

SmithLife[®]

H O M E C A R E

Bringing care home.



MENTAL HEALTH

AWARENESS MONTH

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, a reminder of how important it is to care for our minds as well as our bodies. At SmithLife Homecare, we're highlighting ways to support emotional well-being—for clients, caregivers, and families alike. In this issue, you'll find helpful advice from our registered nurse, simple tips for maintaining mental wellness, and a fresh seasonal recipe to enjoy. We're also spotlighting our caregiver of the month and sharing a few upcoming events you won't want to miss. As we move through May, let's support each other with kindness, patience, and the reminder that no one has to navigate it alone.

Tips from SmithLife Homecare



Supporting Mental Health Through Daily Care

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, a time to recognize that emotional well-being plays a vital role in overall health—especially for older adults and their care partners.

Mental health support doesn't always come in the form of a formal conversation—it often happens quietly, in the way we care for each other day to day. In home care, we see firsthand how small actions and meaningful routines can create comfort, confidence, and connection.

Here are a few caregiving practices that can help promote emotional well-being:

Stick to familiar routines

Consistency can reduce anxiety, especially for older adults navigating memory changes or transitions. Familiar meal times, favorite TV shows, or evening walks offer structure and predictability.

Encourage engagement, not just activity

Folding laundry together, organizing family photos, or preparing a simple recipe can offer more than just entertainment—they promote dignity, memory recall, and a sense of purpose.

Create quiet spaces

Just as conversation is important, so is calm. A peaceful environment—with minimal clutter, soft lighting, and limited background noise—can reduce overstimulation and support emotional balance.

Recognize emotional cues

Irritability, confusion, or withdrawal may be signs of emotional distress. Checking in gently and observing changes in behavior can help catch deeper concerns early.

Promote autonomy

When possible, offer choices: what to wear, what to eat, where to sit. Even small decisions can restore a sense of control and improve mood.

Be a steady presence

You don't always need the right words. Sometimes, simply being present—listening without

interruption, sitting without distraction—is the best support you can offer.

At SmithLife Homecare, we recognize that mental health support is woven into every moment of caregiving. It's in how we show up, how we listen, and how we honor each individual's story.

Nurse's Corner



Mental Health: Small Steps for a Stronger You

Written by: Essy Gurevich, BSN, RN

As we recognize Mental Health Awareness Month, it's important to remember that mental well-being is just as vital as physical health—especially for older adults and their care partners. Whether you're supporting a loved one or navigating your own aging journey, simple lifestyle adjustments can help promote clarity, calm, and connection.

Here are a few accessible ways to support mental wellness:

Sunlight & Nature: With the colder months behind us here in the D.C. area and the plants now in bloom, it's a wonderful time to get outside. Exposure to Vitamin D and natural plant compounds (called terpenes) may help stimulate the mind and improve outlook. A walk, fresh air, or even sitting in a garden can make a meaningful difference.

Social Engagement: Regular interaction—whether through visits, phone calls, or community programs—can reduce feelings of loneliness and provide a sense of belonging.

Purposeful Activity: Engaging in hobbies, spiritual practices, or volunteer work can provide direction and reinforce identity.

Sleep Hygiene: Rest is restorative. Aim for consistent sleep and wind-down routines that support better cognitive and emotional health.

Limit Screen Time: Reducing exposure to blue light—especially from televisions, phones, and tablets—before bedtime can help improve sleep quality and minimize mental overstimulation.

Nutrition & Hydration: A balanced diet with whole foods can positively impact mood.

Limiting processed foods and staying hydrated supports both mind and body.

Gentle Movement: Walking, stretching, or chair yoga improves circulation and releases mood-lifting endorphins.

Aromatherapy: Certain essential oils, such as lavender, are known for their calming effects. A dab on the wrist or hand, or use of a diffuser, can help promote relaxation and reduce feelings of stress.

Professional Support: If feelings of sadness, hopelessness, or confusion persist—or if they begin to feel unmanageable—it may be time to reach out to a healthcare provider or licensed therapist. Mental health deserves the same attention and care as any other aspect of wellness.

Supporting mental health doesn't always require major changes—sometimes, it starts with a few minutes outdoors or a heartfelt conversation with a friend. A little bit of care goes a long way, and there is no shame in asking for help when you need it. With the right support, both internal and external, brighter days are always possible.

If you have questions, concerns, or simply need some encouragement, we're always here for you. Please don't hesitate to reach out to our team at SmithLife Homecare by calling 301-816-5020.

Caregivers of the Month



Pictured: Misrak Antenyistegne.
Jeanette Gwet, Elizabeth Grey, Esther Nsemba,
and Genet Ayifokru were unavailable.

Every month, we get the honor of recognizing caregivers who go the extra mile—not because they have to, but because it's who they are. This month, we're proud to spotlight

five incredible women who have left a lasting mark on the lives of their clients and families: Misrak Antenyistegne, Jeanette Gwet, Elizabeth Grey, Esther Nsemba, and Genet Ayifokru.

Each of these caregivers has shown up with heart, dedication, and the kind of quiet strength that brings comfort during life's most vulnerable moments. One client shared how Jeanette made her recovery at home feel seamless and safe, describing her as "wonderful and friendly" during a time she needed support the most.

A family member reflected on the impact Genet had on their mother over five years, calling her "a true angel" who cared with compassion even on the hard days. Whether it's Misrak's calming presence, Elizabeth's gentle approach, Esther's consistent kindness, Jeanette's nurturing energy, or Genet's remarkable devotion—these women embody what caregiving is truly about.

We're so lucky to have them as part of the SmithLife Homecare family. Thank you all for your compassion, your strength, and the beautiful way you care. Congratulations to our April Caregivers of the Month!

The Latest from Our Blog



What are Elder Care Services?

Are you seeking a qualified caregiver to help your aging parent or another loved one? Elder care services could be the right approach, but which type of care is best for your family member? SmithLife Homecare supports aging adults by offering a range of personalized, in-home assistance for daily living, health management, and companionship. [\[Read More\]](#)

Easy Recipes for Seniors



Lemon Herb Couscous with Veggies

This bright and zesty dish is packed with soft textures and fresh spring flavors—perfect for a light lunch or a side.

Ingredients (Serves 2-3)

- 1 cup couscous
- 1 cup low-sodium vegetable broth or water
- ½ zucchini, finely diced
- ½ cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley or basil, chopped
- Juice of ½ lemon
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Salt & pepper to taste

Instructions

1. In a pot, bring broth (or water) to a boil. Remove from heat, stir in couscous, cover, and let sit for 5 minutes.
2. Fluff with a fork and stir in zucchini, cherry tomatoes, herbs, lemon juice, olive oil, and seasoning.
3. Serve warm or chilled—either way, it's delicious and easy to eat!

Nutrition Highlights

- Low in sodium & gentle on digestion
- Rich in fiber and antioxidants
- Bright citrus flavor encourages appetite
- Soft texture for easy chewing

Join the SmithLife Community!

Have you connected with us on social media yet? If not, we'd love to see you there! Dive deeper into our community—follow us for updates on events, useful resources, and community highlights.

Never miss a moment—**follow us today!**



Perspectives on Aging: Strategies for Clinicians and Caregivers

Thursday, May 8, 8:30am - 3:00pm, In-person & Virtual option available

Charles E. Smith Life Communities, in collaboration with Suburban Hospital, a member of Johns Hopkins Medicine, proudly presents the 15th Annual Sara and Samuel J. Lessans Healthcare Symposium — Perspectives on Aging: Strategies for Clinicians and Caregivers.

Made possible through the generosity of Drs. Ellen and Stuart Lessans, in memory of Stuart's parents, Sara and Samuel J. Lessans, this annual event brings together leading physicians and healthcare professionals for a dynamic day of learning. This year's program will explore key factors that contribute to healthy aging, including the role of social connection, the impact of ageism, and evolving health policies that support older adults.

□ Location: Woodmont Country Club

Keynote Speakers:

- Morning Keynote: Allison Gilbert, Emmy Award-winning journalist and author.
- Luncheon Speaker: Susan Pinker, award-winning author, journalist, and psychologist.

This symposium offers valuable strategies for both professional and family caregivers and includes CE credits for eligible professionals.

- Learn more and register: smithlifecommunities.org/events
- Questions? Contact ataggart@ceslc.org or call 240-833-2407

Don't miss this opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue and gain tools to improve care for older adults. Register today!

Sara and Samuel J. Lessans
Healthcare Symposium

PERSPECTIVES IN AGING: STRATEGIES FOR CLINICIANS AND CAREGIVERS

Thursday, May 8, 2025
8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Woodmont Country Club

In-person and virtual option available



QUESTIONS:
ataggart@ceslc.org
240-833-2407



Scan this
QR code

smithlifecommunities.org/events

MORNING KEYNOTE SPEAKER:



Allison Gilbert, Emmy
Award-winning journalist
and author

KICKSTARTING CONNECTION

In today's challenging
and often isolating times,
we all yearn for deeper

and more fulfilling connections. Join us for an inspiring fireside chat with Gilbert, co-author of "The Joy of Connections," Dr. Ruth's final book. This action-driven guidebook is packed with 100 practical strategies to combat loneliness, anchored by Dr. Ruth's powerful story of surviving the Holocaust, living in an orphanage, rebuilding her life in America and eventually becoming a world-renowned sex therapist.



Charles E. Smith Life Communities has applied for continuing education credits for social workers, nursing home and assisted living managers, and contact hours for nurses.

LUNCHEON SPEAKER:



Susan Pinker,
award-winning
author, journalist
and psychologist

In her book,
"The Village Effect:
How Face-to-Face
Contact Can Make

Us Healthier, Happier, and Smarter," Pinker explores the impact of face-to-face contact on health, lifespan, education, romance, and business and why face-to-face interaction at home, school and work makes us healthier, smarter and most successful. She provides a compelling argument for why digital networks will never replace genuine human contact — and why we need it to survive.



Charles E. Smith
LIFE COMMUNITIES



[Register here](#)

Saving Claire and the Fight to Reduce Falls

Thursday, May 15, 11:30am - 1:00pm, In-person

We're excited to share an upcoming event hosted by Charles E. Smith Life Communities—a special screening of *Saving Claire*, a powerful documentary that examines aging, resistance to change, and behaviors that increase the risk of falls.

Following the film, a panel of local professionals will lead a thoughtful discussion on the key issues raised.

- ☐ Where: Yetta Krupsaw and Samuel Paul Cohen Social Hall, Smith-Kogod Residence
- ☐ Lunch will be served

Don't miss this meaningful opportunity to explore fall prevention and safer aging through the lens of lived experience.

SAVING CLAIRE AND THE FIGHT TO REDUCE FALLS: DOCUMENTARY SCREENING AND DISCUSSION

May 15 • 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Yetta Krupsaw and Samuel Paul Cohen
Social Hall at Smith-Kogod Residence



[Register here](#)

Mark Your Calendars



This month is:

National Nurses Month

Dates

5/6 - National Nurses Day

5/11 - Mother's Day

5/29 - Memorial Day

5/28 - National Senior Health & Fitness Day

Weeks

5/6-5/12 - National Nurses Week

5/10-5/16 - Mental Health Awareness Week

A Special Note From Our Team

This May, we celebrate National Nurses Month and National Hospital Week—a time to recognize the heart, resilience, and dedication of the incredible professionals who care for others every single day.

To the nurses and hospital teams who show up with compassion and strength, thank you. Your impact reaches far beyond the bedside, and we are grateful for all you do.

With deep appreciation,
The SmithLife Homecare Team

Our Trusted Resources

We understand the importance of having access to reliable and informative resources for caregivers, patients, and their families. That's why we've curated an extensive list of resources, designed to support you through every step of your caregiving journey. Click below to learn more about our suggested resources.

[View Resources List](#)



SmithLife Homecare is a leading provider of in-home care services in Maryland and Washington, D.C., specializing in senior care, dementia and Alzheimer's care, companion services, support for aging-in-place and support for complex medical recovery.

We are also the premier agency for nurse staffing, serving hospitals, rehabilitation centers, memory care facilities, and assisted living communities.

Contact us today to learn how we can help you or your loved ones.

Telephone: (301) 816-5020

Website: smithlifehomecare.com

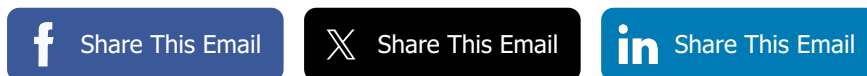
Email: info@smithlifehomecare.com





SmithLife Homecare is proudly owned by Charles E. Smith Life Communities, a trusted leader in senior care for over 115 years. Backed by a century-long legacy of excellence in healthcare, SmithLife Homecare provides compassionate, professional in-home support that empowers older adults to live independently and safely at home, or wherever they call home.

Licensed as a residential service agency by the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Office of Health Care Quality and Washington, D.C. Department of Health as a Home Support Agency. MD #RSA-01265 | DC #HSA-0014



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