



*A Bi-Monthly Newsletter  
for Family Caregivers*

**Sauk County ADRC:**  
**(608)355-3289**  
**[www.co.sauk.wi.us/adrc](http://www.co.sauk.wi.us/adrc)**

 **@adrcsauk**



When was the last time you laughed? Like REALLY laughed?? We've all heard that old saying - laughter is the best medicine. Well, it's true! Did you know there are hidden health benefits of laughter? According to the National Institute of Health and Mayo Clinic, current research shows that laughter can have serious positive physiological effects for those who engage in it regularly. Here are some ways laughter can positively affect our bodies:

- Short-Term Benefits
  - Laughter can stimulate many organs. Laughter increases intake of oxygen-rich air, stimulates the heart, lungs and muscles. Laughter increases the endorphins (feel-good chemicals) in your brain.
  - Laughter increases and then decreases your stress response, heart rate and blood pressure. That gives us a nice, relaxed feeling.
  - Laughter can stimulate circulation in our muscles which may help reduce symptoms of stress
- Long-Term Benefits
  - Positive thoughts can release neuropeptides that help fight stress and serious illnesses
  - Laughter may decrease pain by causing the body to produce natural pain relievers
  - Laughter can make it easier to cope with difficult situations.

So how do you laugh more? Browse the greeting card aisle, search for comic strips, watch funny movies, look up jokes, try laughter yoga (yes, it's a thing!), or share jokes with others. Give it a try!

Need some inspiration?

*E.R. Doctor:* How are things with the kid who swallowed a roll of quarters?

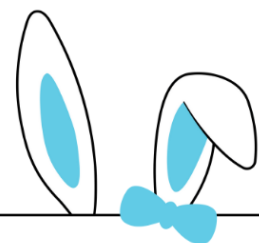
*Nurse:* No change yet.



*Sincerely,*

*Marina Wittmann*

**Aging Program Supervisor**  
**Caregiver Support Program Coordinator**  
**[marina.wittmann@saukcountywi.gov](mailto:marina.wittmann@saukcountywi.gov)**



The ADRC will be closed on  
Friday, April 18, 2025



# Ask Kurt!

Kurt Goeckermann

Dementia Care  
Specialist



## My brother has dementia and seems to get more restless in the evening. Is this what I hear called sundowning?

Sundowning is a set of symptoms that often appear in those with mid and later-stage dementia. These symptoms typically appear in the late afternoon and evening as seen in your brother. Caregivers may start to notice increased restlessness, anxiety, confusion, hallucinations, wandering, care resistance, calling out, or other behavioral disturbances. While it is not fully known what causes sundowning, multiple factors seem to contribute negatively:

1. Sleep disturbance or insomnia
2. Over stimuli earlier in the day or at the time of sundowning
3. Inadequate lighting during the day
4. Side effects of medications
5. Pain
6. Dehydration
7. Any other illness or diagnosis that may contribute to confusion or physical issues.



Sundowning can be a source of great distress to the person with dementia and their caregivers. Frustratingly, like much involving dementia, we do not have a solution or cure for the challenge of sundowning. That does not leave us with no recourse. There are numerous things we can do to help all involved and reduce the symptoms and distress that arise. This will involve some trial and error to find out what is helpful, but often some relief can be accomplished. Approaches that may help include:

1. Light therapy during the day. Consider increased exposure to sunlight, windows, or utilizing sunlight-mimicking lamps in the morning and early afternoon.
2. Minimizing or avoiding caffeine.
3. Some form of movement or exercise the person enjoys earlier in the day.
4. When possible, move appointments and activities earlier in the day.
5. Music therapy, calming, familiar music later in the day and evening.
6. Provide very familiar settings, objects, and pictures, especially as the day winds down. Utilize simplified, calming activities and conversation.
7. Speak with your MD about possible treatment. Just as the wrong medications, doses/timing can contribute to sundowning, some medications may alleviate it. These can include herbal and natural medications or those needing a prescription. Include a discussion of possible pain or other health issues that may negatively impact well-being.
8. If naps are necessary, try to make them short and earlier in the day.
9. Avoid or minimize alcohol.
10. Avoid excess stimuli later in the day, decrease and lower lighting as the evening winds on. Minimize excess noise and commotion. Consider trying to reduce screen use right before bed or utilize calming programming.
11. Encourage the use of needed glasses or hearing aids throughout the day to increase understanding of the environment and avoid further confusion.
12. As the caregiver, realize the person is not trying to cause upset or be difficult. Dementia makes people less able to adapt. They are losing the ability to evaluate and modify their behavior. Adaptation falls to the caregiver. Arguing, correcting, or getting upset are all counterproductive to addressing the symptoms of sundowning. A calm, gentle demeanor is always the best approach. Please, as a caregiver, utilize the formal and informal supports available.

It is important to know that the above symptoms and approaches may or may not work depending on the person and the caregivers. Each individual and situation is different. Try things, if they are ineffective after a trial, adapt and move to other approaches. Finally, please contact the Dementia Care Specialist through the Aging and Disability Resource Center in your county. They can help you to consider approaches, both practical and emotional that can reduce the stress of sundowning for all.

*Sincerely, Kurt*



The Wisconsin State Conference presented by Oak Park Place is one of the largest and most comprehensive statewide conferences dedicated to Alzheimer's disease and dementia in the country. Please join us May 5-6, 2025 for our annual conference, A Journey of Care: 45 Years of Dedication & Hope.

This year's event is entirely in person and will be held over 2 days. It features keynote speakers, panels, workshops, and our annual caregiver awards. Topics range from the latest in Alzheimer's research, mental health & caregiver stress, how dementia impacts diverse communities, and caregiver safety.

Together we are Honoring the Past. Shaping the Future. We invite you to join us so that together, we can improve the lives of those living with dementia and their families.

**May 5-6, 2025 | Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells**  
[www.alz.org/wi/events/wisconsin-state-conference](http://www.alz.org/wi/events/wisconsin-state-conference)

# NEW!! Dementia Caregiver Support Meeting

Led by ADRC Dementia Care Specialist, Kurt Goeckermann

ADRC: (608)355-3289

**3rd Monday of  
Every Month** | **3:30pm**

**First Meeting in March**

Spring Green Community Library | 230 E Monroe Street



# PTSD FAMILY COACH



**PTSD Family Coach** is a **free, easy-to-use mobile application** that was developed by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in 2016 and updated in 2018. The app can help partners and loved ones of people with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). More than **240 family members of Veterans** with PTSD helped create PTSD Family Coach (Owen et al., 2017). The app is an easy way to learn about how PTSD can affect families. It also has tools to help family members manage their well-being.

## CUSTOMIZE PTSD FAMILY COACH

Choose the top three things you would like from the app. This way, PTSD Family Coach can highlight content for your needs. Choose from topics, like:

- Managing PTSD symptoms in loved ones
- Taking care of myself
- Managing relationship problems
- Parenting

## THINGS TO KNOW

Browse topics that answer questions you may have:

- Learn how your loved one's symptoms can affect you
- Learn how to care for yourself
- Explore treatment options for you and your loved one
- Get tips on how to feel closer to your loved one, respond to anger, and talk about your needs

## THINGS TO TRY

Try self-help tools to manage stress levels for your loved one and yourself. Learn how to:

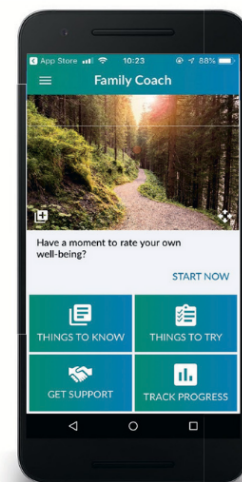
- Communicate positively with your loved one
- Create daily rituals that can help you feel closer
- Manage your loved one's feelings of being alone and help them get out more

## GET SUPPORT

Use PTSD Family Coach to connect with other caregivers and learn more about treatment options. Learn how to grow your own personal support system by reaching out to people you trust. If you're in crisis, you can choose from resources that will connect you with people who are ready to help. If you use Twitter, connect with others from within the app using #PTSDFamilyCoach.

## TRACK PROGRESS

PTSD Family Coach can help you create goals to help your loved one, yourself, and your family. Learn to recognize and track patterns in your loved one's symptoms. Track your own well-being and learn what helps you feel better over time.



## REFERENCES

- Owen, J., Kuhn, E., Jaworski, B., McGee-Vincent, P., Juhasz, K., Hoffman, J., & Rosen, C. (2018). VA mobile apps for PTSD and related problems: Public health resources for veterans and those who care for them. *mHealth*. doi:10.2196/mhealth.2018.05.07
- Owen, J., Jaworski, B., Kuhn, E., Hoffman, J., Schievelbein, L., Chang, A., Ramsey, K., & Rosen, C. (2017). Development of a mobile app for family members of Veterans with PTSD: Identifying needs and modifiable factors associated with burden, depression, and anxiety. *Journal of Family Studies*. doi:10.1080/13229400.2017.1377629



For more information, visit:  
[www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile](http://www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile)

Date Created: February 13, 2019



# Caregiver Support Meetings & Memory Cafe's

## General Family Caregiver Group

- **Riverwood Senior Living**, Wisc Dells, Last Tuesday @ 10am | Contact Sue, 608-886-0873
- **Woodman Senior Center**, Richland Center, 4th Monday @ 10:30m | Contact Pam, 608-548-3954

## Veteran Specific Caregiver Group

- **Baraboo VA Clinic**, 3rd Monday @ 1:30pm | Contact Meghann Schmitt, 608-256-1901 ext. 12308  
\*caregiver of an enrolled veteran or enrolled veteran who is a caregiver

## Parkinson's Specific Group

- **First Congregational Church** in Baraboo, 3rd Monday @ 2pm | Contact Geri Schoenoff, 608-356-3473

## Mental Health Specific Group

- **West Square Building**, UW Extension Room, 3rd Monday @ 6pm | Contact Ted Hall, 608-301-5390
  - Virtual option available: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84660758640> \*for adults with a loved one who has symptoms of a mental health condition, including alcohol or substance use disorders

## Dementia Specific Groups

- **Maplewood** in Sauk City, 4th Tuesday @ 3pm | Contact Theresa Grimes, 608-643-3383
- **Virtual Morning Coffee Connect**, Every Monday @ 10am | Contact Pam Kulberg, 608-548-3954
- **Reedsburg Library**, 3rd Wednesday @ 12pm | Contact Marina Wittmann, 608-355-3289
- Coming Soon! **Spring Green Community Library**, 3rd Monday @ 3:30pm | Contact Kurt Goeckermann, 608-355-3289 (starts March 17, 2025!)

## Huntington's Disease Specific Groups

- **Virtual Huntington's Disease Groups**, 3rd Tuesday @ 6:30pm (Caregivers), 2nd Tuesday @ 6:30pm (Young Adults, 16-35), 1st Saturday at 10:30am (Statewide) | Contact Deb Zwickey, 414-257-9499

## Memory Cafe's

A safe space where caregivers and loved ones with dementia can socialize, listen to music, and have fun!

- **Fusch Community Center**, 2nd Friday @ 10am | Contact Kurt Goeckermann, 355-3289
- **Reach Out Lodi**, 4th Friday @ 1pm | Contact 697-2838

## Alzheimer's Association Virtual Statewide Groups | call 800-272-3900 to register

- For Persons Living with Mild Cognitive Impairment, 2nd Wednesday @ 10am
- Family Caregivers for Loved One with Dementia Living at a Facility, every other Friday @ 10am
- Family Caregivers for Loved One with Frontotemporal Degeneration, 3rd Wednesday @ 6pm
- Family Caregivers for Loved One with Dementia in the Early Stages, 4th Tuesday @ 10am

# Grief for Family Caregivers: Understanding Anticipatory Grief



If you are a family caregiver, you may experience grief not only after losing a loved one but also in the time leading up to their passing. Caring for someone with a long-term or incurable illness often brings feelings of sadness, loss, and uncertainty. This is known as anticipatory grief, a natural response when preparing for a significant change or loss.

## What Is Anticipatory Grief?

Anticipatory grief is the grief felt before a loss. It commonly occurs when a loved one has a terminal illness or a condition like Alzheimer's that permanently alters their personality. While your loved one is still alive, it can feel as though the person you once knew is "gone."

Anticipatory grief is a real and valid emotional response to the realization that a life-changing loss is on the horizon.

## Symptoms of Anticipatory Grief

Not everyone experiences anticipatory grief in the same way, but common symptoms often mirror those of conventional grief (1), including:

- Emotional stress
- Intense preoccupation with the loved one
- Wishing for a return to their personality before their illness
- Loneliness and tearfulness
- Irritability or anger
- Withdrawal from social interactions
- Depression and anxiety
- Mourning changes in their personality or appearance

Similar to grief after death, anticipatory grief is experienced in phases (2), though the process may feel more unpredictable.

## Phases of Anticipatory Grief

### 1. *Acceptance of Death*

Coming to terms with the inevitability of your loved one's condition. This phase may involve feelings of depression and sadness.

### 2. *Concern for the Dying Individual*

Regret over past arguments or unresolved issues may surface, prompting a desire for closure.

### 3. *Rehearsal of Death*

Preparing for the end, such as discussing funeral arrangements or saying goodbye.

### 4. *Imagining Life Without Them*

Picturing a future without your loved one, including mourning the life you planned together.

Article Continued...



## Anticipatory Grief vs. Grief After Death

While both forms of grief share similarities, anticipatory grief often involves heightened feelings of anger, loss of control, and unpredictability. You may feel stuck in limbo, unsure how to process emotions or prepare for the inevitable loss.

## How to Cope with Anticipatory Grief

Managing anticipatory grief can be challenging, but these strategies can help:

### 1. *Redefine Hope*

Focus on the quality of life rather than the quantity of time. For instance, hope for “good days” or meaningful moments with your loved one.

### 2. *Build a Support Community*

Involve family and friends to create a network of emotional support. Leaning on others can ease the strain and foster connection.

### 3. *Spend Time with Your Loved One*

Use this time to bond, resolve past issues, or create positive memories. A “bucket list” of shared activities can be a way to honor your relationship.

### 4. *Seek Counseling*

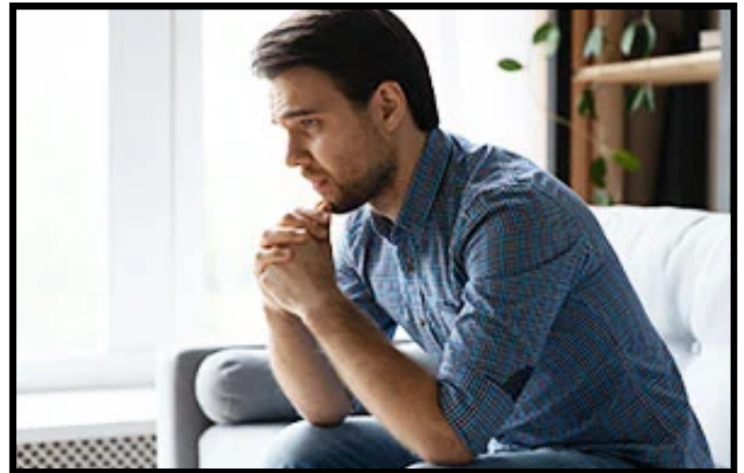
Professional counselors, social workers, or support groups can provide a safe space to process your feelings and prepare for the transition ahead.

### 5. *Surround Yourself with Support*

Share your sadness and fears with trusted friends or professionals. Engaging with others can help you feel less isolated in your journey.

## When to Seek Help

If grief becomes overwhelming and interferes with daily activities, you may be experiencing complicated grief. Reach out to a mental health professional for support. Follow this link to learn more about mental health when navigating grief and loss.



## More Information on Grief for Family Caregivers

Grief is a deeply personal experience, and there’s no right or wrong way to process it. While the sadness may lessen over time, some caregivers need additional support to navigate prolonged grief. For more resources and insights, visit the Caregiver Action Network and search for:

- What’s Next After Caregiving? Coping with Grief and Life After Caregiving.
- Rediscovering Self After Caregiving: Navigating Loss & Renewal
- Caregiver Action Network Help Desk

## References and Resources

1. Johansson ÅK, Grimby A. Anticipatory Grief Among Close Relatives of Patients in Hospice and Palliative Wards. American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Medicine®, 2012.
2. University of Rochester Medical Center. Anticipatory Grief – Health Encyclopedia.

<https://www.caregiveraction.org/anticipatory-grief/>



# Take 5!

## QUOTE OF THE ISSUE:

~ Spring adds new life and  
new beauty to all that is ~

Jessica Harrelson

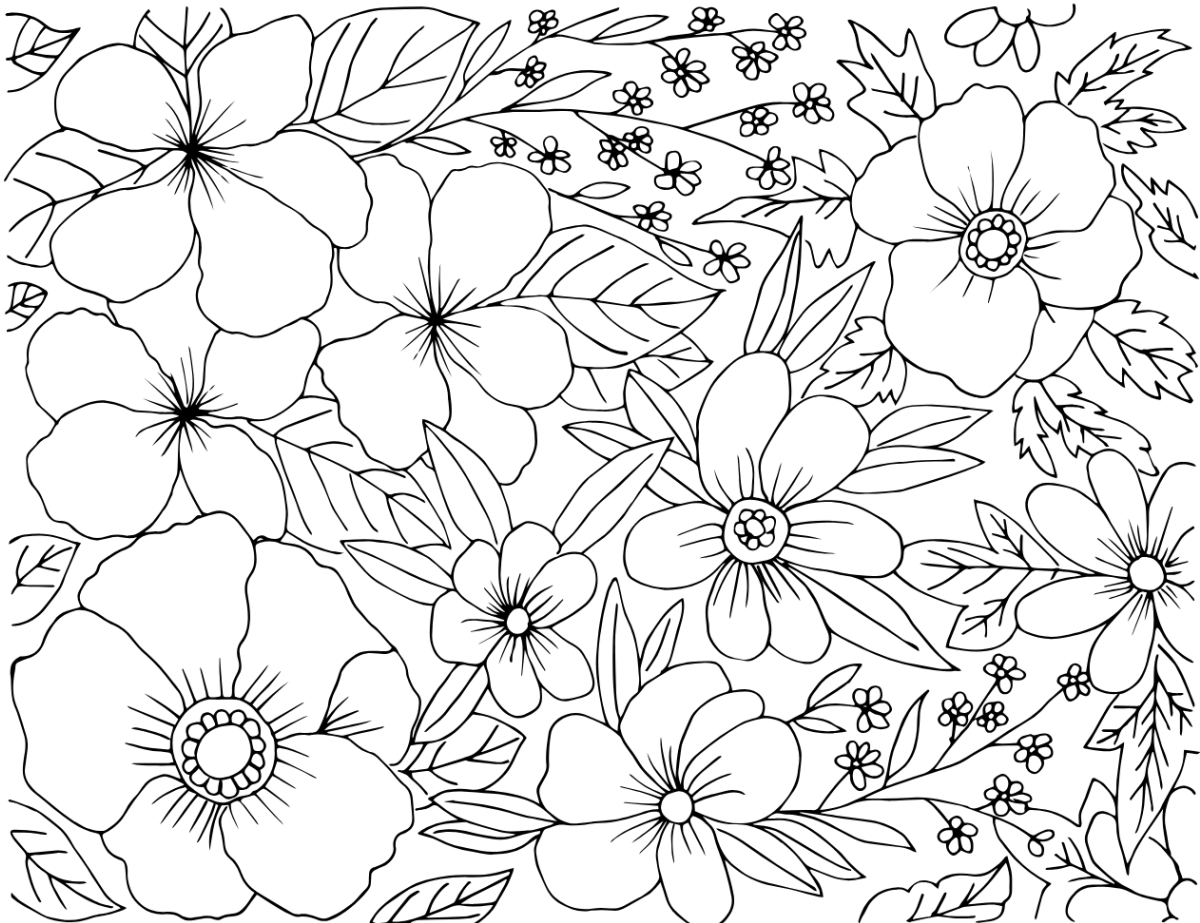
Solution on Page 12

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						8	4	
8		9	1			6	7	
	6		7					4
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	8	1			5	3		9
	2	4						
9					7	4		

### Sudoku Rules:

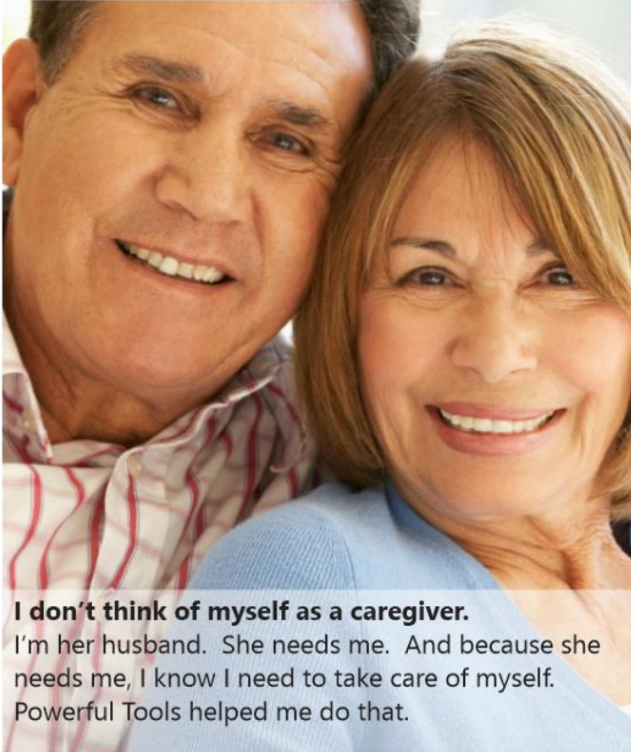
Fill in the blanks so that each of the nine rows, columns, as well as each of the nine 3x3 grids must contain one of each number 1-9.

Color Me! 





Powerful Tools  
FOR Caregivers



**I don't think of myself as a caregiver.**  
I'm her husband. She needs me. And because she needs me, I know I need to take care of myself. Powerful Tools helped me do that.

### Spring 2025 Workshop

**Starts:** Wednesday, April 9

**Time:** 1:00 – 2:30pm

**6 consecutive weeks**

**Location:** Reach Out Lodi, 601 Clark Street, Lodi, WI 53555

**Suggested Contribution:** \$20

**Register** with Amyjane Craig at the Columbia County ADRC (608)742-9233

Workshop co-sponsored by the Columbia County ADRC and Sauk County ADRC.

# Caregiving is rewarding.

**But it can be challenging too.**

Caring for someone with an injury or illness — such as dementia, cancer, heart disease, Parkinson's disease, stroke or others — can be physically, emotionally and financially demanding.

**Taking care of yourself is important.**

Powerful Tools for Caregivers (PTC) can show you the way!

## **What is Powerful Tools for Caregivers? And why should I take it?**

Powerful Tools focuses on **your** well-being. The class meets once a week for six weeks and has been studied and shown to help family caregivers:

- Reduce stress, guilt, anger, and depression and improve emotional well-being
- Manage time, set goals, and solve problems
- Master caregiving transitions and be part of decision-making
- Communicate effectively with the person needing care, family members, doctors, and other helpers
- Find and use community resources



## Beyond Phone Calls: Activities for Reconnecting With Your Loved Ones

Rekindling old relationships is a great way to widen your social circle. What's more, catching up with old friends or family you haven't seen for a while can be a real mood lifter.

But if you haven't done much socializing lately, it can be hard to know where to start. Read on for some activities you can suggest doing together — and some tips for what to do if you feel rejected after reaching out.



### BRING BACK BEING A PEN PAL WITH AN OLD FRIEND

Who doesn't love getting a letter in the mail? To get things started, send an old friend a reminder of an experience or event you both shared — like the time you took the wrong bus because you were so busy chatting.

Say you've been thinking of them and would love to correspond more often. Be sure to include all of your current contact information — mailing address, email address, and phone number — so they know how to reach you. Or send a postcard with your favorite quote or poem, or a fun fact you recently learned. Be creative!

### START A TRAVELING BOOK CLUB WITH YOUR SCHOOL BUDDIES

If you love to read, you probably have some old paperbacks lying around the house. Why not pass them along to a small group of friends? The idea is simple: The person who owns the chosen book reads it and then mails it to the next person. Once everyone is done, you discuss it. This works better with only two or three people. Alternatively, you could all agree to get the same book from the library. (The [Libby app](#) lets you borrow ebooks and read them on your phone or tablet.)



### INVITE FORMER CO-WORKERS TO A VIRTUAL GAME NIGHT

If online games aren't your thing, rest assured old-school board games like Pictionary or Yahtzee work just as well. Here are some tips for [playing them on Zoom or other video chat platforms](#). You can keep it even more simple by finding some trivia questions and answers online that everyone can take turns reading to the group.

### HOST A MOVIE NIGHT WATCH PARTY

Pick a classic film from your childhood and invite your cousins or school friends to watch it with you. There are lots of ways to watch movies together online these days; here are [some good streaming options to try](#). And if you're uncomfortable with the tech, ask if any of the folks you're inviting would be willing to help you set it up.



### SEND YOUR FAMILY SOME OLD PHOTOS

Mail or email photos from your childhood to your relatives — it's so easy to snap a pic of those old prints from your phone. Offer to [set up a Google Photos drive](#) for everyone to share their own photos, and schedule a time for everyone to identify who's in the photos and reminisce about old times.



**REMEMBER TO MANAGE YOUR EXPECTATIONS**

If you reach out to someone who doesn't respond or turns you down, try not to take it personally. They may be feeling too overwhelmed to talk with anyone and say they're busy to avoid hurting your feelings. Also consider their personality – some people may accept your offer to take a walk in the park but would have no interest in joining a book group. **The key thing to remember is that it may not have anything to do with you or your request.**

As for the people you fell out of touch with because of a disagreement or misunderstanding, experts say acknowledging your part in the situation can open the door to reestablishing the relationship. If the person accepts your offer to do something together, remember to take things slowly as you'll both need time to regain each other's trust.

**Make Your Plan for Reaching Out**

Now that you have some ideas for reconnecting with your old friends and family members, it's time to get started. Take out a piece of paper or journal and jot down the names of three people you'd like to reconnect with, along with an activity to invite them to join.



Name	Activity
<i>Nancy from high school</i>	<i>Game night</i>

If you're feeling nervous, remember to breathe, relax, and tell yourself that reaching out is what matters. There's a good chance that at least one of the people you invite will say yes, giving you something fun to look forward to on your calendar.

**Connect With Common Ground Questions**

Getting into the swing of socializing is easier when you have a few icebreakers in your back pocket. After you've introduced yourself, ask a question that helps you find a subject to talk about.

- What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given?
- When you die, what do you want to be remembered for?
- What is your favorite item you've bought this year?
- What is your absolute dream job?
- Have you ever been told you look like someone famous – who was it?
- You have to sing karaoke, what song do you pick?
- Who was your childhood actor/actress crush?

<https://connect2affect.org/reconnect-with-loved-ones/>





# for Well Connected!

ADRC  
505 Broadway St  
Baraboo, WI 53913

Call or Email Marina Wittmann  
ADRC: (608)355-3289  
marina.wittmann@saukcountywi.gov

5	1	7	8	4	6	9	3	2
6	3	2	5	7	9	8	4	1
8	4	9	1	3	2	6	7	5
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7	8	1	4	6	5	3	2	9
3	2	4	9	8	1	7	5	6
9	5	6	3	2	7	4	1	8

Solution for Sudoku

## Breakfast Jokes

For Kids!



**How many vampires are in this room?**  
I dont know, I can't Count Choculas.



**What type of cereal do cats like?**  
Mice Krispies.



**Why do eggs make terrible joke tellers?**  
They're always cracking up.



**Why did the bacon laugh?**  
Because the egg cracked a yolk.



**How does Reece eat her cereal?**  
Witherspoon.



**What is an earthquake's favorite breakfast?**  
Quaker Oats.



**What's a car's favorite meal?**  
Brake-fast.



**What two things can you never eat for breakfast?**  
Lunch and dinner.

ListCaboodle.com