

ProActive Caring e-News


July 2020



Help spread the word about our new e-Manual

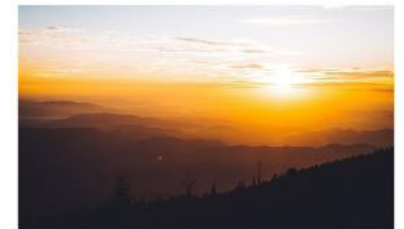
ProActive Caring, a caregiver support program for family members of persons with intellectual, developmental, and other disabilities, recently announced its ProActive Caring e-Manual is available as a downloadable, interactive resource.

The e-Manual leads users through eight modules that teach mindfulness and other strategies that have been shown to enhance well-being and reduce caregiver stress. Access to the e-Manual is free of charge, thanks to a grant from the New York State

Developmental Disabilities Planning Council. To view and download the e-Manual, please click [here](#); you can also share a flyer about the e-Manual accessible [here](#). 

Since caregivers are likely to pay attention to material from an agency, organization, or individual they know and trust, we encourage you to distribute it widely to your personal networks.

If you use excerpts from the manual we ask only that you include the following citation: "Scirri, M. and Drum, T. (2020). *ProActive Caring*



Caregiver Support Program.
Retrieved from proactivecaring.org.
Thank you so much for your assistance!

Visit Digital Resource Center for webcasts, videos and more

In addition to the e-Manual for the ProActive Caring Caregiver Support Program, a variety of supporting materials can be found in the ProActive Caring Program's [Digital Resource Center](#).

Materials include "Mindful Minutes" (reflections on quotations shared in each module of the ProActive Caring e-Manual), relaxation exercises (videos that add movement, sound, and other elements to longer, relaxing meditations), other relevant videos and links, and a ProActive Caring

Newsletter Archive. They also include ProActive Caring "School Exchanges," a series of webcasts recorded between March and June 2020 to support parents when their children were home from school.

The webcasts, moderated by Dr. Larry Force, feature exchanges between parent/advocate Lisa Nathan and school psychologist/advocate Peggy Pisano, as well as special guests, on how mindfulness might offer strategies for coping with everyday stressors and help build resilience.

The Digital Resource Center will remain a dynamic and evolving resource as new materials are added and new pages are constructed, so please check back.

When referencing materials on the Digital Resource Center, please include the following citation: "Force et al. (2020). *ProActive Caring Caregiver Support Program*. Newburgh, NY: Center on Aging and Disability Policy at Mount Saint Mary College." Retrieved from proactivecaring.org.

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Find virtual groups for support

Caregivers often say a major cause of depression and stress in their lives is that they feel isolated while caring for a child or an adult with special needs. But no caregiver needs to go it alone! In-person support groups offered by community agencies or informal support networks, such as parents participating in Special Education PTAs (SEPTAs) or parents whose children participate in a sports activity (e.g., Special Olympics), may be ideal. But a virtual caregiver support group or online community may also validate caregiver feelings, provide encouragement, and give hope.

Here are a few online groups that may be a good fit for caregivers of individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities:

- **[Down Syndrome Regression Support](#)**: A private Facebook group founded by Jadene Ramsdell, Senior Adviser to the National Down Syndrome Society.
- **[The Alzheimer's Association's Caregivers Forum](#)**: You can also search the Forum archive for posts on topics such as "Down Syndrome."
- **[My Autism Team](#)**, a social network for parents of kids diagnosed with autism.
- **[Caregiver Action Network \(CAN\)](#)**: A nonprofit organization devoted to providing support to families and caregivers at no cost. CAN offers a Care Community where family caregivers may connect anonymously for support and encouragement, a blog of caregiving stories, and a list of disease-specific organizations and foundations that may provide additional support.
- **[ProActive Caring](#)**, a private Facebook group created by the ProActive Caring Program. The group is intended to encourage sharing and reflection among its members, to provide insight into the stresses of caregiving and into coping mechanisms and approaches that have been shown to reduce stress and improve well-being. Just as one of the hallmarks of ProActive Caring has been the partnership between family caregivers and the staffs of agencies/ organizations providing services to individuals with intellectual, developmental, and other disabilities, the group includes both family members and interested agency/organization staff.

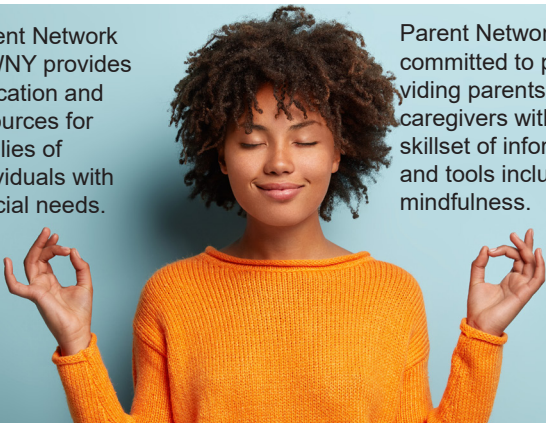
DDPC: Meeting the needs of caregivers

Most support programs for family caregivers center on the needs of individuals for whom they are caring, rather than on the needs of the caregivers themselves. It is a tribute to New York State that its Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC) recognizes the importance of caregiver well-being and has funded Caregiver Support Programs that address that need.

Thanks to Executive Director Sheila Carey, Program Planner Dr. Kimberly Berg, Program Research Specialist Viktoriia Borsuk, Chief Financial Officer Kathleen Mazur, Contract Specialist Linda Speno, Federal Liaison Dr. Jessica Pidgeon, Deputy Executive Director Vicky Hiffa, Executive Assistant Maureen Gannon, Diversity and Inclusion Program Specialist Jacqueline Hayes, and Graduate Assistant Kay Broughton for their advocacy and leadership on behalf of family caregivers and their steadfast support of the ProActive Caring Program.



Parent Network of WNY provides education and resources for families of individuals with special needs.



Parent Network is committed to providing parents and caregivers with a rich skillset of information and tools including mindfulness.

716-332-4170 | www.parentnetworkwny.org
info@parentnetworkwny.org



Get support when you need it. Texts available in English and Spanish. To receive texts, [click here for a link to sign up](#).



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51 Springside Ave, Poughkeepsie NY 12603
845-849-0838
www.HudsonValleyHealingCenter.com

Contact us

Email: proactivecaringprogram@gmail.com • Call: 800-691-3980 (voicemail)