



July 2022

Dear Families and Friends,

When the Alzheimer's Support Network was born, now 40 years ago, little was known about Alzheimer's disease or the other forms of dementia. The families that we met with for support groups were hungry for information! In the beginning, we only had one newspaper article from the New York Times that we copied over and over to share with families.

For these "families," as we have always called ourselves, the diagnosis was usually arrived upon when the person was well into the journey of brain change. The meetings were clearly for the caregivers who often found themselves managing every aspect of their loved one's lives.

So much has changed! Not only is there a plethora of printed materials and resources on the Internet, but people are receiving a diagnosis much earlier in the disease process. With better diagnostic modalities and more knowledge in the medical community, people are often diagnosed when their symptoms are beginning to show up. We celebrate this fact! Having an earlier diagnosis has done a great deal to help people dealing with brain change understand what is happening to them. Rather than worrying about "going crazy" or being overwhelmed by not being able to do what they could once do, they are now able to appreciate what is happening in their brains. Those diagnosed early are able to explore options for living their lives well in spite of the changes in their capabilities.

The Network is excited to be providing services for those dealing with Brain Change. Through the pandemic, we have explored ways to support these courageous people on Zoom. Now that we are doing more in person, we are expanding these services. Each person is different and everyone experiences brain changes differently. Thus, we will continue to develop a wide range of programs for those with a diagnosis of Alzheimer's or other forms of neurocognitive disorder. We strive to support all members of the Care Partners Team!

Please see the next page for currently available programs for people with brain change.

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Current programs especially for people dealing with brain change include:

Our “**Club Room**” has been open during most caregiver support groups for many years. These meetings are open for all those dealing with Alzheimer’s or another form of dementia. The program started as a convenience for those caregivers who wished to go to support group, but could not leave their loved one at home. What a difference a few years makes! Now this time is for all those living with dementia to get together to socialize, laugh, be entertained, play games or just enjoy being with each other and our energetic team members. The most frequent comment caregivers hear after the program is, “That was fun!” Please keep in mind that this group is for the family member of those attending the support group that meets at the same time. Please check the calendar for the dates when the Club Room is available. The group is hybrid (join in person or on Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/3410934109>).

Kindred Spirits is a special group for those who are dealing with a diagnosis and are willing to talk about it. A meeting for their Care Partners is held simultaneously. Both are hybrid. We meet on Wednesday afternoons at 1:30. This program does require one of our team members to explore the appropriateness of the group with the person living with brain change and their care partner. If you would like more information, please contact its creator, Mel. She can be reached by phone at 239 262-8388 or email at Mel@support.network. Making sure that this group is appropriate is important for the success of the program and the comfort of all participants.

Creative Engagement is for everyone! This program is Debbie’s creation and she does a great job of finding exciting guests who talk about resources in our community — and other interesting things! Usually attended by spouses together, everyone is welcome! Creative Engagement meetings are at 2:00 on Friday afternoons, currently on Zoom only. <https://zoom.us/j/3410934109>.

If you need help signing on to Zoom, please contact us!

Services of the Support Network are always free of charge!

We are eager to see you in person or on Zoom!

Your Support Network Team

Alzheimer’s Support Network
1421 Pine Ridge Road, Suite 100, Naples, FL 34109
Help@support.network 239 262-8388 www.support.network