



"A caregiver is a person who is doing something for someone else that contributes to their ability to remain living in the community."

November is National Family Caregivers Month



Approximately 43.5 million caregivers have provided unpaid care to an adult or child in the last 12 months. [National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP - 2015]

The value of a family caregiver is beyond measure.

People have tried to measure.

It has been calculated that if all the family caregivers quit, it would cost the US over \$470 billion! [in 2013 - AARP Public Policy Institute - 2015]

This Month's FAVORITE CAREGIVER TIPS

from the National Family Caregivers Association

- ✓ Make sure legal documents are in order.
- ✓ Seek support from other caregivers. You are not alone!
- ✓ Take care of your own health so that you can be strong enough to take care of your loved one.
- ✓ Accept offers of help and suggest specific things people can do to help you.
- ✓ Learn how to communicate effectively with doctors.
- ✓ Caregiving is hard work so take respite breaks often.
- ✓ Be open to new technologies that can help you care for your loved one.
- ✓ Organize medical information so it's up to date and easy to find.
- ✓ Give yourself credit for doing the best that you can
- ✓ **Laughter is the best medicine.**



Go ahead and give it a try. Turn the corners of your mouth up into a smile and then give a laugh, even if it feels a little forced. Once you've had your chuckle, take stock of how you're feeling. Are your muscles a little less tense? Do you feel more relaxed or buoyant? That's the natural wonder of laughter at work.

Help for caregivers is available in many different ways:

- ♥ 24 hour call in line - **Alzheimer's Association** (always answered by a person) 800-272-3900
- ♥ **Free telephone learning sessions.** (register ahead by calling 866-390-6491) different subjects each time. www.caregiverteleconnection.org. Also starting a *Caregiver Telephone Support Group* that meets for 8 weeks at a time. Call 866-390-6491
- ♥ **Veterans Caregiver Support Line** 855-260-3274
- ♥ Online help from **AARP**: <http://www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving/>
- ♥ **Call the ADRC 920-386-3580**

The Caregiving Rollercoaster

Caring for a loved one can sometimes feel like a rollercoaster ride.

Much of the time you are filled with joy and pride as you spend time with your loved one. Then there are times when you feel overwhelmed and stressed by the challenges of caregiving. Guilt often follows. Then your loved one thanks you for all the work you do and you feel love and joy once more.

These emotional ups and downs often occur during the course of one day. When you are caregiving, life becomes a rollercoaster ride that doesn't stop to let you off!

It is normal to experience a large array of emotions when providing care for a loved one. Caregivers who report higher levels of satisfaction have learned the skill of managing their negative emotions. They are also able to focus on all of the **benefits of caregiving**:

- Growing closer to their loved one as they spend time together
- Feeling enhanced self-worth for coping with a difficult situation
- "Repaying" their loved one who used to care for them
- Having an increased sense of purpose in their life and a sense of achievement

No matter how positive a person is, negative feelings will still come around. The first step toward managing these feelings is to recognize them before they become problematic.

Some common emotions that creep up on caregivers are frustration, anger, fear, and guilt. Some early warning signs of these feelings may be tension, headaches, and increased impatience. As soon as you recognize negative feelings heading your way, step back and calm yourself before they take over. Remember these feelings are normal; they are not good or bad, they just are. The following techniques can be helpful in keeping negative emotions at bay:

- Take some slow, deep breaths.
- Look at the event in a different way. Try to understand the other person's perspective.
- Leave the room for awhile.
- Remember the good times.
- Participate in physical activity.
- Concentrate on the benefits and rewards of caregiving.



When you are calm again, think about what triggered the negative emotion and how it could have been avoided. You can use negative feelings as a catalyst for change. You may find you need more respite care, a change in routine, an outlet for emotional needs such as a support group or to distribute tasks to friends or family members. Ask for help if you need it.

Life for a caregiver is like a rollercoaster ride, so buckle up and prepare for a thrilling ride!

Adapted from an article by Jane Mahoney Older Americans Act Consultant - Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources

CAREGIVERS ARE HEROS



More Help for Caregivers:

Learn tools to help with the caregiving journey and meet others in your situation.

Powerful Tools
FOR Caregivers

Call 920-386-3580 to find out when the next six-week class starts!