

## CAREGIVER NEWS



1-800-798-0988

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

Alternatives has served ten counties in Midwestern Illinois for more than thirty-five years.

Designated by the State of Illinois, Alternatives is the lead advocate throughout ten counties including Rock Island, Henry, Mercer, LaSalle, Putnam, Knox, Henderson, Warren, Bureau, and McDonough

Alternatives' Ombudsmen also serve Brown, Hancock, Schuyler, Adams, Pike and Calhoun County.

It is our mission to promote the independence and quality of life for older adults, adults with disabilities, and their families.

### Finding Your Green Zone

Spring is the time for green and finding your green zone. When responding to a situation we have three choices; transform, cope or collapse. Caregivers are asked to manage many situations from day-to-day household to crisis intervention. How can you bring the mindset to transform and flourish under those circumstances?

#### Your inner game

**What is the mindset you bring to the situation and how does that affect the outer situation? What if you're irritated, anxious or angry?** What is happening in our minds determines how we respond to the outer world. The sympathetic nervous system is the part of our brains that motivate us to get up and go. It is sensitive to what is in our environment, but also to what is happening in our own minds. When overstimulated, it leads to the fight-flight-freeze response. The parasympathetic nervous system acts as a brake, slowing our brain down when it has become overstimulated. It allows us to see what is happening in the moment and what is needed to create positive results.

#### The green zone

Flourishing starts with how we manage our responses. Our nervous system has a green, flourishing zone. When a situation is overwhelming we move into the red zone: we attack, defend, avoid, escape. In the black zone: we freeze, shut-down, burnout. Black and red aren't permanent zones, just temporary if you cope with situations. However, if you're in the red zone for too long, you end up in the black zone; discouraged, frustrated and burned out. **The question for caregivers is: How do I get myself in the green zone?** That's where you need to be to flourish; centered, with inner calm. If you think: "I have to do it all myself" you might not be in the green zone much of the time. What matters, is the quality of your relationships. First with yourself, then with others.

#### Visualize to find the green zone

Breathing, meditation and visualization exercises all help to activate our parasympathetic nervous system. Try this visualization exercise to help find your green zone.

Get comfortable, close your eyes and imagine: Who has helped you? Think about them, see their face, listen to their voice saying your name. Imagine what they do and say. Feel their presence. Notice what happens in your body. Imagine that person standing behind you still supporting you. Bring to mind another person and feel the impact of their presence. And a third person, joining you. Now you have three people supporting you – how does that feel? Next, ask yourself: who can I support? You can do the same for someone else. If you experienced this more, would your caregiver experience be better, would your quality of life be higher?

*Caregiving is a marathon, not a sprint, and caregivers require a support team to keep them flourishing. If you find yourself overwhelmed and spending time in the red zone too long, reach out to Alternatives for connection to a our support network. We can link you with education, resource information, respite, and more. Please check out the back of this newsletter for more programs that can support you on your caregiver journey.*

*Adapted from: Bremer, Marcella. Leading Mindfully for a Positive Culture. Leadership & Change Magazine,*

**If you do not care to receive this quarterly newsletter please email [ehanna@alternativesforyou.org](mailto:ehanna@alternativesforyou.org) and you will be taken off of the mailing list. Thank you.**

**1-800-798-0988**

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

**Care Coordination**— consultation with professionally certified care coordinators providing free, in-home assessments to identify and set up supports for individuals living independently or for nursing home residents wanting to move back into the community.

**Ombudsman**— providing a listening ear, Ombudsmen meet with nursing home residents to help resolve concerns or complaints. For individuals in the community, the ombudsman is the advocate for concerns with services provided through managed care.

**Adult Protective Services**— investigating and resolving reported cases of abuse, neglect or financial exploitation for older adults, (over age 60) or adults with disabilities, (age 18-59).

**Assistance with Money Management**— assisting individuals with bill paying, writing checks, budgeting and balancing their checkbook.

**Bridges Community Program**— Aging and Disability Resource Center for the lower two thirds of LaSalle County. Offering options counseling and assistance with benefits registration including Medicare, Medicaid, state supported programs or other available benefits. Bridges offers a full calendar of events for older adults.

## Resident and Family Support Council

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program's Resident and Family Support Council connects and educates residents of long-term care facilities & their family members who are facing issues related to long-term care in Illinois.

Past meeting topics include *Visitation in Long-term Care*, *Understanding Your Rights: The Right to Privacy & Confidentiality*, *The Gift of Resources to Empower*, & *Home for the Holidays*.

### Spring meeting dates (2nd & 4th Tuesdays of the month):

**April 13 & 27—3p.m.**

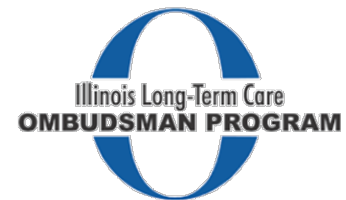
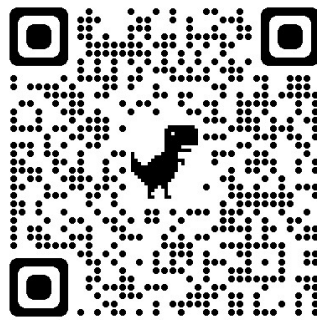
**May 11 & 25—3p.m.**

**June 8 & 22—3p.m.**

Registration is **NOT** required for virtual council meetings.

There are several ways to connect to a Council meeting:

- Email [Lee.Moriarty@illinois.gov](mailto:Lee.Moriarty@illinois.gov) to receive a invitation for future meetings
- Join via Zoom link: [bit.ly/3xpoY3p](https://bit.ly/3xpoY3p)
- Scan the QR code here:



To view past presentations on YouTube, visit their page by typing [IL LTC Ombudsman](#) in YouTube's search function

**alzheimer's**   
**association**

**2022 BrainWorks Conference**

**Thursday, May 5, 2022**

**8:00 AM - 4:00 PM CDT**

Join Alzheimer's Association for the 2022 Virtual BrainWorks Conference! Caregivers and families affected by Alzheimer's or dementia are invited to join via Zoom, **free of charge**. Topics covered include the latest in Alzheimer's and dementia research, effective communication and interaction, challenging behaviors and how to manage them, and managing your money to plan for future Alzheimer's care. You will also get to participate in a Caregiver Q&A panel featuring Iowa Chapter volunteers!

For more information or to register by phone, please contact Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline at 1.800.272.3900