

Living with Alzheimer's: Coping

"My name is Joyce Anderson. I enjoy gardening. I have a flower garden and I have a vegetable garden. If you put positive energy into them, they grow and do well. So I do all of that because it helps, it helps my brain."

"I have challenges, which unfortunately have to do with my memory."

"Do you remember where you put the glasses though?" "I put them up there for now." "OK I'm just going to walk them over there."

"I live with my one and only daughter and her lovely husband and my wonderful, wonderful grandchildren who... they all take very good care of me."

"My mom has early onset dementia, which basically means that it's not your typical age in which she was diagnosed. My mom was still working and very much, fully engaged in her regular day to day activities. And I believe that that's part of, one of the reasons why I did not notice, that there was something a little bit bigger than just a simple forgetting of one or two things."

"We basically came up with a game plan, like what do we need to do moving forward so that mom can feel still comfortable, still a part of society, because that was a big thing for her, also."

"So, as part of the plan, we came up with mom attending a social daycare. At first she was a bit apprehensive thinking that I was sending her to a senior center but once she realized that she was doing word searches, she was doing adult coloring, she's doing painting. She was dancing, she's playing basketball, she's walking. I mean the list goes on. It literally is our lifeline."

"The activity is wonderful. Everybody who goes to the JCC, we all know why each of us is there. We know that. So it's not like you can hide and say, I don't want anyone to know. We all know why we are there. And we all make friends with each other."

"It just helps to have her feel love, have her feel a part of, have her understand that she is still part of something whole and something big."

"If she has nothing to do, she'll do a lot of word search. She'll do adult coloring. And she loves those. Those are the things that really helped to keep her going and keep her routine."

"Having a routine makes a huge difference. And um, it's a sense of security. It's a sense of knowing that all is gonna be well."

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"It allows for her to have that trust. It allows for her to be free. There's no question when we do take her out of the routine, that's when we notice there is disorientation, it's like stirring muddy water."

"Instead of sitting down and feeling sorry for myself, oh my God, what am I going to do? Um, I don't, I have no time for that."

"If I come in every day, being angry with everyone around me and saying, poor me, poor me. Why? I'm not poor me. So I have to maintain a positive attitude within myself in order to strengthen myself, to strengthen the weaknesses, the weakness of forgetting."

"What do you like to say Mom? You're able..." "Yes I'm able."

"A positive that I find in my mom being diagnosed and my mom living with me is how tender life is, how important the minutes are. I like flowers, I know they're gonna die. She loves flowers. But just the moment - of joy."

"My prescription to anyone else that may be going through this is you're not alone. However, you also need to reach out to others. You need to also feel comfortable in just being honest. There are many that are out there that have a similar story that don't mind exchanging coping mechanisms in order to help us through those down times, those hard times, those dark times, so that they will pull you up."

"It becomes a family thing when you have what I have. With my family, not because they're sitting around me – but it's a factual statement, that everybody chip in and help me out when, when, on when I have. I have my bad days too. But I don't walk around and say, oh, you know, I have Alzheimer's, I don't do that."

"This sounds so corny; you know, but love does prevail. And when a person feels love, 'Ahhh.'"