








Support for Caregivers

Did you know that people who have a friend or family caregiver are often able to manage their condition better than those who don't?¹ Below are helpful resources and tips on how to support someone with a chronic condition while also taking care of yourself!

“What you do speaks so loud that I cannot hear what you say.”
Ralph Waldo Emerson

Providing Support

As a caregiver, you are a valued part of the healthcare team. Whether you're an experienced caregiver or are new to caregiving, there are many ways you can provide support to your friend or relative.

-  **Treatment:** send reminders to your friend or relative to take their medication, and help them prepare for doctor appointments. Offer to attend medical appointments with them and ask how you can be a partner in care.
-  **Organization:** create a care file (with a binder, folder, or digital tool) with essential information about your friend or relative's health condition and treatment plan.
-  **Lifestyle Changes:** identify healthy activities that you and your friend or relative can do together, such as cooking nutritious meals or walking together. Speak with your friend or relative's doctor to learn about any diet or exercise limitations.
-  **Emotional Support:** practice active listening, and don't try to 'fix' everything. Accept that managing a chronic disease can be overwhelming at times.
-  **Tasks and Chores:** help with everyday tasks that can be difficult for your friend or relative, like getting dressed or preparing meals.

Honoring Care Preferences and Wishes

When you care for someone, you may not know what their care preferences are. These tools may help you honor and support their wishes:²

- Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare:** this document is similar to 'Durable Power of Attorney,' but is specific to healthcare decisions and may provide instructions about what medical care your friend or relative may want.
- Advance Healthcare Directive:** this document allows a person to specify what actions should be taken for their health if they are no longer able to make decisions for themselves.

For more information, please visit: www.prepareforyourcare.org, www.fivewishes.org, www.theconversationproject.org

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YOU'RE NOT ALONE

Number of unpaid U.S. caregivers:³

53 million

THE VALUE YOU BRING

Value of unpaid U.S. caregivers:⁴

\$470 billion/year

CAREGIVING IS A BUSY JOB

Average time spent providing care:⁴

24 hours/week

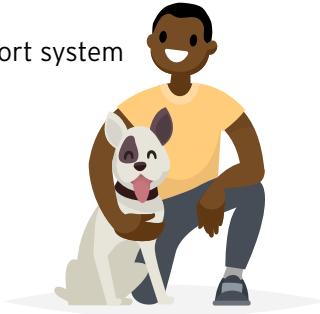
“Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage.”

Lao Tzu

Taking Care of Yourself

Caregiving can be frustrating and stressful.⁵ Sometimes it can make you feel sad, angry, or isolated. As a caregiver, you need to rest, eat well, exercise, and spend time pursuing your personal interests in order to be a better partner in care. These steps for self-care may reduce stress and help you maintain your well-being and health. Use the section below to determine how you will practice self-care:⁶

- Set aside leisure time
- Make sure I have a support system
- Play with a pet
- Exercise/Yoga/Massage
- Read a book
- Invest in my hobbies
- Cook healthy meals



- Look for laughter (eg, movies, friends, etc.)
- Listen to a podcast
- Carve out time in nature
- Take myself out for coffee
- Declutter my home
- Other: _____



Join a Support Group

There are many different kinds of support groups (eg, community, religious, online, condition-specific). There are also support groups just for caregivers.⁷

SUPPORT GROUP BENEFITS

- ◆ Reducing stress
- ◆ Staying motivated
- ◆ Learning about resources
- ◆ Sharing & comparing
- ◆ Developing friendships
- ◆ Managing complicated feelings (eg, grief, guilt)
- ◆ Finding community



Caregiver Support and Educational Resources

This list includes helpful websites and organizations that provide information on support groups and caregiver resources. You can also check with your workplace, employee assistance plan, or your local Area Agency on Aging to learn more about additional caregiver support available in your community.

- ◆ **National Alliance for Caregivers**
www.caregiving.org
- ◆ **National Institute on Aging - Caregiving**
www.nia.nih.gov/health/caregiving
- ◆ **Caregiver Action Network**
www.caregiveraction.org
- ◆ **VA Caregiver Support Program for Military Families**
www.caregiver.va.gov



Take rest; a field that has rested gives a bountiful crop.
Ovid

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