

ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA SORORITY, INC.®
DELTA UPSILON OMEGA CHAPTER

Care for the Caregiver Resources

Guidance to assist
caregivers located in
the Greater Puget Sound
Region.





Table of Contents

Page 2: Available Programs for Support

Page 6: Contact Numbers

Page 7: Signs & Symptoms of Caregiver Burnout

Page 9: New to Family Caregiving?

Page 10: Asking Family and Friends for Help

Page 11: Other Places to Turn for Help

Page 12: Connect with your Loved One

Page 13: Attend to Your Own Needs

Page 14: Physical Needs of Family Caregivers

Page 15: Take Advantage of Community Services

Page 19: 10 Tips for Caregivers



Available Programs for Support

Respite Care:

The purpose of respite care is to provide relief for families or other unpaid caregivers of adults (age 18 and over) who are living with functional disabilities.

Where available, in-home and out-of-home respite care options can be provided on an hourly and/or daily basis, including 24-hour care for several consecutive days. Staff providing respite care services provide supervision, companionship and personal care services that are usually provided by the primary caregiver.

Services appropriate to the needs of individuals with cognitive impairment are also provided. Medically-related services, such as administration of medication or injections, are provided by a licensed health practitioner.



Available Programs for Support

Respite Care – Continued:

The array of respite care providers (volunteer and/or paid services) should cover all levels of care including:

- Companionship, supervision and meal preparation
- Help with activities of daily living (e.g., personal care, lifting, turning, transferring, dressing, eating, walking, medication reminders, etc.)
- Tasks such as catheter care, injections, pressure ulcer care, that require licensed medical or health professionals for respite type care such as a Licensed Practical Nurse or Registered Nurse
- Out of home services: Adult day services where available (socialization, nursing services, rehabilitation, classes and many other activities) or short-term residential facility stays (nursing homes, assisted living, boarding homes and adult family homes).



Available Programs for Support

Family Caregiver Support Program:

The Family Caregiver Support Program is a service available to unpaid caregivers of adults needing care and living in Washington State. There are local Family Caregiver Support Program offices throughout the state staffed with caring and knowledgeable people who can help you:

- Find local resources/services
- Find caregiver support groups and counseling
- Get training on specific caregiving topics.
- Get respite care if you need a break
- Talk through specific issues you are having and offer practical information and caregiving suggestions

Generally, these services are offered free or at low cost. Certain eligibility requirements may apply and availability varies from community to community.



Contact Numbers

Adult Protective Services:

Contact Adult Protective Services if you suspect a vulnerable adult living in his/her own home is being harmed or exploited.

Phone: (866) 221-4909

TTY: (800) 977-5456

King County Caregiver Support Network Website:

<https://www.communitylivingconnections.org/we-can-help/caregivers/>

Phone: (844) 348-5464 (KING)

Alt. Phone: (206) 962-8467

Home & Community Services:

Your local HCS staff are experts in the long-term services and supports available for adults in your community.

King County HCS

1737 Airport Way S Suite 130 & P. O. Box 24847,
Seattle, WA 98134

Phone: (206) 341-7600 or (800) 346-9257

TTY: (800) 833-6384



Signs & Symptoms of Caregiver Burnout

Learning to recognize the signs of caregiver stress and burnout is important, so you can take immediate action to prevent things from becoming worse and start improving the situation for both you and the person you're caring for.

Common signs and symptoms of caregiver stress:

- Anxiety, depression, irritability
- Feeling tired and run down
- Difficulty sleeping
- Overreacting to minor nuisances
- New or worsening health problems
- Trouble concentrating
- Feeling increasingly resentful
- Drinking, smoking, or eating more
- Neglecting responsibilities
- Cutting back on leisure activities



Signs & Symptoms of Caregiver Burnout

Common signs and symptoms of caregiver burnout:

- You have much less energy than you once had.
- It seems like you catch every cold or bout of flu that's going around.
- You're constantly exhausted, even after sleeping or taking a break.
- You neglect your own needs, either because you're too busy or you don't care anymore
- Your life revolves around caregiving, but it gives you little satisfaction
- You have trouble relaxing, even when help is available
- You're increasingly impatient and irritable with the person you're caring for
- You feel helpless and hopeless



New to Family Caregiving?

Learn as much as you can about your family member's illness or disability and how to care for it. The more you know, the less anxiety you'll feel and the more effective you'll be.

Seek out other caregivers. It helps to know you're not alone. It's comforting to give and receive support from others who understand exactly what you're going through.

Trust your instincts. Remember, you know your family member best. Don't ignore what doctors and specialists tell you, but listen to your gut, too.

Encourage your loved one's independence. Caregiving does not mean doing everything for your loved one. Be open to technologies and strategies that allow your family member to remain as independent as possible.

Know your limits. Be realistic about how much of your time and yourself you can give. Set clear limits, and communicate those limits to doctors, family members, and other people involved.



Asking Family and Friends for Help

It's not always easy to ask for help, even when you desperately need it. Perhaps you're afraid to impose on others or worried that your request will be resented or rejected. But if you simply make your needs known, you may be pleasantly surprised by the willingness of others to pitch in. Many times, friends and family members want to help, but don't know how. Make it easier for them by:

- Setting aside one-on-one time to talk to the person
- Going over the list of caregiving needs you previously drew up
- Pointing out areas in which they might be of service (maybe your brother is good at Internet research, or your friend is a financial whiz)
- Asking the person if they'd like to help, and if so, in what way
- Making sure the person understands what would be most helpful for both you and the caregiving recipient



Other Places to Turn for Support

- Your church, temple, or other place of worship
- Caregiver support groups at a local hospital or online
- A therapist, social worker, or counselor
- National caregiver organizations
- Organizations specific to your family member's illness or disability



Connect with your Loved One

Pablo Casals, the world-renowned cellist, said, “The capacity to care is the thing that gives life its deepest significance and meaning.” When handled in the right way, caring for a loved one can bring pleasure—to both you and to the person you’re caring for. Staying calm and relaxed and taking the time each day to really connect with the person you’re caring for can release hormones that boost your mood, reduce stress, and trigger biological changes that improve your physical health. And it has the same effect on your loved one, too.

Even if the person you’re caring for can no longer communicate verbally, it’s important to take a short time to focus fully on him or her. Avoid all distractions—such as the TV, cell phone, and computer—make eye contact (if that’s possible), hold the person’s hand or stroke their cheek, and talk in a calm, reassuring tone of voice. When you connect in this way, you’ll experience a process that lowers stress and supports physical and emotional well-being—for both of you—and you’ll experience the “deepest significance and meaning” that Casals talks about.



Attend to Your Own Needs

If you're distracted, burned out, or otherwise overwhelmed by the daily grind of caregiving, you'll likely find it difficult to connect with the person you're caring for. It's vital that you don't forget about your own needs while you're looking after your loved one. Caregivers need care, too.

Take time to relax daily, and learn how to de-stress when you start to feel overwhelmed. Connect with the person you're caring for or employ your senses to effectively relieve stress in the moment, and return to a balanced state.

Talk with someone to make sense of your situation and your feelings.

Keep a journal. Some find it helpful to write down their thoughts to help see things more clearly.

Feed your spirit. Pray, meditate, or do another activity that makes you feel part of something greater.

Watch out for signs of depression, anxiety, or burnout and seek professional help if needed.



Physical Needs of Family Caregivers

Exercise regularly. Try to get in at least 30 minutes of exercise, three times per week. Exercise is a great way to relieve stress and boost your energy.

Eat right. Well-nourished bodies are better prepared to cope with stress and get through busy days. Keep your energy up and your mind clear by eating nutritious meals regularly.

Avoid alcohol and drugs. It can be tempting to turn to substances for escape when life feels overwhelming, but they can easily compromise the quality of your caregiving.

Get enough sleep. Aim for an average of eight hours of solid, uninterrupted sleep every night. Otherwise, your energy level, productivity, and ability to handle stress will suffer.

Keep up with your own health care. Go to the doctor and dentist on schedule, and keep up with your own prescriptions or medical therapy. As a caregiver, you need to stay as strong and healthy as possible.



Take Advantage of Community Services

Most communities have services to help caregivers. Depending on where you live, the cost may be based on your ability to pay or covered by the care receiver's insurance. Services that may be available in your community include adult day care centers, home health aides, home-delivered meals, respite care, transportation services, and skilled nursing.

Caregiver services in your community. Call your local senior center, county information and referral service, family services, or hospital social work unit for contact suggestions. Advocacy groups for the disorder your loved one's suffering from may also be able to recommend local services. In the U.S., contact your local Area Agency on Aging for help with caring for older family members.



Take Advantage of Community Services

Caregiver support for veterans. If your care recipient is a veteran in the U.S., home health care coverage, financial support, nursing home care, and adult day care benefits may be available. Some Veterans Administration programs are free, while others require co-payments, depending upon the veteran's status, income, and other criteria.

Your family member's affiliations. Fraternal organizations such as the Elks, Eagles, or Moose lodges may offer some assistance if your loved one is a longtime dues-paying member. This help may take the form of phone check-ins, home visits, or transportation.

Community transportation services. Many communities offer free or low-cost transportation services for trips to and from medical appointments, day care, senior centers, and shopping malls.



Take Advantage of Community Services

Adult day care. If your senior loved one is well enough, consider the possibility of adult day care. An adult day care center can provide you with needed breaks during the day or week, and your loved one with some valuable diversions and activities.

Personal care services. Help with activities of daily living, such as dressing, bathing, feeding, or meal preparation may be provided by home care aides, hired companions, certified nurse's aides, or home health aides. Home health aides might also provide limited assistance with tasks such as taking blood pressure or offering medication reminders.



Take Advantage of Community Services

Health care services. Some health care services can be provided at home by trained professionals such as physical or occupational therapists, social workers, or home health nurses. Check with your insurance or health service to see what kind of coverage is available. Hospice care can also be provided at home.

Meal programs. Your loved one may be eligible to have hot meals delivered at home by a Meals on Wheels program. Religious and other local organizations sometimes offer free lunches and companionship for the sick and elderly.



10 Tips for Caregivers

1. Seek support from other caregivers. You are not alone!
2. Take care of your own health so that you can be strong enough to take care of your loved one.
3. Accept offers of help and suggest specific things people can do to help you.
4. Learn how to communicate effectively with doctors.
5. Caregiving is hard work so take respite breaks often.
6. Watch out for signs of depression and don't delay getting professional help when needed.
7. Be open to new technologies that can help you care for your loved one.
8. Organize medical information so it's up to date and easy to find.
9. Make sure legal documents are in order.
10. Give yourself credit for doing the best you can in one of the toughest jobs there is!