



## Helpful Resources For Caregivers

(NAPSA)—If you provide assistance to someone who is disabled or needs help with day-to-day activities, you are not alone.

According to the National Alliance for Caregiving, more than 22 million households provide care for a family member, friend or loved one.

More than 7 million older adults currently require some kind of long-term care, and at least 10 million will have such needs by 2020.

Caregivers can be any age or gender. Thirty-nine percent of caregivers are men and 61 percent are women. Fifty-nine percent of caregivers either work or have worked while providing care. Many juggle caregiving with work and other family responsibilities.

### Caring for the Caregiver

One of the biggest obstacles for caregivers is losing sight of their own physical and emotional needs. Emotions such as guilt, anger, regret and hopelessness—“burnout”—can erode caregivers’ physical and emotional state if they don’t allow time for their own needs. It is easy for caregivers to get lost in the many issues of caregiving and lose sight of their own needs, but it is important that they understand taking care of their own needs will help them to be more effective in their caregiving role. Caregiving is a process, not an event. As a caregiver, you need to recognize that you cannot do everything at once and that you do not need to do it alone. It is important for both you and your loved one that you enlist the support of others. Don’t wait until your responsibilities seem overwhelming.

### Assessing Care Needs

The first step in providing care for a family member is



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assessing the degree to which your loved one can function. A person who is forgetful or unable to eat, move about or use the toilet without help will obviously need a higher level of care than someone who simply requires occasional assistance with tasks such as bill paying.

There are community resources that can assist you in figuring out the kind of help your loved one may need and locating resources to meet those needs.

### Communication

Loved ones may resist your efforts to assist them or make demands on your time that you are unable to meet. It can help to put yourself in your loved one’s place and try to understand the feelings that might be causing his or her reaction.

As important as it is to make those you care for feel as if they are being heard and understood, it’s also important to understand and express your own feelings and limitations.

Good communication skills help caregivers adapt to change by helping them obtain and share information, ask for what they want and stay connected to others. Seek out others who can assist in meeting your loved one’s needs. You may need to enlist the support of both informal help such as other family or friends and more formal services that are available in the community.

### Planning

Exploring your options and planning ahead will reduce your anxiety about becoming a caregiver. There are a number of resources both on a local and national level that can assist.

You can find resources through the Eldercare Locator, a free public service from the U.S. Administration on Aging, online at [www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov) or by phone at (800) 677-1116. Organizations such as the Alzheimer’s Association or the American Cancer Society can assist if your family member has a particular illness. Senior centers, hospital discharge planners and your local Area Agency on Aging can help find services in your loved one’s community. Many government and private resources are available online.

### Learn More

Helpful information can also be found in a free booklet called “Resources for Caregivers” from the MetLife Mature Market Institute and the National Alliance for Caregiving in cooperation with the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging.

For a copy, you can call (203) 221-6580, e-mail [maturemarketinstitute@metlife.com](mailto:maturemarketinstitute@metlife.com), visit [www.maturemarketinstitute.com](http://www.maturemarketinstitute.com) or write MetLife Mature Market Institute, 57 Greens Farms Road, Westport, CT 06880.