

Are you looking for someone to talk to—someone who understands what it's like to deal with Alzheimer's disease?

Whether you've just been diagnosed or you're caring for a loved one, joining a support group could be a great way to find people who understand what you are experiencing.

Imperial has a Family Caregiver Support Group which meets the second Monday of each month in the conference room of the Imperial United Methodist Church from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Participants are encouraged to bring a sack lunch and may attend for the whole time or whatever works with their lunch hour.

Barb Hill and Deb Swink are co-facilitators.

Hill reported that they decided to take over the support group after Brenda Cahow could no longer lead it. The Methodist Church's Rainbow Senior Program (which Barb and Deb are part of) visits many residents at the Senior Living Facilities suffering from Alzheimer's and dementia.

Hill's mother suffered with Alzheimer's for over eight years and recently passed away in July, so she personally knows the challenges and difficulties in dealing with the disease. She reports that the Alzheimer's support groups in Ogallala and Imperial were a great help to her through the course of her mom's disease.

In December, they will have a guest speaker—Shaun Meyer, RN, Director of Home Health for Hi Line Home Health which is affiliated with Perkins County Health Services. She will be speaking on helping the Alzheimer patient during the Christmas season. She will be talking about ways to make the holiday season easier for the person with Alzheimer's or dementia and also for their loved ones.

This support group is affiliated with the Alzheimer's Association of the Great Plains. The group, however, is not just for caregivers and families of Alzheimer's patients. It is also for anyone who is caring for persons with Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, MS, stroke, dementia or other related memory issues.

With any of these diagnoses everyone is dealing with many of the same issues and problems. This is a place where individuals can share their feelings, hear from others in a similar situation and get help with problem-solving.

Everyone is responsible for their own participation, so feel free to share as much or as little as you like. Information shared within the groups is confidential, with the exception of a dangerous or abusive situation in which coordinators are required to inform the appropriate individuals/organizations in order to provide additional assistance.

Swink reports that they also have a lot of information available on dementia. Anyone interested may call Barb at 882-4002 or Deb at 882-5924.