

Community: Kensington Park

Title: The Guide to Senior Caregiver Well Being and When to Look for Help

Description: When it comes to being a caregiver for a loved one, a lot of newly added stress can be brought on. Here's when and how to ask for help.

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The Guide to Senior Caregiver Well Being and When to Look for Help

Sometimes, becoming a caregiver for a loved one is a part of their long-term care plan. Other times, becoming a caregiver happens out of necessity after a loved one is injured or starts developing significant symptoms due to a chronic illness.

Whether your role as caregiver was planned or unexpected, it's important to have the proper support and resources established. Caregiver burnout is a common occurrence when someone is neglecting their own needs for the sake of their loved one.

Caregiving is a selfless and rewarding gift. But striking the right balance between caring for yourself and your loved one is essential for the healthiest care and relationships. Discover how to maintain this care balance by incorporating self care and having a plan when you need help.

In the shoes of a caregiver

If you are the son or daughter of an aging parent and they become sick or start showing signs that they need assistance, you might feel [responsible](#) for their care. While it's important to make sure your parents are safe and receiving the care they need, this doesn't mean it's supposed to fall completely on your shoulders.

What often happens is one person takes on full responsibility of the caregiver role, which can quickly lead to burnout. You might continually push aside your needs for theirs, and begin neglecting your need to sleep, eat, [have your own social life](#), and enjoy quality alone time to decompress.

Especially if your loved one is in the [late stages](#) of Alzheimer's or dementia, it becomes essential to have a strong support group to help you mentally and physically care for them.

Managing caregiver well-being along with a loved one's

If you feel like you're reaching your limits, what can you do next? What happens if you've convinced everyone you could handle it, but you need help? The first step is identifying what you are experiencing.

The following [signs and symptoms](#) can appear when you are experiencing caregiver burnout:

- Anxiety and depression
- Exhaustion
- Anger or irritability
- Feeling a lack of control
- Avoiding people and activities
- Neglecting your health needs

- Feeling hopeless
- Lack of motivation and concentration

It's important to remember your health needs are just as important as the senior receiving your care. When you start to suffer, they will suffer, too, because they can only receive the level of care you are physically and mentally able to provide.

Once you are able to recognize and identify how you're feeling, you need to take action. Ask for help from family and friends, and begin implementing simple, daily self-care techniques.

Self Care is Not Self-Indulgent

Are you new to the idea of self care, or have you always thought it seemed a bit selfish? [Self care](#) doesn't have to mean luxurious spa days or vacations. It simply means taking care of yourself daily, and taking steps to maintain good health.

Self care should look different to every person, because everyone's needs are different. Start by paying attention to how you feel and working to lower stress whenever possible. Actively think of ways others can support you, too.

Five Empowering Practices for a Healthy Mind/Brain

It might seem impossible at first to find the time to add self-care elements to your day. It's okay to start small and grow over time. If you can only find 10 minutes on your first day to exercise or rest, take that time. Every little bit helps.

Be mindful of these five key practices that will help boost your energy and mood, and decrease stress levels:

1. Find ways to move: walk, bike, stretch, jump
2. Reduce sugar and processed foods and add in more fruits and veggies
3. Make space to meditate, pray, or practice breathing
4. Practice gratitude and optimism
5. Make time for hobbies and social activities, even if it's just a phone call to a friend

Gradually implementing these key practices will help you not to feel overwhelmed or give up. If you need help finding the time to prepare meals for yourself, practice your hobbies, or exercise, ask a family member or friend if they can step in to help while you complete these activities. Or, perform them while your loved one is napping or occupied.

Mindfulness, Meaning, and Peace at the Speed of Life – Decrease Stress and Increase Longevity

Any form of self care can count as stress relief if it helps reduce your stress or anxiety levels. The ability to find peace during stressful times comes from knowing yourself and understanding what you need to do to feel better.

Does baking boost your mood and spirits? Do you need to push hard during an exercise routine to feel relief? Are meditation, yoga, or reading the sort of quiet, mindful activities that help you cope? Recognize what your mind needs to have to feel calm and at peace, no matter what you're going through.

Another aspect of understanding yourself means you know when you need help. Allow yourself to ask for help or seek support, whether it be a family member helping with daily care, someone running errands, or hiring an in-home aide.

Remember, it's not a sign of weakness. You are putting your loved one first when you're willing to seek additional support.

When a caregiver needs to seek help

Sometimes, despite all your best efforts, your loved one's care exceeds what you and your support system are capable of performing. You still have to keep your household running and your bills paid, and if you're unable to do so while caring for a loved one, it is time to consider more advanced levels of support.

The transition to a senior living community

It's important to remember moving a loved one to a [senior living community](#) isn't a failure on your part. Our loved ones requiring more advanced assistance, such as those with Alzheimer's or dementia, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, and others, need special care from medical professionals.

This is why assisted living communities exist: To perform quality, professional care around-the-clock for your loved ones. These teams have access to the medical equipment and medications necessary for your loved one, especially as their illnesses progress.

Some communities, such as Kensington Park, contain all forms of senior living: from AL lite, which is [independent living](#) with light assisted living care needs, to an advanced [memory care community](#), all with luxurious accommodations and loving, caring staff.

Kensington Park's Continuing Support for Caregivers and Families

Kensington Park is here to support you and your loved ones. If you're a caregiver looking for support, we host a continuous, virtual [caregiver support group](#), among many other engaging and informative [events](#).

[Call us today](#) to learn more about our community, our team, [our promise](#), and how we can support your loved ones and enrich their lives as they age.