Caregiver Self-Determination: A Path to Health and Independence

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Objectives for the Session

At the end of this session, participants will understand:

• The challenges of caring for someone

• How to reduce health and financial risks by seeking out support and using caregiver resources

• The benefits to care receivers when the caregiver uses respite

• What the “7 deadly emotions of caregiving” are and how to deal with them

• How to maintain your physical and mental health while caregiving
Challenges of Caregiving

Different living situations can present different challenges:

- Caring for someone living alone in their own home
- Caring for someone living with a spouse or family members
- Caring for someone living in a community setting or healthcare setting
Health Risks for Caregivers Without Proper Support

- Less likely to take good care of self, including healthy eating, exercising, having routine checkups and medical tests, etc.
- Lowered immunity/get sick more often
- Higher levels of stress and depression
- Greater likelihood of using prescription drugs, smoking, and alcohol consumption
Health Risks for Caregivers Without Proper Support (cont.)

- Increased cardiovascular and circulation problems
- More likely to develop a chronic condition like diabetes, arthritis, ulcers, or anemia
- Slower wound healing
- Increased risk of premature death
How Poor Caregiving Can Affect the Care Receiver

- More doctor’s visits
- More hospitalizations
- Relationship with family deteriorates
- Earlier care facility placement
What’s in it for Me?

Accessing resources early as a caregiver will:

- Significantly reduce caregiver and care receiver injuries
- With quality in-home care (including respite), caregivers and care receivers have 25% fewer doctor’s visits each year
- Entry into an institution is delayed with proper care
- Reduce the risk of early death for both caregiver and care receiver
Help and Supports: Where do We Go From Here?

• “Self-determination includes asking for and accepting help!”

• How to find the support and help that’s available

• What are the support services and resources that can preserve the caregiver’s health?
Take Advantage of What’s Out There!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Some of the available resources and supports:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Respite care</td>
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<tr>
<td>• In-home care</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Caregiving classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Adult day programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Support groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Home delivered meals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Help with chores</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Emergency response systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Counseling</td>
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<td>• Falls Prevention</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Health promotion workshops</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Caregiver cafes</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Memory cafes</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Caregiver conferences, days of renewal, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Caregiver websites</td>
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How to Maintain Your Emotional Health While Caregiving

The 7 deadly emotions of caregiving and how to deal with them:

- Guilt
- Resentment
- Anger
- Worry
- Loneliness
- Grief
- Defensiveness
Maintaining Your Emotional Health While Caregiving

- The Benefits of Joining a Support Group
- The Benefits of Educational Programs for Caregivers
Maintaining Your Physical Health While Caregiving

- Engage in an active lifestyle for good health
- Physical exercise is essential for many reasons
- Exercise can significantly reduce the risk of developing both chronic physical conditions as well as Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias
- Exercise is most effective when done regularly
Benefits of Staying Physically Active

- Helps you stay strong and fit enough to keep doing the things you like to do
- Improves your health and helps you maintain your independence
- Helps prevent or delay many diseases and disabilities
- Helps manage stress and improves your mood
- May help reduce feelings of depression
- Can improve or maintain cognitive function

http://nihseniorhealth.gov/exerciseforolderadults/healthbenefits/01.html
**Benefits of Walking**

Daily walking is one of the easiest and BEST prescriptions for health:

- Maintains thinking functions
- Increases blood flow to the brain while decreasing blood pressure
- Reduces the risk of diseases and conditions that can decrease your independence
- Helps stimulate your brain functions in seeing new sights, chatting with fellow walkers, and just getting out of the house.
## Resources for Caregivers: What is Working Now?

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>County Aging &amp; Disability Resource Centers</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Family Caregiver Support Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alzheimer’s Family Caregiver Support Program</td>
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<td>County Dementia Care Specialists</td>
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<td>County level dementia coalitions</td>
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<tr>
<td>County level caregiving coalitions</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Dementia Friendly Community” training</td>
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Thank You!