

CARING FOR CAREGIVERS

An Essential Guide for Supporting Caregivers



BROUGHT TO YOU BY NEIGHBORS WHO CARE

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Caring for a loved one can be both rewarding and challenging. If you want to support a friend or family member who is a caregiver, this ebook is for you. Filled with practical tips and compassionate advice, it will help you understand their needs and offer meaningful support. Whether it's providing a listening ear or lending a hand, this guide will show you how to make a positive difference in their caregiving journey.

Your caregiver may be dealing with various challenges, such as caring for a spouse recovering from surgery, managing the aftermath of a fall or accident, or supporting a loved one with a serious condition like cancer or dementia. This is a tough time for both the caregiver and their loved one(s).

Recognizing and supporting caregivers is crucial for their well-being and that of those they care for. Your approach to providing support can either strengthen or weaken caregivers, so it's essential to educate yourself about caregiving and discover effective ways to support them.

We hope this guide will give you practical ways to walk with the caregiver in your life, offering support and understanding. May it help you love well and show you care even when it's difficult or uncomfortable.

You may want to consider printing out this guide and ask the caregiver to highlight or circle the items that resonate with them and what would be helpful for them.

"The simple act of caring is heroic."

- Edward Albert



Caregiving: Assisting individuals who are unable to fully care for themselves due to physical, cognitive, or emotional challenges.

Being a caregiver can be emotionally and physically exhausting. While many see it as a labor of love, the responsibilities can become overwhelming. As a family member or friend, you play a crucial role in providing much-needed support and relief to someone who dedicates their time and energy to caring for their loved ones.

Caregivers juggle many responsibilities, from medical appointments to emotional support, all while managing their daily lives. They often have to drop everything when health issues arise, sometimes resulting in an unexpected hospital visit.

Caregiving at any level can be emotionally and physically difficult. The daily dread and anxiety caregivers feel are real, weighing heavily on their shoulders. They often experience stress that they may not fully comprehend, as they are immersed in the constant unpredictability and day-to-day responsibilities.

Many caregivers find themselves unprepared for the full extent of caregiving responsibilities. They might think it will be easy, only to face unexpected and many times stressful challenges. As they navigate these complexities, they may feel overwhelmed and frustrated, especially if they're used to managing life's demands independently.

By understanding their challenges, we can offer more meaningful support and ensure they are not left to shoulder the burden alone, promoting a caring and supportive atmosphere for both caregivers and those they care for.



Supportive relationships are vital for the caregiver's well-being.

Connecting with caregivers means going beyond simple expressions of concern; it involves maintaining continuous and thoughtful communication. These connections are crucial for supporting the well-being of caregivers, enabling them to provide effective care to those who depend on them.

Caregivers often lack interaction beyond their caregiving duties so your personal connection not only demonstrates you care about them but also links them to life beyond their immediate environment. Without regular check-ins, caregivers may feel neglected and uncared for creating even more feelings of disconnect from the world which can bring on depression and anxiety.

Implement strategies for building a stronger connection with the caregiver.

If the caregiver has a loved one with an upcoming surgery or important appointment planned, put a reminder on your calendar or phone a day or two before. This will remind you of their upcoming appointment(s) so you can send a text or give them a call to let them know you are thinking of them and wish them well.

If the caregiver will be in a hospital waiting room, ask them if they have someone to sit with or if they'd like you to be there. Some caregivers want the support while others want to be left alone to wander, read, play a game or watch a movie to keep their minds occupied. The important thing is to ask what they want or need and adjust your assistance accordingly.

You may also consider setting a reminder to reach out that repeats every few days or weekly depending on the situation. Let them know they don't need to respond, but you want them to know they're on your mind and you care. Just a little note, scripture, quote, gif, or emojis (💖🥰🙏🥹) can show them you are thinking of them. Your words have the power to brighten their day, offering a moment of relief amidst their responsibilities. Even if the caregiver doesn't reply, your message will provide much-needed positivity. It's often the small gestures that brighten a caregiver's day the most.

While many of us know to avoid phrases like “It could be worse” or “This too shall pass,” there are other common statements that can unintentionally cause hurt and miscommunication, making the person feel as though you don’t care or don’t have time for them.

Let’s explore a few examples.

“If there is anything I can do, let me know.”

This is one of the most common statements because people believe it’s the right thing to do. They say it out of common courtesy or habit, often without thinking about what it might mean. Unfortunately, this statement tends to feel insincere because more often than not, it lacks action. Keep in mind this statement can be very uncomfortable for those who struggle to ask for help.

“I wish there was something I could do.”

While this statement often comes from a place of genuine concern, it can unintentionally convey you don’t have anything to offer or are too preoccupied with your own life and problems to step in and help. This perception can lead to feelings of unimportance at a time when they are most in need of support.

“I’m here if you need me.”

This well-intentioned phrase can end up feeling more like a polite formality rather than a sincere offer of help. Its vagueness often results in it being easily forgotten or overlooked. They appreciate the sentiment, but without specifics, they may worry about imposing on you or feel uncertain about what kind of help you are offering.

Despite good intentions, the above statements can leave caregivers feeling unsupported and hesitant to ask for help.

During times of stress, caregivers may struggle to identify their needs or feel reluctant to seek help without a clear invitation.

"Kind words do not cost much. Yet they accomplish much." — Blaise Pascal

Navigating conversations during challenging times can be tough. We often find ourselves wanting to offer support but unsure of what to say or how to help. It's normal to feel this way, as many of us haven't been equipped with the tools for effective communication during difficult seasons.

Although there's no one-size-fits-all statement suitable for every person and circumstance, our aim in this ebook is to assist you in selecting the most impactful words while steering clear of those that may prove unhelpful or worse, hurtful.

Words of encouragement acknowledging their hard work can create a positive atmosphere of appreciation and support. A simple "Your strength is remarkable" can boost morale and reinforce their dedication to the one they are caring for. Simple expressions like, "I appreciate what you are doing and your dedication is not going unnoticed" can lift the caregiver's spirits and show them their efforts are seen and valued.

Caregivers often encounter difficult situations and emotions, so it's important to remember that they are on a journey that can change their usual demeanor, leading them to behave differently from what you are both used to. Extend them grace, say you are sorry when they are hurt, and tell them you recognize that they're enduring a challenging season of life and you want to be there for them.

Connecting with care can significantly impact their well-being and the quality of care they provide for their loved one(s).

Remind them you'll be by their side until their storm turns into a rainbow.



Another effective method of communicating with the caregiver is to use open-ended questions. These types of questions cannot be answered with a simple "yes" or "no"; instead, they require a more detailed and thoughtful response. This encourages the person to share more information, feelings, or insights.

12 Examples of open-ended questions:

1. How are you feeling today?
2. What issues are you facing today?
3. What are today's highs and lows?
4. What challenges have you encountered recently?
5. What's your biggest challenge right now?
6. How are you coping with the challenges?
7. What are you struggling with right now? How can I help you work through it?
8. How are you coping with the stress that comes with caregiving?
9. In what areas do you need the most help? Errands, food prep, cleaning, etc.?
10. What support or resources would help you the most right now?
11. How do you prioritize self-care while balancing the demands of caregiving? Looking ahead, what are your hopes and concerns for the future?
12. Are there any resources I can help you find that would be most beneficial for you right now?

Encouraging caregivers to share freely creates an environment where you can better understand their needs and effectively support them.

Another challenge caregivers can face is asking for and accepting help. Many hesitate to reach out, feeling their tasks are insignificant or that they might burden others with trivial matters. They also recognize that their family and friends are busy with their own lives, making it harder to ask for assistance. Yet, accepting support is essential for the caregiver's well-being and delivering the best care possible to their loved ones.

Staying connected with caregivers and reassuring them of your availability for support is crucial. Offering specific ways you can assist, providing choices, or asking what particular support they might need can be very helpful. In the following pages, we'll present various ideas to offer assistance and encourage them to accept your help effectively.

If you offer help and they don't need it right away, check back in a few days. Regular check-ins foster ongoing communication and help them feel more comfortable seeking assistance later on.

Encourage them to make a list of tasks they're comfortable delegating, like picking up an order or buying groceries. By suggesting specific ways to help, you demonstrate your readiness to support them without adding to their decision-making load. Let them know you will follow up with them in a few days to help check some things off their list.

Keep yourself updated on the caregiver's needs and the evolving situation. Continuously communicate your availability and willingness to help, even if they haven't asked recently.



In caregiving, where responsibilities are overwhelming and emotions run deep, simply being present and actively listening can profoundly impact the caregiver's well-being. Caregivers often need to express their pain and frustrations to someone other than the person they care for.

Often, caregivers are facing complex challenges that can't be fixed with a simple solution so remember you don't need to solve their problems. Instead, your role as a supporter is crucial in providing them with emotional relief and encouragement. By being there to listen attentively, you offer them a safe space to express their frustrations, fears, and anxieties. This also allows caregivers to process their emotions more effectively instead of allowing these emotions to build up over time leading to anxiety, depression, and caregiver burnout.

If you haven't made the point to intently listen to the caregiver or haven't reached out because you feel unsure about what to say, remember the important step is to simply reach out, even with a short text. Don't hesitate to say, "I'm truly sorry I haven't visited. I am not sure what to say or do." It's better to apologize, and admit uncertainty than to leave the caregiver feeling like you don't care. Admitting you're not sure how to help shows genuine concern and willingness to support. Also, don't forget to give yourself some grace—you don't need to be perfect; you just need to be present.

Don't be afraid of silence. Sometimes, just sitting with someone during a particularly difficult time is all that is needed. Simply being present can reignite their sense of purpose and dedication, inspiring them to be the best caregivers they can be. Listening to them also conveys that they can always reach out to you when needed, whether it's a comforting hug on a tough day or a friendly ear to talk to.



Most caregivers want to know you care and more than anything they need a hug, listening ear or a shoulder to cry on.

A visit can be a lifeline of hope and understanding for caregivers, offering the support and encouragement they often need.

Taking the time to visit with the caregiver and their loved one can profoundly impact their well-being and yours. Spending time together offers emotional support, relieves physical strain and exhaustion, provides social interaction, and strengthens your relationship with them.

When planning a visit, it's crucial to honor the caregiver's space and schedule. Instead of arriving without notice, kindly inform them that you'd like to visit and suggest a specific day and time range for your visit allowing them to choose a time that works best for them. This allows them to plan accordingly, whether it's completing household tasks or doing their needed therapy. It also allows them to tidy up, addressing any potentially embarrassing items like soiled clothes or a sink full of dishes. Consider that, for both caregivers and those receiving care, a cluttered home can create discomfort when welcoming visitors. While you may not mind dishes in the sink or unfolded laundry, it's important to recognize that it may matter to them.

Understanding the dynamics of listening and sharing.

When visiting a friend who is going through a tough time, it's crucial to be mindful not to burden them with your problems. Sharing your issues might unintentionally overwhelm them further, adding to their existing stress. It can also make them feel pressured to support you when they're already dealing with their challenges. Instead, consider waiting for them to ask before discussing your concerns. This approach ensures that your friend feels supported without feeling additionally burdened.

By focusing on their well-being and asking how they are coping, you demonstrate empathy and create a supportive atmosphere that acknowledges their current difficulties. This approach helps them feel understood and cared for during a challenging period.

Some caregivers struggle to find time for daily meal preparation amid juggling work, household chores, and caregiving duties. Offering a prepared meal can ease the stress of cooking and meal planning, allowing them valuable time to rest and recharge.

Traditionally, when someone is in need or going through a challenging time, loved ones rally around with homemade meals. While meal trains are a common way to provide support during difficult times, they may not always be necessary or feasible for everyone. For some individuals or families, coordinating meal schedules or accommodating dietary restrictions can be challenging.

Here are a few ideas to offer support whether you cook or not.

Bring a Meal

If you know their likes and are aware of any diet restrictions, drop off an already-made dinner for them to heat or freeze. This gives them the choice to consume or save for later which is helpful for those with unexpected days in the ER or upcoming surgeries and treatments.

Pick up something from the deli, then text them saying, "I've left a special surprise for you on the patio/porch. Enjoy!"

Share your Meal

Short on time to prepare a full meal? Share yours with them!

- I've made a big pot of chili. Would you like me to bring some over to you?
- I'm putting chicken on the grill, can I add some pieces for your dinner?
- I've prepared a salad. Would you like some for your lunch or dinner?
- I made too much food tonight. Can I bring you my extras?
- I've baked a loaf of bread. Would you like some for your meal?
- I'm baking cookies. Would you like some for dessert tonight?

Give a gift card from a restaurant.

While giving a gift card might be convenient for you and helpful if you live far away, it might not suit every situation. It's important to be considerate of the caregiver's needs and home situation when deciding on this option. While a gift card allows recipients to choose their favorite meal, it can also add stress for caregivers who must arrange orders and pickups amidst their busy schedules.

Order a meal from the restaurant website.

If they're comfortable with technology, they can place an online order that you can pick up and deliver. Many places offer payment upon pick-up so you can offer to pay for the dinner or they can pay or use a gift card when ordering.

Provide a meal from a local food truck.

Arrange for a meal from a local food truck offering their favorite street food or unique dishes, whether at a local event with food trucks or through direct delivery.

Use a food delivery app.

Use food delivery apps like Uber Eats, DoorDash, or Grubhub to order a meal from a restaurant of their choice and have it delivered directly to their home. You can provide them with a gift card or credit to cover the cost. Many of these services allow you to schedule deliveries in advance.

Avoid giving cash to cover expenses.

Most caregivers are hesitant to accept cash, which can lead to discomfort or awkward moments. Offering cash might unintentionally suggest financial need, even though they are fully capable of paying for their meals. It could also imply a preference for a quick solution rather than a more personal gesture. Remember, the goal is to ease their burden during this challenging time.

A better approach would be asking them directly for their dinner preferences and taking care of everything—from ordering to pickup and delivery. This method also ensures the meal is fresher compared to other delivery services and allows for a brief visit as well as offering an opportunity for a comforting hug as you drop off their meal.

In a world where grand gestures often steal the spotlight, it's easy to overlook the profound impact of small acts of kindness. These seemingly minor gestures demonstrate genuine care, alleviate the caregiver's burden, and offer much-needed relief. In a role where burnout is common and self-care is often neglected, these small acts can provide essential moments of respite and rejuvenation.

These small gestures are particularly perfect for those with packed schedules, offering invaluable support amidst the chaos of daily life.

Here are a few small gesture ideas to show you care:

- I'm going to the grocery store. What's on your list I can pick up for you and drop off at your home?
- I'm heading to the farmer's market. Want me to pick up some fresh produce for you?
- I'm going to Costco today, is there anything I can get for you?
- I'm at Starbucks grabbing a coffee, can I bring you a coffee/tea?
- I'm going to WalMart tomorrow. If you place an order, I'll pick it up for you.
- I'm going to Jersey Mike's, Salad and Go, etc., what can I bring you?
- I'm going to the pet store. Do you need anything for your furry friend?
- I'm going to the hardware store. Do you need any tools or supplies?
- My spouse wants to visit your loved one. Do you want to go for lunch or take a walk with me?
- I have nothing on my calendar for Tuesday so I'll come to your house for a few hours and I can water your plants, help chop vegetables, fold laundry or clean. (NOTE: When offering cleaning assistance, it's better to present a range of options, allowing them to select what they need and want most.)

You don't need to shower your caregiver with gifts or a full day at the spa. Small gestures can mean a lot. A heartfelt note, a caring text, or a small gift can uplift their spirits and show your support during tough times. It's not about the cost, but the thought – showing that you care enough to choose something special. Your genuine intention and words matter most. Even with a busy life, meaningful gestures can make a difference and strengthen your bond with the caregiver.

Need some inspiration? Here are a few ideas:

- A favorite treat such as a chocolate bar, candied nuts, wine, etc.
- A treat from [Nothing Bundt Cakes](#) like delicious [Bundtinis](#) in numerous flavors
- A potted plant or bouquet of flowers to brighten their space
- A puzzle book or jigsaw puzzle for a mental break
- A magazine or book for the one being cared for offers the caregiver free time
- A cookbook with easy, nutritious recipes for quick and healthy meals
- A bowl, tin/bag of popcorn with an Amazon or Apple gift card to rent a movie
- A soothing foot lotion along with matching fuzzy socks
- Bath bombs or bath salts for a rejuvenating soak
- A sleep mask to help them rest during breaks or nights
- A candle or essential oils which have therapeutic benefits
- A mug with some herbal tea to help them relax
- Customized playlist or music gift card that encourages relaxation
- Coloring book and colored pencils: A mindful activity for relaxation
- A journal or guided mindfulness book to encourage self-reflection
- Self-care kit with a sleep mask, lip balm, hand cream, and a cozy blanket

Behind the scenes of caregiving lies a hidden and often secret crisis. Many caregivers experience what is called Caregiver Stress Syndrome, a condition characterized by physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion. Caregivers, immersed in relentless demands and overwhelmed by fear and worry, often overlook their well-being, experiencing emotional exhaustion that affects their mental and physical health.

Caregiver stress can have a significant impact on both the caregiver and the person receiving care. Recognizing these signs early is crucial for maintaining the caregiver's well-being and ensuring quality care. Since caregivers may not always identify these signs themselves, it is important for you to help recognize them and take proactive steps as necessary. Below are some of the signs to look for.

Recognizing the Caregiver Stress (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Exhaustion | <input type="checkbox"/> Mood Swings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional Exhaustion | <input type="checkbox"/> Insomnia or Sleep Difficulties |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor Concentration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Depression | <input type="checkbox"/> Increased Use of Alcohol |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increased Irritability | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Withdrawal |

If the caregiver is acting out of character or showing signs of stress, it's important to take action. Begin by having a conversation with the caregiver or another family member, approaching the situation with love and grace. Together, you can create a plan to alleviate some of the stress. This may involve listening to the caregiver's concerns, encouraging self-care, offering respite care, finding necessary resources, or supporting them in seeking professional help. Additionally, remember to check in regularly to see how the caregiver is managing.

Our bodies aren't designed to continually endure this kind of stress, and eventually, it can manifest unexpectedly in numerous ways. One such way is what is called a "flight or fight" response, also known as the stress response. This response is a natural physiological reaction triggered in caregivers when they encounter stressful situations.

When caregivers experience stress, their bodies release hormones like adrenaline and cortisol, preparing them to either confront the stressor (fight) or escape from it (flight). Most of the time the stressor is in a relationship with either a friend or family member. But it can also be internal stressors which might consist of traumatic memories (i.e. past abuse, war, natural disaster, death of a loved one, etc.). Internal stressors can also be from worrying about what the future will bring.

When caregivers endure intense stress, their whole being stays on high alert, constantly trying to cope with the perceived threats or stressors. This can overwhelm them like a wave of panic, guilt, or sadness.

When this happens, it's as if their rational thinking is inaccessible, and they struggle to manage their emotions. This might manifest as emotional crying, outbursts of anger, or withdrawing inward. Occasionally, past or present trauma can reappear as powerful emotions like fear, anxiety, anger, sadness, or shame. These feelings can be overpowering and hard to manage.

Avoiding Caregiver Stress Syndrome hinges on having a good support system and someone who cares.



Ignoring signs of physical, emotional, and psychological distress can exacerbate Caregiver Stress Syndrome or even lead to thoughts of suicide. It's crucial to recognize these signs and offer support, encouraging caregivers to seek professional help when necessary. Caregivers themselves or the individuals they care for may not always notice these signs, underscoring the importance of attentive and supportive friends or family members who can provide assistance.

Recognizing Signs of Physical Distress:

Fatigue and Exhaustion: Constant tiredness and/or appearing overwhelmed

Aches and Pains: Complaints of headaches, backaches, or muscle tension

Changes in Appetite or Weight: Significant changes in appetite leading to weight gain or loss

Sleep Problems: Excessive yawning, complaining about the lack of sleep

Recognizing Signs of Emotional Distress:

Irritability: Increased irritability, excessive crying, or frequent emotional outbursts

Mood Swings: Sudden sadness or unexplained anger

Withdrawal: Social isolation or avoiding previously enjoyed activities

Poor Judgment: Making decisions that seem risky or out of character

Recognizing Signs of Psychological Distress:

Anxiety: Excessive worry, fear, nervousness, or panic attacks

Depression: Sadness, loss of interest in activities, and thoughts of death or suicide

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): Distressing memories of traumatic event(s) accidents, loss of loved one(s), natural disasters, or personal assaults

Their life is precious and your presence makes a difference.

Encourage caregivers to take breaks, exercise, join support groups, and engage in meditation or other stress-relieving activities. If possible, offer to sit with the loved one so the caregiver may participate in these kind of activities. Support them in seeking counseling or medical help to manage distress and prevent suicidal thoughts.

Did you know that statistics reveal 40% of caregivers pass away before those they care for? This sobering statistic highlights the immense physical and emotional toll that caregiving can take on individuals.

Caregivers frequently face challenges with their mental well-being as a result of ongoing stress, fatigue, and isolation leading to feelings of hopelessness and despair. For those who have already experienced loss, the idea of going through it again can be unbearable, often resulting in internal mental and emotional turmoil. Despite feeling overwhelmed, they find it challenging to articulate these struggles.

Stress and negative thoughts can quickly intensify, causing caregivers to wish they weren't alive or have thoughts of suicide as a means of escape. Regularly checking in and asking open-ended questions can provide insights into their emotions and help detect any warning signs. It's important to stay engaged, pay attention to their behavior, and take action when needed, even if they haven't indicated they need help or if you're unsure how to best support them.

Recognizing Warning Signs of Suicidal Thoughts (Check all that apply.)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extreme Mood Swings | <input type="checkbox"/> Consistently Tired and Restless |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Acting Impulsively | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty Concentrating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increased Agitation | <input type="checkbox"/> Increased Use of Alcohol |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unusually Quiet or Reserved | <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of interest in Activities |

If you notice any of these signs, discuss them with the caregiver or another family member. Providing a listening ear, supportive care, and encouraging professional assistance are crucial to preventing a crisis or the tragic loss of a caregiver.

Self-care encompasses intentional activities that promote physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Neglecting self-care can affect personal health, and caregiving abilities, and may lead to Caregiver Stress Syndrome. Here are self-care ideas. Consider arranging for someone to stay with the person being cared for if needed:

Physical Activity: Physical activity reduces stress as well as boosts mood and energy levels. Invite them on a walk with you, or take a yoga class together.

Hobbies: Hobbies help reduce stress levels. Learn something new or engage in a hobby they enjoy. Buy an adult coloring book to color with them while you visit.

Nourishing Meals: Balanced nutrition supports both physical and mental well-being. Make them a fresh salad they can enjoy throughout the week.

Listen Intently: Sharing feelings and challenges can alleviate emotional stress. Plan time to sit down with the caregiver and listen attentively.

Respite Care: Offer 30 minutes to sit with their loved one(s), allowing them time to meditate, soak up the sun, or practice grounding to enhance brain function.

Motivating Music: Music improves the mood and gives a mental break from negative thoughts. Create a playlist or find calming music on YouTube.

Laugh Together: Laughter is a powerful tool for reducing stress. Watch a comedy show, play games, or send them funny videos or memes.

Create a Social Event: Social interaction helps caregivers avoid feelings of loneliness and isolation. Connect with others for coffee, conversation, or wine.

Create a Self-care Toolkit: Create a gift bag and fill it with items to promote relaxation such as aromatherapy oils, bath salts, face masks, or soothing teas.

Restful Sleep: Support the caregiver by listening to their concerns and offering reassurance to alleviate nighttime anxiety caused by stress or worries.

Gratitude Journal: Encourage mindfulness and positivity by providing them with a journal to write down things they're grateful for at the end of each day.

Play Self-Care Bingo! A fun and interactive approach to prioritize self-care. Create a competition to see who can get Bingo first. [Download the game here.](#)

Saying "I'm thinking of you" is easy, but thoughts alone aren't enough. Taking proactive steps shows genuine care and support, crucial for both their well-being and the quality of care they provide. Here are some tangible action steps you can take. Print this page and challenge yourself to check off as many as you can feasibly accomplish.

- ☐ Create a calendar or schedule to check in with the caregiver.
- ☐ Send a text every few days with a note, scripture, quote, gif, or emojis.
- ☐ Find a funny video to send.
- ☐ Plan a visit. Offer a hug, listening ear or a shoulder to cry on.
- ☐ Ask one open-ended question each week to better gauge how the caregiver is.
- ☐ Set aside one hour to intently listen to their struggles and needs.
- ☐ Ask them for the task list of items they are willing to delegate. Act accordingly.
- ☐ Bring a meal or share one of yours.
- ☐ Regularly offer one item from the small gesture list or choose one of your own.
- ☐ Choose one small gift from the list on page 13 or choose one of your own.
- ☐ Learn about any medical conditions to offer understanding conversations.
- ☐ Jot down signs of distress to help prevent Caregiver Stress Syndrome.
- ☐ Gather resources they can use such as a book, blog post, or support group.
- ☐ Each week choose 1-2 items to encourage self-care for the caregiver.
- ☐ Offer weekly respite care by sitting with the one being cared for.
- ☐ Send words of encouragement such as "Your strength is remarkable."
- ☐ Tell them you will be by their side until their storm turns into a rainbow.

There are numerous ways you can be more involved and resources available within your community that can provide essential support to caregivers. Whether you're helping to identify local services, connecting caregivers with others, or assisting them in navigating financial aid options, your efforts can make a significant difference in their lives. Here's a few more to consider:

Educate Yourself: Learn about the condition of the person being cared for or educate yourself on Caregiver Stress Syndrome so you can offer more informed support. This shows caregivers that you're genuinely interested in their lives and committed to helping effectively.

Encourage Self-Care: Taking care of yourself is so important! Encourage a self-care routine that benefits the body, mind, and spirit. Remind caregivers to spend time with friends/family, eat well, exercise, meditate, do puzzles or crafts, play games, listen to music, etc. [Download Self-Care Bingo](#) and play along!

Offer Respite Care: Arrange for regular breaks for caregivers by providing respite care. This could involve sitting with their loved one, taking over caregiving duties, or having a [Neighbors Who Care volunteer](#) come into the home for a few hours so they can rest and recharge.

Attend Support Groups: Connect caregivers with support groups, online forums, or local resources where they can find additional help, information, and solidarity. If they are uneasy, offer to attend with them.

Create a Shared Calendar: Use a shared online calendar to coordinate tasks and appointments. This way you can see upcoming events and allow you to see the caregiver's tasks they might need help with.

Financial Assistance: If they are struggling, offer to assist with financial tasks such as organizing and paying bills, researching medical insurance coverage, or seeking financial aid or benefits they might be eligible for.

Continuing Care for Caregivers

We hope this has been helpful and you feel better equipped to help care for the caregiver in your life. If your friend will be in the caregiver role for an extended period of time, consider connecting them with Neighbors Who Care. We have a team of caring and dedicated volunteers ready to help.

Our Services:

We have 10 helpful services including Respite Care, Dinner Delivery, Transportation, Friendly Visiting, Welfare Visits, and more Click [HERE](#) to see all our services.

Resources for Caregivers:

Another very helpful tool is our FREE ebook Conquer Caregiver Challenges with Confidence which offers practical strategies to overcome 15 common challenges caregivers face. Please download it and email or print it for the caregiver in your life.

Click [HERE](#) to visit our caregiver page filled with resources, free downloads and articles to help them on their caregiver journey.



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