

Helping Caregivers Manage Stress

(NAPSA)—There is good news for caregivers. Resources are available that are designed to help them manage the stress that can often accompany their role. In the United States, more than 65 million caregivers spend an average of 20 hours each week providing care for people who can't fully care for themselves. While this compassionate act is emotionally rewarding, it can take a toll on caregivers, leading to stress and potential burnout.

A self-assessment for caregivers

Here are a few questions to ask yourself about your caregiver experience. As a caregiver, do you:

- Worry that your overall health is spiraling downward?
- Believe that the only choice you have is to provide care for someone?
- Neglect your own personal or physical concerns?
- Experience exhaustion or depression much of the time?
- Notice that your eating habits have changed—eating more or less than normal?
- Make adjustments to your work schedule or take significant amounts of time off from work to be a caregiver?
- Feel like the relationship with the person you're caring for is strained—where you are increasingly impatient and frustrated?
- Worry about the financial commitment of your caregiving?
- Feel overwhelmed with your situation, but are not sure how to make it better?

Providing caregivers with care

Carole Crook of Georgia answered “yes” to many of these questions during the nine years she cared for her husband James, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. She decided she wanted to keep him home for the rest of his lifetime, but as his health deteriorated, she reached a point where she didn't know where



There's a program to provide the support that caregivers need.

to turn. That's when she looked into a program called “Solutions for Caregivers,” provided through James' former employer.

Solutions for Caregivers is designed to provide the support that caregivers need. Through the program, nurses assess a family's situation and needs, develop a care plan and discuss recommendations with the whole family.

The program connected Carole with a care manager named Audrey, who sent a nurse to their home to conduct an assessment.

“She checked out James and his blood pressure. She wrote down all my questions and did a thorough job with it,” Carole said. “It took maybe two weeks to get the results back. After that, everything fell right on into place.”

Audrey worked with Carole and James for five months, providing support prior to James passing away. Her imprint remains with Carole to this day.

“Ms. Audrey, she was doing her job, but she just seemed like, ‘I know you and I will take care of you.’ She did above and beyond. I am so glad my path crossed with her path,” Carole said. “She became like a personal friend. She was so understanding and so nice. I just can't give her enough praise and she did everything so thoroughly.”

You can learn more about caregiver support at WhatIsSolutionsForCaregivers.com.