WELL BALANCED

- NOVEMBER 2026 -

Family Caregivers Month



BUILDING A CAREGIVER *Support Network*

Caring for a friend or family member can be deeply meaningful, but it can also be demanding. Many caregivers find it difficult to make time for their own health, rest, and personal needs while balancing the responsibilities of supporting someone else. November is Family Caregivers Month, making it a timely reminder to recognize and support the caregivers in our lives who provide care for someone who is aging, ill, injured, living with a disability, or in need of support within their families or communities. Recognizing and supporting caregivers can be done through simple acts of appreciation, regular check-ins, and offering practical help when possible. A strong support network can help caregivers feel less alone, manage stress, and stay connected to the resources they need.

Why Support Matters

Caregivers often prioritize the needs of those they care for above their own, which can increase their risk of depression, anxiety, stress, and burnout. Many also experience feelings of guilt if they choose to take time for self-care. Having a reliable support system can help reduce stress, lessen feelings of isolation, and promote better physical and emotional well-being. When caregivers are able to support their own wellness and personal needs, they may feel more empowered and resilient, allowing them to provide better care for others.



Did You Know?

On average, family caregivers spend about 25 hours each week providing care, and 25% devote more than 40 hours per week to caregiving responsibilities.

Barriers to Asking for Help

Caregivers may hesitate to ask for help for many reasons. Some worry about burdening others. Some view asking for help as a sign of failure or selfishness. Others are already overwhelmed by managing care, medications, appointments, work, and daily responsibilities, making the process of seeking support feel like just another task to add to their list. Some caregivers may also believe they are best equipped to provide care on their own. Recognizing these common barriers is an important first step toward building a support network that feels practical, accessible, and supportive.

How to Support a Caregiver

It may not always be easy to know how to support the caregivers in your life. Caregivers may be reluctant to ask for help, unsure of how to communicate their needs, or simply too overwhelmed to reach out; recognizing these barriers can foster greater understanding and make it easier to offer meaningful support.

Here are a few meaningful ways you can help a caregiver:

- **Provide emotional support by listening.** Let caregivers know you are available, even if they simply need someone to vent to.
- **Offer practical support.** Bring over a meal, help with household chores, run errands, or assist with yard work, for example.
- **Give caregivers a break through respite care.** Step in and help yourself, or arrange for a trusted friend, family member, or professional caregiver to provide temporary support.

- **Encourage self-care.** Remind caregivers to stay on top of routine medical appointments, eat nutritious foods, stay physically active when possible, and seek support from a mental health professional if they are experiencing stress, overwhelm, or other emotional challenges.
- **Stay connected.** Continue reaching out and inviting caregivers to activities, even if they cannot always attend. Regular check-ins and continued inclusion can help them feel supported, valued, and less isolated.

Did You Know?

Financial support may be available to help you or your loved one manage caregiving costs. Options may include short-term respite grants for hired help, insurance coverage, or military benefits, for example.

How Caregivers Can Build Support

If you're a caregiver, remember that asking for help is not a sign of weakness. Seeking support can ease stress, foster meaningful connections, and help ensure you have the resources and encouragement you need to care for both yourself and others. Consider these ideas to lessen the burden of asking for help.

- **Build your circle of support.** Identify trusted neighbors, friends, community members, and healthcare professionals who may be able to help. Keep their contact information current so support is easier to access when you need it and before a potential crisis occurs**.**
- **Expand your support network.** Consider joining a caregiver support group or exploring virtual communities and online support tools. Connecting with people in similar situations can help you learn practical tips and feel less alone.
- **Ask openly and clearly.** Many people want to help but may not know what would be most useful. Share your caregiving situation honestly and let others know what kind of support would make a difference, whether it is a meal, a ride, help with errands, or time to rest.
- **Be specific about what you need.** When requesting help, provide clear instructions, timing, and any important details to make sure the person helping feels prepared and confident.
- **Express appreciation.** A simple thank you can strengthen relationships and encourage continued support over time.

Resources

» National Family Caregivers Month (ncoa.org)

» Self-Check Tool for a Caregiver (memory.ucsf.edu)

Sources

» https://memory.ucsf.edu/caregiving-support/caregiver-well-being

» https://www.caregiver.org/resource/smart-caregiving-by-fca-when-caregivers-reject-offers-of-support/?via=caregiver-resources,caring-for-yourself,general-self-care

» https://www.caregiveraction.org/asking-for-help-as-caregiver/

