



Navigating Family Caregiving: Personal Stories and Practical Tools

November 15, 2022



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ELDERS
COALITION

NATIONAL CENTER ON ELDER ABUSE (NCEA)

**Why this work is
important.**

Education

Through our local, national, and global outreach efforts, we promote training, awareness, engagement, and dialogue on elder abuse and how it can be prevented.

Research

The NCEA provides the latest in research to identify and support best practice interventions in the field and advance elder justice for older people.

Collaboration

We work with organizations, agencies, professionals, and the public to empower older adults with the tools to help them live with dignity and respect, free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Los Angeles Caregiver Resource Center

The Los Angeles Caregiver Resource Center at the USC Leonard Davis School provides support across the continuum of caregiving, including diagnosis, prognosis, and services that help maintain the care recipient's independence and abilities, helping caregivers care for themselves, and manage their own well-being.



Diverse Elders Coalition

The Diverse Elders Coalition advocates for policies and programs that enhance the health and wellbeing of diverse elders, educates and connects diverse older adults and their loved ones to key policy debates on aging, and increases public support for issues that affect diverse communities.



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Presenters



Donna Benton, Los Angeles Caregiver Resource Center

Donna Benton, PhD, is a Research Associate Professor of Gerontology at the USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology. Benton is the Director of the USC Family Caregiver Support Center (FCSC) and the Los Angeles Caregiver Resource Center (LACRC). She has over 30 years of experience in providing direct service, advocacy and programs for families caring for persons with dementia. She was appointed to the CA Master Plan for Aging Stakeholder Advisory Commission and the CA Commission on Aging (CCOA). Her research focus is on the development of online evidence-based interventions for family caregivers to improve mental and physical health and well-being and prevention of elder mistreatment. She also serves as a mentor to students interested in advocacy for caregivers.



Nina Darby, Diverse Elders Coalition

Nina Darby (she/her) is the Training Manager at the Diverse Elders Coalition (DEC). Prior to joining the DEC, Nina delivered trauma-informed and culturally responsive programming as a direct service provider and program manager in Boston. With 10 years of training experience, Nina has trained healthcare and social service providers, law enforcement, court personnel, city employees and domestic violence advocates on how to best support and meaningfully collaborate with individuals and communities who hold diverse identities. As someone who watched her mom step into a caregiving role for her grandmother, Nina holds a deep appreciation for the rewards and challenges of family caregiving.

Presenters



Lynne Tillman, Author & Caregiver

Lynne Tillman is a novelist, short story writer, and cultural critic. Tillman is the author of six novels, most recently, *MEN AND APPARITIONS*, five collections of short stories, two collections of essays, and two other nonfiction books. Tillman's recent book-length autobiographical essay *MOTHERCARE*, is an honest and beautifully written account of a sudden, drastically changed relationship to one's mother, and of the time and labor spent navigating the American healthcare system. She is Professor/Writer-in-Residence in the Department of English at the University at Albany. She lives in New York.



Lara Porzak, Photographer & Caregiver

Lara Porzak is an American fine art photographer and is the president and owner of Lara Porzak Photography, Inc. Lara is the daughter of Pulitzer-prize nominated novelist, Marianne Wiggins, who was also a tenured professor of English at USC. In 2016, Marianne endured a massive stroke when she was just a few chapters short of finishing her novel, *Properties Of Thirst*, and Lara helped guide the story to the end.


Moderator



Lorraine Berry, Freelance writer, Los Angeles Times

Lorraine Berry taught at the SUNY-Cortland before returning to the Pacific Northwest. She is a writer, and her work frequently appears in the Los Angeles Times, Boston Globe, and others.

Housekeeping Items

- All attendees will enter the meeting in listen-only mode.
- Please utilize the Q&A function to submit questions to panelists.
- To enable the Live Transcript feature, click the  button.
- Recording & presentation materials will be made available via the National Center on Elder Abuse and Los Angeles Caregiver Resource Center <http://losangelescrc.usc.edu>.
- Your feedback matters! After we conclude today's webinar, please follow the link to complete our survey.

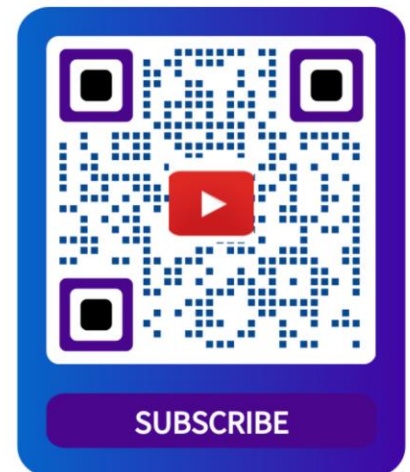
CAREGIVING PODCAST

Tips and Tools for Safe and Supportive Caregiving



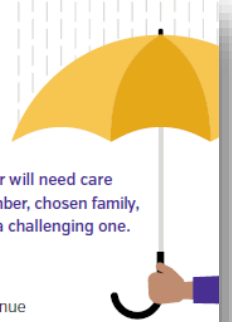
Donna Benton, Ph.D.

Assistant Dean of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) and research associate professor at the USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology, and Director of the Family Caregiver Support Center/LA Caregiver Resource Center at the School of Gerontology.



Tip Sheet: Tips and Tools for Safe and Supportive Caregiving

Tips and Tools for Safe and Supportive Caregiving



Most people either are caregivers, know a caregiver, will become a caregiver, or will need care during their lives.¹ Caregiving, and in particular caregiving for a close family member, chosen family, partner, or friend, can be a very rewarding and meaningful role. It can also be a challenging one.

What challenges do family caregivers face?

- As a loved one's medical needs increase and caregiving duties expand or continue over time, unexpected physical, emotional, and/or financial hardships may arise.
- Family carers may not identify themselves as caregivers. They may not recognize that their roles are being redefined as the demands of the situation change.
- It may be difficult for some caregivers to accept that they are now responsible for parents who raised and cared for them.
- Most people are surprised to take on the new roles and few know where to turn for financial, legal, medical, and emotional support.
- Shifting roles may become more complicated for families with histories of unresolved conflict. Caregivers harboring residual anger may respond to a loved one inappropriately and without fully understanding the changes that have occurred.
- Family caregivers may feel guilty about having any negative feelings. They may not have someone to talk with who understands their experience.

What is the impact of caregiver challenges on the care recipient?

- The demands of caregiving may get in the way of providing proper, quality care. For example, a caregiver may desire a break and leave an adult who is unable to care for themselves alone.
- Caregivers who have not acknowledged their caregiving role or are new to the challenges of caring for a loved one may lack knowledge and skills to adequately meet their needs. This may lead to failing to assist a loved one who can't remember to take their medication.
- Unprocessed feelings of anger held from childhood or adolescence may result in caregiver ambivalence and poor care. A reluctant caregiver may threaten to move the family member into a long-term care facility, a fear for many older adults.
- Family conflict among siblings and other relatives about their caregiving roles and responsibilities may negatively impact care for their loved one.
- Without appropriate supports in place, unchecked caregiver challenges could potentially lead to elder mistreatment.
- On the other hand, these new roles can help with learning resilience, patience and problem-solving. Caregivers and care recipients understand and can promote the value of care, and model roles for future generations.

1 Paraphrasing a quote by Rosalynn Carter

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