

Caregiver Support Services

Caregiver Support Services address the needs of a person caring for another. There are three main categories of Caregiver Support Services.

- **Caregiver Training:** Educational programs designed to provide caregivers the knowledge and skills needed to safely provide care for a loved one.
- **Caregiver Support:** Support services and programs are available to provide emotional support, physical support and/or financial support.
- **Respite:** A break from the responsibilities of caregiving. Also known as: Caring for the Caregiver!

Many people caring for a family member or friend suffer under the weight of the responsibilities. Often a combination of caregiver training, support, and respite can help a caregiver provide the best care possible for their loved one while caring for themselves along the way.

Think about the following items.
Do they describe you?

Are you:

- **Withdrawing socially**...you no longer want to stay in touch with friends or participate in activities you once enjoyed. "I don't care about getting together with friends anymore."
- **Anxious**...about facing another day and what the future holds. "I'm worried about what will happen when I can no longer provide care."
- **Depressed**...you feel sad and hopeless much of the time. "I don't care anymore. What is wrong with me?"
- **Exhausted**...you barely have the energy to complete your daily tasks. "I don't have the energy to do anything anymore."
- **Sleep deprived**...you wake up in the middle of the night or have nightmares and stressful dreams. "I rarely sleep through the night, and don't feel refreshed in the morning."
- **Unusually emotional**...you cry at minor upsets; you are often irritable. "I cried when there was no milk for my coffee this morning. Then I yelled at my son."
- **Having difficulty concentrating**...you have trouble focusing and you find it difficult completing complex tasks. "I used to do the daily crossword. Now I am lucky if I can solve half of it."
- **Having more health problems**...you may lose or gain weight, get sick more often (colds, flu), or develop chronic health problems (backaches, high blood pressure)."Since the spring, I have had either a cold or the flu. I just can't seem to shake them."

If you answered yes to any of these, you may need caregiver support. There are local resources that can help you.



Find inspiration for caring for a loved one in the book *Love Cares: Encouraging Words and Stories from an Alzheimer's Caregiver* from AdventHealthPress.com
adventhealth.com/adventhealth-press/love-cares-encouraging-words-and-stories-alzheimers-caregiver

Caregiver Support Services

FAQs

What is respite?

It is important for caregivers to become familiar with the term respite, which basically means “care for the caregiver”. Respite care can extend for a few hours or for several weeks. It provides the caregiver with opportunities to take care of personal affairs, to get some rest, or to take a break from the routine of caring for someone.

When does a caregiver need caregiver support services?

The services needed may change over time as the needs of the person being cared for changes.

What do Caregiver Support Services cost?

Support may either be free or fee-based and can vary based on an individual’s resources.

What are the warning signs of caregiver stress?

Caregiving can be one of the most stressful situations faced in a lifetime. Common signs that stress may be effecting your health include:

Physical Signs

- Disturbed sleep
- Back, shoulder or neck pain, muscle tension
- Headaches
- Stomach/digestive problems (upset or acid stomach, cramps, heartburn, gas, irritable bowel syndrome, constipation, diarrhea)
- Loss of hair
- High blood pressure, irregular heartbeat, palpitations
- Weight fluctuation (gain or loss)
- Chest pain
- Fatigue
- Perspiration
- Skin disorder (hives, eczema, psoriasis, tics, itching)
- Periodontal disease, jaw pain
- Weak immune system; more colds, flu, infections
- Sexual dysfunction/lack of libido

Emotional Signs

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Moodiness/mood swings
- Butterflies
- Feeling out of control
- Irritability, easily frustrated, road rage
- Memory problems and lack of concentration
- Increased substance abuse
- Phobias
- Argumentative
- Feeling of isolation
- Job dissatisfaction

If you suffer from either physical or emotional signs of caregiver stress, please contact your primary care provider for an evaluation.