is  
calm and beautiful.

I cradle my hands, one in the other,

"Thank you."

— Laura Lynn LaNotte-Hayes

## What is an Ombudsman?

By Susan Bussean, Program Manager: Fresno-Madera Long Term Care Ombudsman Program

*We are ADVOCATES for residents of long-term care, and we're here to help!*

The Fresno-Madera Long Term Care Ombudsman Program is a community-supported program and is mandated by federal and state Older Americans Acts. We are here to provide free advocacy and assistance to all residents of licensed long-term care. Ombudsmen do not conduct regulatory inspections, write any citations or provide direct care to residents. We are resident advocates! The mission of our State Certified Ombudsman Representatives is to advocate for the dignity, quality of life and quality of care of residents in long-term care facilities.

Our advocacy approach is entirely resident-centric. We require written consent from the resident to take action on their behalf. Ombudsmen handle a wide variety of complaints about resident's quality of life and care. Not all complaints are about the care provided by a facility, some complaints are about outside agencies, services or individuals (e.g., Medicaid or Medicare benefits, Hospice).

Complaints are also received from individuals other than the resident (e.g. family member). The complainant will be informed about the resident consent requirement, and the resident's quality of life and care, and capacity to make decisions will be discussed. Residents with dementia are often able to express their wishes and give direction to the Ombudsman. If the resident cannot provide consent, the Ombudsman will work with the resident representative, or follow program policies to resolve problems or concerns in the best interest of the resident. No action can be taken or information shared without resident consent, so the Ombudsman will visit the resident to see if they wish to pursue the complaint. If the resident desires the Ombudsman to take action on a concern brought forward by themselves, or by someone else, the Ombudsman will continue to communicate with the resident throughout the investigation process. Our focus is to resolve issues and complaints to the RESIDENT'S satisfaction.

Ombudsmen conduct monthly, unannounced visits to all licensed long-term care facilities in Fresno and Madera counties. We are available to assist residents and families of the 37 Skilled Nursing Facilities and 250+ Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (commonly called Assisted Living Facilities) located in Fresno and Madera counties. Ombudsmen are proactive about identifying any new residents, stopping by to introduce themselves, and explain that we provide free advocacy on their behalf.

Ombudsman often provide assistance in the following areas:

- Investigate complaints made by, or on behalf of, a resident
- Investigate Resident Rights violation(s)
- Address questions or concerns about the quality of a resident's care
- Offer assistance with a transfer or discharge notice received
- Investigate all allegations of elder abuse occurring in a long-term care setting (financial, physical, mental, neglect or emotional)
- Investigate resident-to-resident altercations
- Attend Care Plan Meeting (resident request required)
- Assist with the development Resident Councils and attend meetings, when invited
- Witness the signing of Advanced Health Care Directives (Skilled Nursing Homes only)
- Provide in-service trainings to facility staff on mandated reporting and resident rights
- Provide facility information options for placement or relocation
- Provide referrals to appropriate community resources and programs

**Ombudsman services are free and confidential!** If you would like to request assistance or receive additional information, please call Fresno-Madera Long Term Care the Ombudsman Program at 559-224-9177.



## National Family Caregivers Month – Honoring Family Caregivers

By Elizabeth Avila

November celebrates National Family Caregivers Month, recognizing and honoring family and friends that care for their loved ones. Caregiving is often unexpected, throwing families out of their usual routine and into unknown territory. A daughter's weekly visit or phone call with her mother may cause her to start noticing changes with her mother's behaviors and level of care. After consistent check-ins, the daughter starts providing transportation, adjusting her schedule to drive her mother to doctor appointments and pick up prescriptions. What used to be the daughter's self-care time after work has now evolved into helping her mother take a bath. Eventually, the daughter finds herself in a new role where she's now trying to balance her own life and work responsibilities alongside her mother's.

More than 48 million individuals dedicate their time and care to help their loved ones maintain their quality of life and purpose at home. National Family Caregivers Month provides the opportunity to raise awareness of the efforts and challenges family caregivers face on a daily basis. With caregiving, what families experience one day may vary entirely the next. One family's journey could also branch out differently compared to another's. Caregivers may be directly tied to their loved one, such as a daughter, son, sibling, spouse, or partner, while others are non-relatives, such as friends or neighbors. Regardless of the relationship, taking care of a loved one is a powerful, rewarding, but also overwhelming task that can affect all parties associated with the care.

Caregivers often develop a narrow focus on their loved one's care, easily pushing aside their own health and needs. Nevertheless, a caregiver's health, both mentally and physically, remains as important. Although it may

seem difficult at first, dedicating a small portion of one's time, such as ten minutes a day for a morning stretch or coffee break, can be revitalizing. Maintaining a positive outlook and finding the humor in challenging situations can make a difference in how one responds. Some caregivers find comfort in journaling, painting, gardening, or reading. Other caregivers may prefer social environments, such as support groups.

With community resources, families can determine particular needs and find support. Valley Caregiver Resource Center offers support groups where caregivers may connect with others going through similar situations and experiences with their loved ones. Family and friends may also attend free educational classes to learn more about diagnosis, behavioral management, stress reduction, and other issues related to caregiving. Family Consultants will work with family caregivers to create a care plan tailored to their caregiving situation, helping them navigate their loved one's care and connect them with local resources for further support. National Family Caregivers Month reminds families that they do not have to face their journey alone. Caregivers leave an immense impact in the community, and their love, patience, and care, are greatly appreciated and honored.

### SOURCES:

- <https://www.caregiveraction.org/nfc-month/>
- <https://www.joyce.edu/blog/national-family-caregivers-month/>
- <https://kin.uncg.edu/2022/11/29/national-family-caregivers-month/>
- Fact Sheet: Caregiving at Home: A guide to Community Resources
- Fact Sheet: Caregiving 101
- <https://www.aarp.org/politics-society/government-elections/info-2024/election-issue-family-caregivers.html#:~:text=More%20than%2048%20million%20family,forced%20into%20costly%20nursing%20homes>

## Minding your Mental Health

By Kevin Alvey, MA, MFCC, Program Manager, Caregiver Resource Center

Have you ever had someone sneak up from behind and startle you? It can be scary sometimes. The main reason we get surprised is because we just weren't paying close enough attention to our surroundings.

Don't let that happen with your mental health. The holidays can stir up a lot of emotions. For some it is the most wonderful time of the year, for others it can activate feelings of loneliness, isolation and other negative lived experiences.

Overwhelmingly, anxiety and depression are the most common conditions that are exacerbated by the onslaught of holiday activity. More commonly, it is the imperceptible way that depressive symptoms can crawl into our holiday cheer. But there are always common signs to watch out for:

- Noticeable changes in mood, energy level, or appetite
- Feeling flat or having trouble feeling positive emotions
- Difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much
- Problems concentrating, feeling restless, or on edge
- Increased worry or feeling overly stressed

Keeping an eye out for these sneaky changes in emotions can be a tremendous support in managing the needed changes we can make to take back control. Some helpful changes can be:

- Set boundaries around your energy and time commitments
- Stay connected to loved ones or close friends for support when needed
- Increase your fun. Say yes to things you like, and no to things that are a drain on your energy
- Don't be afraid to ask for help. Assert yourself and follow through when someone has offered help, give them a specific task.

Minding your mental health starts today. A mental health setback can't sneak up on you if you are alert and intentional in protecting yourself.

MINDING YOUR MENTAL HEALTH STARTS TODAY. A MENTAL HEALTH SETBACK CAN'T SNEAK UP ON YOU IF YOU ARE ALERT AND INTENTIONAL IN PROTECTING YOURSELF.

### UPCOMING TRAINING

Want to become a OMBUDSMAN Volunteer?

Next training is: Oct. 28 - Nov. 1st, 2024

Call (559)224-9177  
for more information!



# CAREGIVER EDUCATIONAL CLASSES



**valley**  
**CAREGIVER**  
**RESOURCE CENTER**

Classes are being offered In-Person or Online

To Register, Call us at:  
(559) 224-9154 or  
(800) 541-8614

## CLASS KEY

Want to know if a class listed is in-person or virtual?  
These symbols will tell you.

- I** IN-PERSON Class
- V** VIRTUAL Class
- H** HYBRID Class  
(both virtual and in-person)

Please be aware that if you are experiencing any Covid-like symptoms you will not be able to attend. Classes are not for professionals, providers, or care receivers.

# FALL 2024

## OCTOBER Classes

- V** **Durable Medical Equipment 101**  
Wednesday, October 9, 2024 | 10:00 am to 11:30 am  
Guest speaker: The Bone Store
- H** **Compassionate and Creative Approaches to Dementia Behaviors**  
Wednesday, October 23, 2024 | 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm
- H** **Caregiving For A Family Member Who Treated You Unkindly**  
Thursday, October 24, 2024 | 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm  
Guest speaker: Toni M. Onkka, LCSW
- V** **Emergency Preparation for Caregivers**  
Thursday, October 31, 2024 | 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm

## NOVEMBER Classes

- H** **CA Silver Alert Program – Help for Individuals Who Wander**  
Wednesday, November 6, 2024 | 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm  
Guest Speaker: Detective John Overstreet from the Fresno Police Department, Family Justice Bureau-Elder Abuse Unit
- V** **Caregiving Through the Holidays**  
Friday, November 8, 2024 | 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm
- H** **Breaking Free From the 'Yes Syndrome'**  
Thursday, November 14, 2024 | 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm

## DECEMBER Classes

- V** **Strengthening Family Caregiver Relationships**  
Virtual  
Thursday, December 5, 2024 | 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm
- H** **Lunch and Learn – Planning for the Future: What are your options when helping a loved one take care of their finances?**  
Tuesday, December 17, 2024  
In Person: 11:30 am to 1:30 pm | Virtual: 12:00 pm to 1:30 pm  
Guest Speaker and Sponsor: Noble Credit Union
- V** **Caregiver Book Club**  
Thursday, December 19, 2024  
2:00 pm to 3:00 pm  
CRC Clients Only

**FOR ALL CLASSES CALL TO REGISTER:  
(559)224-9154 or (800)541-8614.**

Once registered (only when attending virtually), you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the training.

**PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED FOR ALL CLASSES**

## OTHER Classes

- I** **Matter of Balance: Do You Have Concerns About Falling?**  
A Matter of Balance is an award winning program designed to help reduce the fear of falling, manage falls, and increase the activity levels of older adults who have concerns about falling. This is a two-hour eight-sessions program. Limited Space.  
Call the main office at (559) 224-9154 for dates and times
- I** **Powerful Tools For Caregivers Class**  
Powerful Tools for Caregivers is a two-hour six-sessions program. This class will give you the tools to help reduce stress, communicate effectively, reduce guilt, anger, and depression, help you relax, make tough decisions, set goals and problem-solve. Please note that this class will NOT focus on the disease process. Limited Space.  
Call the main office at (559) 224-9154 for dates and times

Part of a Statewide System of Caregiver Resource Centers serving family caregivers, contracted through the California Department of Aging, and grants from various Area Agencies on Aging in Fresno-Madera, Kern, Kings-Tulare, and Merced. VCR educational classes are not open to providers, volunteers or for patients.

**For more info on these events or our programs, visit:**  
[www.valleycrc.org](http://www.valleycrc.org)

**Like us on Facebook:**  
[www.facebook.com/ValleyCRC/](https://www.facebook.com/ValleyCRC/)



**Find us on Instagram:**  
[https://www.instagram.com/valley\\_caregiver\\_resource\\_cntr/](https://www.instagram.com/valley_caregiver_resource_cntr/)







Please be aware that if you are experiencing any Covid-like symptoms you will not be able to attend. Classes are not for professionals, providers, or care receivers.

**FALL 2024**

**Valley Caregiver Resource Center**

offers a wide variety of FREE support groups for all caregivers which meet on an ongoing basis. Join us in person or virtually to connect with a community of support.

Support Groups are being offered In-Person

For more info, Call us at:  
(559) 224-9154 or  
(800) 541-8614

\* If you are in Kings or Stanislaus counties, please reach out to VCRC at (559) 224-9154 for more information about groups in your area.

**FRESNO County**

**Alzheimer/Dementia Support Group**

1st Monday & 3rd Wednesday | 10:00-11:30am  
Location: Fresno VCRC Office

**Caregiver Support Group**

3rd Wednesday | 2:00-3:30pm  
Location: Fresno VCRC Office

**TBI/Stroke Support Group**

4th Monday | 2:00-3:30pm  
Location: Fresno VCRC Office

**Spanish Support Group**

Last Friday | 10:00-11:30am  
Location: Fresno VCRC Office

**KERN County**

**Caregiver Support Group**

1st Friday | 10:30am-12:00pm  
Location: Tehachapi

**Caregiver Support Group**

3rd Thursday | 10:30am-12:00pm  
Location: Ridgecrest

**MADERA County**

**Caregiver Support Group**

2nd & 4th Tuesday | 10:00-11:30am  
Location: Oakhurst Lutheran Church

**MERCED County**

**Alzheimer/Dementia Support Group**

2nd Tuesday | 2:00-3:30pm  
Location: Living Well Café

**General Caregivers Support Group**

4th Tuesday | 2:00-3:30pm  
Location: Living Well Café

**TULARE County**

**Caregiver Support Group**

3rd Thursday | 10:00-11:30am  
Location: Tulare Senior Center

**TUOLOMNE County**

**General Caregiver Support Group**

4th Thursday | 1:30-3:00pm  
Location: Area 12 Agency on Aging

**SUPPORT GROUP SPOTLIGHT:**

Support Network is an online Facebook support group designed to connect and support family caregivers. This Facebook group is a private online support group, with no mediator or set meeting time. It is a safe place to talk, ask questions, find solutions to obstacles or share your caregiving experiences with others walking on a similar path. The online platform is designed to build community, connect caregivers, and offer solutions to daily struggles all through the convenience of an app on your phone.

**JOIN NOW:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/valleycsn>

For more info on these events or our programs, visit:

[www.valleycrc.org](http://www.valleycrc.org)

**LOCATION  
GUIDE**

**Fresno VCRC Office:**

5363 N. Fresno St.

**Living Well Café – Merced:**

851 W 23rd St, Merced, CA 95340

**Ridgecrest:**

417 Drummond Ave, Ridgecrest, CA 93555

**Oakhurst Lutheran Church:**

39255 Black Road, Oakhurst, CA 93644

**Tehachapi – The Salvation Army  
Community Center:**

538 E. Tehachapi Blvd, Tehachapi, CA 93561

**Tulare Senior Center:**

201 N F St, Tulare, CA 93274

**Area 12 Agency on Aging:**

19074 Standard Rd, Sonora, CA 95370

# FAMILY CARE AND MEDICAL LEAVE

## QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

PG 1

**California law** guarantees job-protected leave to eligible employees with a serious health condition, who are caring for a family member with a serious health condition, or to bond with a new child (by birth, adoption, or foster placement). This leave is referred to as the **California Family Rights Act leave** or **CFRA leave**.

**Employees** also have federal rights to leave for their own or a family member's serious health condition or to bond with a new child, which are provided for by the **Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**. When both state and federal laws apply, the employee receives the benefit of the more protective law.

**THE QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE** below concerns leave for an employee's own serious health condition or to care for a family member with a serious health condition.

	<b>California Family Rights Act Leave (CFRA)</b>	<b>Family &amp; Medical Leave Act (FMLA)</b>
<b>I am eligible if:</b>	I have or a family member has a serious health condition, I have worked for my employer for 1+ year, I have 1250 hours of service in the past year, and my employer has 5+ employees. (Gov. Code, § 12945.2; Cal. Code Regs., tit. 2, § 11087).	I have or a family member has a serious health condition, I have worked for my employer for 1+ year, I have 1250+ hours of service in the past year, and 50+ employees work within 75 mile radius. (29 U.S.C. § 2611(2); 29 C.F.R. § 825.110).
<b>How much leave do I get?</b>	Up to 12 weeks per year for all CFRA purposes. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 2, § 11090).	Up to 12 weeks per year for all FMLA purposes. (29 U.S.C. § 2612; 29 C.F.R. § 825.701).
<b>Which family members may I take leave for?</b>	An eligible employee may take job-protected leave to care for a child of any age, spouse, domestic partner, parent, grandparent, grandchild, or sibling with a serious health condition. "Child" means a biological, adopted, or foster child, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child of an employee or the employee's domestic partner, or a person to whom the employee stands in loco parentis. "Parent" includes a biological, foster, or adoptive parent, a parent-in-law, a stepparent, a legal guardian, or other person who stood in loco parentis to the employee when the employee was a child.	An eligible employee may take job-protected leave to care for a child, spouse, or parent with a serious health condition.
<b>What is a serious health condition?</b>	A serious health condition is an illness, injury, or physical or mental condition that involves either inpatient care or continuing treatment by a healthcare provider. (Cal Code Regs., tit. 2, § 11087).	A serious health condition is an illness, injury, or physical or mental condition that involves either inpatient care or continuing treatment by a healthcare provider. (29 U.S.C. § 2611(11); 29 CFR § 825.113).
<b>Should I notify my employer when I'm going to take leave?</b>	Yes. Give your employer at least 30 days' notice if possible. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 2, § 11091).	Yes. Give your employer at least 30 days' notice if possible. (29 U.S.C. § 2612(e)(1)).
<b>Am I required to take leave all at once?</b>	No. The leave does not need to be taken in one continuous period of time. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 2, § 11090).	Maybe. You can take leave intermittently if medically necessary. Otherwise, you need the approval of your employer to take intermittent leave. (29 U.S.C. § 2612(b); 29 C.F.R. § 825.202(c)).



# FAMILY CARE AND MEDICAL LEAVE

## QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

PG 2

	<b>California Family Rights Act Leave (CFRA)</b>	<b>Family &amp; Medical Leave Act (FMLA)</b>
<b>Will I lose my job while on leave?</b>	No. You will be reinstated to your same or comparable job, except in limited circumstances unrelated to your leave (such as layoffs). (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 2, § 11089).	No. You will be reinstated to your same or comparable job, except in limited circumstances unrelated to your leave (such as layoffs). (29 U.S.C. § 2614(a); 29 C.F.R. § 825.214 & 825.216).
<b>Will I be paid on leave?</b>	<u>Maybe.</u> You will be paid if your employer pays employees on CFRA leave, if you use accrued paid time off (such as vacation time), or if you apply to the California Employment Development Department (EDD) for State Disability Insurance (SDI) or Paid Family Leave (PFL) and qualify. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 2, § 11092).	You will be paid if your employer pays employees on FMLA leave, if you use accrued paid time off (such as vacation time), or if you apply to EDD for SDI or PFL and qualify.
<b>Am I required to use sick/vacation time?</b>	CFRA leave for self: If you are receiving State Disability Insurance for your own serious health condition, an employer may not require you to use accrued vacation or sick time. You may elect to supplement State Disability Insurance with accrued vacation or sick time. If you are not receiving State Disability Insurance, you may elect to use, and your employer may require you to use, accrued vacation and/or sick time. CFRA leave for family member: If you are receiving Paid Family Leave to care for the serious health condition of a family member, an employer may not require you to take accrued vacation time. You may elect to supplement Paid Family Leave with accrued vacation time or, if your employer agrees, sick time. If you are not receiving Paid Family Leave, you may elect to use it, and your employer may require you to use accrued vacation time, and you and your employer may agree that you can use sick time.	You may elect to use vacation time, sick leave, or paid time off. If you are on unpaid leave, your employer may require you to use vacation time, sick leave, or paid time off. (29 C.F.R. § 825.207).
<b>Will my employer continue to pay for my health coverage?</b>	Yes. Your employer must pay for the continuation of your group health benefits if your employer normally pays for those benefits. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 2, § 11092).	Yes. Your employer must pay for the continuation of your group health benefits if your employer normally pays for those benefits. (29 U.S.C. § 2614(c); 29 C.F.R. § 825.209).
<b>Will I lose seniority or benefits?</b>	No. And, you may accrue seniority or benefits if your employer allows accrual for other forms of leave. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 2, § 11092).	No. And, you may accrue seniority or benefits if your employer allows accrual for other forms of leave. (29 U.S.C. § 2614(a) (2); 29 C.F.R. § 825.209).
<b>Do I need to provide a medical certification?</b>	<u>Maybe.</u> Your employer may require medical certification of a serious health condition. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 2, § 11091).	<u>Maybe.</u> Your employer may require medical certification of a serious health condition. (29 U.S.C. § 2614(a)(4); 29 C.F.R. § 825.306).

\* This guidance is for informational purposes only, does not establish substantive policy or rights, and does not constitute legal advice. <https://calcivilrights.ca.gov/employment/family-care-medical-leave-guide/>

**Our upcoming Greek Gala is officially SOLD OUT!** But don't worry, we have a waiting list for those who would like to attend and there are still opportunities to donate to our live and silent auction. Contact us today to see how you can still contribute and support our great cause.

PLEASE JOIN US

Valley Caregiver Resource Center Presents a

# GREEK GALA

October 18th

Clovis Veterans Memorial District  
808 Fourth Street, Clovis, CA 93612



COME JOIN US FOR A  
STUNNING GALA

Immerse yourself in the rich  
of Greek culture and enjoy a  
dinner of delicious food.

Be a dedicated advocate in  
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seniors to receive the services and benefits over time.

BUY TICKETS  
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FOR QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT:

**Michelle DiBuduo, Executive Director**  
5363 N. Fresno Street, Fresno, CA 93710 ♦ [www.valleycrc.org](http://www.valleycrc.org)  
Phone: (559) 224-9154 ♦ [mdibuduo@valleycrc.org](mailto:mdibuduo@valleycrc.org)

Valley Caregiver Resource Center is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.  
Contact your tax advisor regarding deduction of donations.

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**IT'S TIME TO CALL!**

**HICAP**  
 Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program

**OPEN ENROLLMENT IS  
 OCTOBER 15 – DECEMBER 7**

**CALL TO SCHEDULE YOUR APPOINTMENT TO REVIEW YOUR MEDICARE PLAN CHOICES**

*HICAP is a program of the Valley Caregiver Resource Center serving Medicare beneficiaries in Fresno and Madera counties. HICAP counseling services are provided by counselors registered with the California Department of Aging who are acting in good faith to provide information about health insurance policies and benefits to you, the client. Counseling is free, confidential, and unbiased.*

[www.valleycrc.org](http://www.valleycrc.org)  
 (559) 224-9117 • (800) 434-0222

**DONATE TODAY!**

Valley Caregiver Resource Center (VCRC) gratefully accepts donations;. Donated funds go towards services provided by VCRC, HICAP, OASIS and the Ombudsman Program. Services will not be denied if a client will not or cannot contribute to the cost of the services. The Fresno-Madera Ombudsman Program does not receive donations when Long Term Care Facilities sponsor or donate to VCRC. Your generosity in donating to VCRC will be greatly appreciated and can be done by forwarding your gift to VCRC at 5363 N. Fresno St., Fresno, CA 93710. VCRC is a 501(c)(3) private non-profit organization. All gifts are tax deductible in accordance with existing IRS regulations. Donations can also be made online through our website at: [www.valleycrc.org](http://www.valleycrc.org)