

Stepping into the role of caregiver



Alzheimer's disease causes an undue burden on both the loved one afflicted with the disease, as well as those who assume caregiving responsibilities. The emotional impact and chronic stress of a loved one slowly deteriorating—be that physically or mentally—can affect the whole family. It is important to remember that while times of joy, shared laughter, and companionship are often cut short, they are not eliminated completely.

15 million caregivers give 18 billion hours of their time, unpaid, to care for loved ones with Alzheimer's disease.

Caregivers of people with Alzheimer's and related dementias provide care for a longer duration than caregivers of people with other conditions (79% versus 66%) and 57% of family caregivers provide care for four or more years. More than six in ten (63%) Alzheimer's caregivers continue having care responsibilities for the next five years compared with less than half of caregivers of people without dementia (49%).

Many family caregivers are still working and caring for their families, too. Caring for their aging loved ones means managing medications, doctor appointments, financial planning, and long-term care insurance on top of the needs of their own household. As such, the responsibility of being a caretaker takes a toll on the health of the caregiver.

When stepping into the role of caregiver, it is important to remember that you are not alone and there are resources to help. The Alzheimer's Association offers both peer and professionally led in-person support groups for caregivers and others dealing with the disease. There are also specialized groups for children, individuals with younger-onset and early-stage Alzheimer's, and more. Message boards and blogs give caregivers a place to detail their struggles and triumphs in the tumultuous ride of caring for a person with Alzheimer's.

CaregiverStress.com lists eight tips to help stay positive and optimistic as a caregiver, and to focus on your own self-care:

- Look for the good.
- Speak kindly to yourself.
- Lean on positive people.
- Find happiness through health.
- Remember you are doing your best.
- Laugh to lighten your load.
- Keep it simple—don't set yourself up to fail with unrealistic goals.
- Take time for yourself.

Most importantly, remember that you are doing an extraordinary thing for your loved one.



For more information call 512-641-8805, email us at contact@caradayhealth.com or visit caradayhealth.com