

Talking Point chat room 21 August
The sandwich generation – caring for parents and children

SerenaS	Welcome to the chat room - tonight's session is about the sandwich generation - people who are caring for parents and children.
SerenaS	If you'd like to post a message, ask a question, share your experience or just say hello, just type in the white box at the top and click 'Ok'
jaymor	Good evening Serena and everyone, I am not a sandwich carer so will be sitting up the corner with a coffee listening in.
jeany123	Good evening everyone I'm not either so I will be joining Jaymor
Sheepteach	Hi, not used this before, hope it works ok. I care for my dad with VasD and have four teenagers one of whom has depression, also working p/time so my sandwich is very full!
SerenaS	Hello jaymor :) You're more than welcome to sit in the corner and listen in. I was surprised to learn how many people are in the 'sandwich generation' - they're 25% of the adult population.
SerenaS	Hi Sheepteach - it sounds like you are juggling quite a lot. How do you manage it?
Sheepteach	Hi 25% I am surprised too, I know of one other person who has experience similar to mine. SerenaS I think in a few years time I will look back and wonder how I managed, just as I do now when I had 4 kids under 5!!
SerenaS	Perhaps so Sheepteach - I know many carers on Talking Point wonder how they cope at times
Sheepteach	fortunately I have a very supportive hubby, though it took a long time for him to understand dad's illness. Dad lives about an hour away, so I visit twice a week when I am working nearest to him. I am afraid the children have had to do a lot for themselves on those days, and I must admit it's not always easy especially when they have their own growing up issues.
Izzy	I'm having a coffee with Jean and Jaymor!
jaymor	Did you bring any shortbread Izzy?
SerenaS	Hello Izzy :)
Izzy	But of course Jaymor. In a tartan tin. Hello Serena
Sheepteach	With a scottie dog on ;) ?
SerenaS	It's great to hear that your husband is supportive Sheepteach. Do you think your children understood what was happening to their grandfather?
jaymor	Not quite the same but we have members caring for their partner and have young children. That must be very hard. Sheep teach it must be so difficult to be pulled in two directions
Izzy	Of course Sheepteach. It must be hard having youngsters whilst caring for an older relative.
SerenaS	One strange thing about the sandwich generation - there aren't a lot of resources around (I was researching the topic). That really surprised me.
SerenaS	Yes jaymor - I think that people who have partners with dementia and children must also have a tricky balancing act.
Izzy	I believe there are some good books/resources around for helping young people understand.

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Izzy	Isn't there also an Alz Soc Factsheet?
SerenaS	Yes, that's right Izzy; there are resources to help children understand more about dementia.
jeany123	Yes there is Izzy I gave someone the link today
Warrior Mum	Hi everyone, I have two sons (one autistic), a mother with mixed type dementia and a hubby (aged 33) who has just been diagnosed with vascular dementia therefore I have a triple decker sandwich going on!!! Yeah for me. Luckily I have not lost my sense of humour yet :-)
SerenaS	Hello jeany :)
jeany123	I think it must be difficult if the person lives with the family as well a different set of problems,
Izzy	I thought that Jeany. I just googled 'children's books Alzheimer's' and what came up looked interesting.
jeany123	hello Serena
SerenaS	Hi Warrior Mum - thanks for popping in to the chat room. It sounds like you're coping with a lot of different things there. Have you found anything - other than a sense of humour - helps?
Warrior Mum	Hi jeany, could you possibly let me know what the link is?
jeany123	Hello Warrior mum I think it was you I gave the link to the fact sheet for children you certainly have your hands full
jaymor	Hello Warrior Mum, I don't know about a sense of humour, just how do you keep going. Do you get a good back up from the professionals
jeany123	I will put it on your thread warrior mum
Sheepteach	Dad was diagnosed just over 3 years ago, when my youngest was 10. We have always spoken openly and matter of factly amongst our immediate family, though dad has never accepted that he has any problems, so the children took it on board very well. Grandpa was always a bit eccentric anyway, when my daughter was 6 he gave her a tea towel for her birthday as he thought she would like to help mummy in the kitchen!
Sheepteach	Wow, warrior mum, that's a whole plate load! I am so glad you have kept your sense of humour, sometimes I have dig deep to find mine.
Warrior Mum	My SN son is 7 and my Mum was diagnosed just before he was born so he knows no different. However I have had to explain his Daddy's diagnosis as Daddy's brain is not working properly and when Daddy has a bad day or is upset my son will go up to his Daddy and kiss him on the forehead and say "It's ok"
Izzy	Aw the wee soul. It must be so hard for you WM.
Sheepteach	I'm guessing, warrior mum, that you must have some good routines established?
Warrior Mum	I just have to see the funny and good side to everything. There are times when it gets too much and I have a little cry and then crack on with things. We have established routines with both sons as the youngest turns two soon. However Daddy has a habit of trying to change them for his benefit which is quite funny when a 7yr turns round to his Daddy and says "It's not time yet, check the clock!!!" I just have to smile as the 7yr

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	can't read the clock yet ;-)
Warrior Mum	Thank you jeany. You probably did but don't get chance to check properly during the day.
Sheepteach	Gosh warrior mum, you seem to have a very good attitude, you wouldn't be human if it didn't get to you some times. Do you get much chance for me-time, coffee with a friend for example?
Izzy	I wondered if the school know about your situation and keep an eye on your son.
Sheepteach	Have to go now, tea finally on the table, thank goodness its school hols and none of us have to be up early tomo. Though it is my dad visiting day. Take care everyone, it was good to talk. x
Izzy	Goodnight ST. Wishing you a peaceful evening.
SerenaS	Thanks for popping in Sheepteach - I hope it was helpful for you. Please do pop into Talking Point whenever you need to. :)
jaymor	Bye Sheepteach,
SerenaS	I think two very good points have been raised so far - making time for yourself as a carer and working how to explain what dementia is to your children. Are there other helpful things for people caring for parents and children?
Warrior Mum	Not much me-time recently (since Boxing Day 2013 - when hubby had sudden onset of confusion. diagnosis sort of treatment sorted for hubby, caring for my Mum part-time
Warrior Mum	Sorry about last entry go a phone call and then forgot what I was saying
jaymor	Our youngest grandchild was 8 when my husband was diagnosed and he found it difficult. We now have a great grandson aged 5 who accepts Granddad as granddad and a grandson of two who again shows no sign of backing away and is happy to be with granddad
SerenaS	That's okay WM. Do you find you have enough support?
jeany123	Good night everyone I have to go and give husband his medication and supper,
Warrior Mum	I either care for one person or up to four people at one time or am travelling from one to the other. So not much me-time since Boxing Day.
Izzy	Night Jeany. Bill is watching New Tricks!
Warrior Mum	I have a few good friends, one of which owns his own garage so my hubby is welcome there anytime to give me a break during the week,
jeany123	Oh love it he has good taste x
tp18	so sorry I only just managed to pop in, I have been (and still am) at work
SerenaS	Night jeany :)
SerenaS	Hello tp :)
Izzy	Hi tp!
jaymor	Bye Jeany
SerenaS	It sounds like you have some good friends WM, it sounds like they're a great support :)
Warrior Mum	My In laws are in a sort of denial and not completely supportive. My

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	Mum who has Mixed Type Dem thinks that she is still ok in herself to help me with the boys. But I do feel lonely at times.
SerenaS	Is there anything that Talking Point, or Alzheimer's Society could do to help you - people who are caring for parents/partners and children?
jaymor	What would we do without good friends? They got me through some really bad patches.
SerenaS	That must be hard WM.
tp18	Talking Point at least makes me feel like I am not alone in dealing with this :) So I am very grateful for that
jaymor	Serena we need the professionals we deal with to understand that just because we are standing upright does not mean we are coping and able to carry on.
SerenaS	That's good to know tp 18 :)
jaymor	TP, glad you are finding TP a help
Izzy	Sadly Jaymor they don't read TP.
SerenaS	I think you're right jaymor. Also, I think sometime assumptions are made about the age of people who are affected by dementia, what they like to do, the age of people who are caring, whether they are working or not, and whether they may be caring for someone else too! I think support groups are massively helpful but not everyone can get to an 11am meeting on a weekday.
Warrior Mum	I'm unsure SerenaS as I have not yet met anyone else in a similar situation. Because of my hubby being so young with his diagnosis I contacted the local alz. soc. and they came to visit. my hubby is reluctant to go to any day activities or except any carers "to babysit him". As one day he will say yes and the next he will deny that he agreed to carers etc. Fighting a losing battle on that front.
SerenaS	I'm going to keep the chat room open for a few more minutes ...
SerenaS	I can understand his reluctance WM. I think support groups for younger people are forming and can often be more social in style and feel less intimidating. Hopefully something like that will soon be in your area :)
Warrior Mum	Going to have to say "Night night" as my little one is stirring. Thank you for this evening chat and a little downloading time. Thank you again, take care, be strong and smile XxxxX
jaymor	Our local Alzheimer's.soc meeting is from 10.30 to 12 and I wonder how several of the carers manage to get their cared for ready and into the car for the journey.
jaymor	I will say goodnight, drink my cold coffee and have my evening chat with my daughter on the phone.
SerenaS	Night WM - I do hope the chat was helpful :)
tp18	My mother also is very reluctant to accept help from anyone other than me. Since she *sounds* so OK when she speaks, no one seems to understand that she needs help, or will help me try and explain to her that she needs help. She is self-funding to S.S aren't that interested
SerenaS	Night jaymor :)
Izzy	Night all. :)

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SerenaS	That's tricky tp - I do hope you're able to find someone to support you.
SerenaS	Sadly, we're out of time and I'm going to close the chat room shortly. I'll be putting a transcript together early next week which I hope will be helpful. In the mean time please do keep posting on TP :)

Thanks for reading the transcript from our chat room session on 21 August.

Some helpful resources on this topic are listed below.

Alzheimer's Society National Dementia Helpline - 0300 222 11 22; further details about the service here:

<http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents.php?categoryID=200365>

'Talking to Children and Young People about dementia', an Alzheimer's Society factsheet:

http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=108

'Carers – looking after yourself', an Alzheimer's Society factsheet:

http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=119

Younger people with dementia – information on Alzheimer's Society website

<http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents.php?categoryID=200350>

Sandwich generation – information and tips from US website dementia today:

<http://www.dementiatoday.com/sandwich-generation/>

'The sandwich generation: Older women balancing work and care,' an interesting report from the Institute for Public Policy Research:

<http://www.ippr.org/publications/the-sandwich-generation-older-women-balancing-work-and-care>

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If you have questions about our chat room, please contact us by emailing

talkingpoint@alzheimers.org.uk

You can view the chat room here: <http://forum.alzheimers.org.uk/chatroom.php>