



## Wilma L. West Library Resource Notes

### The Sandwich Generation

In this and the next Resource Note, I plan to address two societal issues that arise from the roles members of our multi-generations are playing. Today, I'll share resources concerning the "Sandwich generation," a phrase coined by Carol Abaya, MA. On Maya's web site, [The Sandwich Generation](#), she gives these definitions of the individuals in this cohort.

**"Traditional:** those sandwiched between aging parents who need care and/or help and their own children.

**Club Sandwich:** those in their 50s or 60s sandwiched between aging parents, adult children and grandchildren. OR those in their 30s and 40s, with young children, aging parents and grandparents. (Term coined by Carol Abaya)

**Open faced:** anyone else involved in elder care.  
(Term coined by Carol Abaya)"

As noted last week, family members from three to four generations have lived together and cared for one another throughout our history; so, why this phenomenon of the "sandwich generation?" What is different? Three changes in our behavior are possibilities for the "sandwich generation": (1) Women are having children later in life; (2) More women are in the work force; and (3) Our parents are living longer. Add to this, our mobile society, which often leaves only one sibling available to assist aging parents. This is the case in my family, and I shall never be able to thank my bother and sister-in-law for their loving care of my parents. Read this November, 1999 article by Tom Anderson, published in the *USA Today Magazine*, "[Taking a Bite Out of the Sandwich Generation](#)," and pass the reference on to friends, family members or clients. A

Following are specific references at this site:

**The American Association for Retired Persons (AARP)**, published this interesting report "In the Middle: A Report on Multicultural Boomers Coping With Family and Aging Issues " that you can read or download in full at [http://research.aarp.org/il/in\\_the\\_middle.shtml](http://research.aarp.org/il/in_the_middle.shtml).

### References

Although I did not find any references to the "sandwich generation" in OT SEARCH, here are some recent citations concerning family caregivers.

Chen, T-Y, Mann, W.C., Tomita, M. & Nochajski, S. (2000). Caregiver involvement in the use of Assistive Devices by frail older persons. *The Occupational Therapy Journal of Research*, 20(3), 179-199.

**ABSTRACT:** The population of persons over age 65 years is increasing, and with this trend there is an increase in number of older persons with disabilities, or frail elders. The importance of supportive environments for home-based frail elders has been recognized. Supportive environments include the presence of family caregivers and appropriate assistive devices. Assistive devices (AD) offer the potential to decrease frail elder's need for personal assistance, and could reduce some of the burden expressed by caregivers. The inclusion of family caregivers in treatment planning and its implementation is a component of occupational therapy practice. Occupational therapists are also recognized as the lead professional in the provision of assistive devices. However, there has been little research on the involvement of family caregivers in the use of assistive devices. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between caregiver involvement and the use of, and satisfaction with, assistive devices by frail elders. Interviews regarding assistive devices were conducted with 20 frail, cognitively intact elders who had a primary caregiver in their homes. Results indicate that elders regard assistive devices as very useful in saving time, conserving energy, reducing frustration, and providing a feeling of security. Caregivers were involved in the use of assistive devices when the device was first acquired (early caregiver involvement) and made suggestions for using the devices. They also encouraged, instructed, and assisted with the use of devices later, as necessary. There was a relationship between early caregiver involvement and involvement at the time of the interview (late caregiver involvement). Verbal encouragement and caregiver's use of assistive devices to help perform tasks were strongly associated with both device use and satisfaction. The results reinforce the importance of caregiver involvement with assistive devices used by frail older persons.

Elliott, T.R. & Shewchuk, R.M. (1998). Recognizing the family caregiver: integral and formal members of the rehabilitation process. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 10(2), 123-132.

**ABSTRACT:** Radical and emerging changes in health care service delivery systems and steady increases in the number of chronic health conditions have shifted more responsibility to family caregivers of people with disabilities. These caregivers essentially operate as formal health care providers who receive little or no recognition, support, or preparation from health care systems. In this article, major societal and psychological issues in caregiving are discussed. We also explore interventions to prepare and assist caregivers that effectively integrate them into the rehabilitation process. (C) 1998 Elsevier Science Ireland Ltd.

Hersch, G.I. (1991). Perspectives of the Caregiving Relationship by Older Adults and Their Family Members. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University. (Dissertation)

**ABSTRACT:** The intent of this study was to investigate the affective dimensions of the caregiving dyad of adult child/grandchild and frail parent/grandparent by employing qualitative methodology. Through open-ended, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and participant observation, the intergenerational dynamics impacting the frail parent-adult child relationship and its effect upon family coping strategies were examined. The investigator engaged in the hermeneutic process with respondents from 11 families, culminating in a joint construction for both the caregivers and care receivers. Utilizing the constant comparative method of joint coding and analysis, six major patterns of meaning delineated by the caregivers emerged. These were: the characteristics of caregiving, stress and coping strategies, preparation for

caregiving, relationships, understanding of caregiving, and the meaning of caregiving. For the care receivers, four major themes were identified independence vs. dependence, life satisfaction, value of reminiscence, and the bipolar view of the caregiving situation. The patterns and the subcategories were then organized into stages of caregiving for both respondent groups. A case study format was used to present the emic construction of each family regarding the experience of care involvement. Findings from the study indicated that where affective ties were strong, caregiving responsibilities were felt less negatively. In addition, the long-range and more helpful approaches to coping with caregiving consisted of seeking spiritual support, reframing, gaining confidence in one's problem-solving skills, and finding meaning in the caregiving. For the care receivers, their method of coping with the loss of independence was derived from recognition and satisfaction with past endeavors and resolution of the present situation. A conceptual framework was offered as a graphic portrayal of the dimensions of caregiving impacting the quality of the dyad relationship. Implications for future research and policy formulation dealing with both professional and family caregivers were discussed.

Howard, K. & Singleton, J.F. (2001). The forgotten generation: The impact a grandmother with Alzheimer's Disease has on a granddaughter. *Activities, Adaptation & Aging*, 25(2), 45-57.

**ABSTRACT:** When a parent assumes the caregiving responsibilities of someone with Alzheimer's disease, the relationships between family members, as well as the family roles, may be altered. The caregiving role is generally assumed by the female within the home; a daughter or daughter-in-law. The children of the caregivers are affected as their mother becomes involved with the caregiving responsibility of their grandparents with Alzheimer's. The leisure patterns of the family are affected as the grandparent's behavior and daily care affect the everyday routines of the family. The focus of this research was to gather information to generate new insights about how granddaughters were affected when their grandmothers had Alzheimer's disease. Information was collected by interviewing six granddaughters. The themes that emerged from the granddaughters' stories included problems with social interaction and feelings of embarrassment due to the grandmothers' behavior. Stress and tension, feelings of guilt, feelings of sadness, feelings of frustration and anger also emerged. Avoiding the caregiving situation, participating in activities, the need to possessing information about Alzheimer's disease and the importance of support were other themes that emerged. These themes formed the foundation for a model that illustrates the interaction of the themes on the granddaughters in this study.

McGrath, W.L., Mueller, M.M., Brown, C., Teitelman, J. & Watts, J. Caregivers of persons with Alzheimer's disease: An exploratory study of occupational performance and respite. *Physical & Occupational Therapy in Geriatrics*, 18(2), 51-69.

**ABSTRACT:** This qualitative study explored the impact of caring for a family member with Alzheimer's on the caregiver's occupational performance and the perceived influence of respite on occupational performance. Five caregivers participated in semi-structured interviews including the client-centered Canadian Occupational Performance Measure. The caregivers described (a) the desire for respite that would be mutually beneficial for the caregiver and the care receiver; (b) the importance of engaging in occupations that provided a mental break from caregiving; and (c) prioritization of occupations for which they would use respite. The findings emphasize the need for client-centered interventions to promote caregiver occupational performance.

Morris, A.L. & Gainer, F. (1997). Helping the caregiver: Occupational therapy opportunities. *OT Practice*, 2(1), 36-40.

ABSTRACT: Mrs. Stewart cares for her mother, who has Alzheimer's disease, but she is considering placing her in a nursing home because she can no longer leave her alone while she goes to work. She is unaware that there is an adult day center not far from her house where her mother would not only be well supervised but would engage in activities to enhance her remaining function. Mr. Williams prepares all of his grandfather's meals, which makes it virtually impossible for him to take a vacation or even stay late at the office, and he is becoming resentful. If he were aware of the local Meals-on-Wheels, much of this burden would be relieved. Mrs. Gomez has been taking care of all of her husband's personal care needs since he had a stroke, and she is exhausted. If she and her husband had access to low-priced assistive technology equipment, he would be more independent and feel better about himself and she would have more energy to help him with other activities.

Steinfeld, E., Tomita, M., Mann, W.C. & DeGlopper, W. (1999). Use of Passenger Vehicles by Older People with Disabilities. *The Occupational Therapy Journal of Research*, 19(3), 155-186.

ABSTRACT: The goal of this study was to identify the range of problems faced by frail older people in using private passenger vehicles and to identify how assistive technology and selection of vehicles may reduce those problems. Research activities included a review of existing research, a review of assistive technology for vehicle use, four focus group sessions, and a survey of 101 older people with disabilities. The findings of the research indicated that frail older people had significant problems both as drivers and as passengers. Although they are reluctant to self-report driving problems, they did report many problems entering and exiting vehicles. Forty percent of those surveyed reported difficulty getting their legs in and out. The study identified many ways that occupational therapists can assist frail older people and their caregivers in using passenger vehicles. It also identifies gaps in research, vehicle design, and assistive technology that need to be addressed.

Tamm, M. (1999). Relatives as a help or a hindrance -- A grounded theory study seen from the perspective of the occupational therapist. *Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 6(1), 36-45.

ABSTRACT: Family caregivers are the primary source of support for rehabilitation in the home setting for frail elderly people. The purpose of the study was to gain a deeper understanding of how occupational therapists view the family caregivers and their own role in rehabilitation in the home-care setting. The investigation was carried out as a grounded theory study. Interview transcripts from 18 community-based occupational therapists were analyzed according to the constant comparative method for grounded theory described by Glaser & Strauss. Six categories formed two higher-order categories -- family caregivers as a help or as a hindrance. The role of the occupational therapists in relation to relatives varied, depending on the part played by the relatives themselves, but it was better defined and distinct when relatives acted as a help than when they acted as a hindrance.

The family role of caregiver is affecting the work world, as discussed in the following citations.

Buffardi L.C., Smith J.L., O'Brien A.S. & Erdwins C.J. (1999). The impact of dependent-care responsibility and gender on work attitudes. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 4(4), 356-67.

**ABSTRACT:** On the basis of a survey of 18,120 federal employees in dual-income households, six 5-stage hierarchical multiple regression analyses, controlling for 10 demographic variables, assessed the impact of child care, elder care, and gender on work-family balance and various facets of job satisfaction. Elder-care responsibility was associated with lower levels of satisfaction with perceived organizational support, pay, leave benefits, and work-family balance, whereas the negative main effects of child care were limited to leave benefits and work-family balance. However, child-care responsibility also interacted with gender: Its negative influence was greater on women's work-family balance and leave satisfaction. Decrements in satisfaction associated with dependent care on the "sandwich generation" were additive, not interactive.

Ponzetti, R.K. & Ponzetti, J.J., Jr. (1999). Corporate Opportunities for Intergenerational Linkages: A Human Resources Perspective. *Child & Youth Services*, 20(1 / 2), 149-159.

**Abstract:** The potential impact of dependent care needs on corporate employers and employees is described. Recommendations are made regarding the development of effective intergenerational approaches to meet these needs and reduce their associated expenses. The roles of human resource personnel, intergenerational program developers and intergenerational program researchers in such initiatives are described

Seaward M.R. (1999) 2nd Quarter. The sandwich generation copes with elder care.

*Benefits Quarterly*, 15(2), 41-8.

**ABSTRACT:** The "sandwich generation" refers to the demographic age group of individuals who are caring for young children and elder parents at the same time. The increasing number of employees who must care for children and parents alike is a trend that is projected to continue. This is a burdensome responsibility that can cause stress and result in loss of productivity, accompanied by higher cost, to employers. The author discusses elder-care services that employers can offer to enhance productivity and gives case examples of companies that are making elder-care benefits available to employees.

Spillman, B.C. & Pezzin, L.E. (2000). Potential and active family caregivers: changing networks and the "sandwich generation". *Milbank Quarterly*, 78(3), 347-74, 339.

**ABSTRACT:** Informal family care giving has been a traditional mainstay of care for the frail elderly. As the Baby Boomers approach retirement and old age, it is not clear that society can continue to rely on informal arrangements. The 1984 and 1994 National Long Term Care Surveys were used as sources for examining changes over a decade in the population of chronically disabled elderly, their sources of care, and the characteristics of family caregivers. The results showed that although the total number of active family caregivers declined, a constant number of primary caregivers were looking after recipients who were more severely disabled. Members of the "sandwich generation" and full-time workers maintained or even increased their participation as primary caregivers. The competing demands confronting these caregivers and the higher disability levels among care recipients probably contributed to the growing pattern of reliance on formal care, a situation that is likely to continue.

Next week, I'll pull together resources on the growing number of grandparents assuming the roles of primary parenting of their grandchildren.