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EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

A GUIDE FOR CARE PARTNERS OF
PEOPLE LIVING WITH SCHIZOPHRENIA



CARE PARTNERS DESERVE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT, TOO

While you're taking care of your loved one, who's taking care of you?

Caring for someone living with schizophrenia can be stressful, isolating, and exhausting. That's why it's so important to look after yourself. Your emotional health matters. Getting help is not a sign of weakness but one of strength.

Support helps make daily life and its responsibilities easier. It can be reassuring to speak with people who understand what you're going through because they've lived through it, too. Peer support groups and communities can put you in touch with other care partners so you can share experiences, tips, and advice while learning about ways to manage stress, anxiety, and burnout. Most of all, these resources offer hope. You can do this. And you don't have to do it alone.

QUICK TIPS

Below are a few steps toward taking care of yourself:

- Join an online or in-person peer group to share and learn from others' experiences
- Take a few minutes each day for yourself. Pause. Take a few slow, deep breaths. Notice how you're feeling without judging yourself
- Remember, you're not alone—help is out there. Ask for help when you're feeling overwhelmed

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RESOURCES

This guide brings trustworthy resources for emotional wellness together in one place. This way, you can find what you need quickly to take care of yourself when things seem overwhelming. Remember, help is available if you look.

PAGE **Caregiver Action Network—10 Tips for Family Caregivers**

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While caring for your loved one is important, make no mistake—you're important, too. Here are some tips to use every day to help make being a care partner more manageable for you and your loved one.

PAGE **Circle of Care—A Guidebook for Mental Health Caregivers**

6

Mental health care is one of the most challenging areas out there. With this guidebook, get greater insight into what being a care partner means and what you need to do for yourself. Also included are additional helpful resources for support and understanding.

PAGE **Caregiver Self-Assessment**

11

Taking a step back is a good way to see how your care partner responsibilities are affecting you. A few moments spent with this self-assessment can help you take care of yourself.



LOOKING FOR EVEN MORE?

Visit HomeGroundSCZ.com
to find a variety of helpful tools.

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TOGETHER IN COMMUNITY

This resource guide was developed by Teva Pharmaceuticals as part of our commitment to supporting the hardworking community that is dedicated to caring for people living with schizophrenia.

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caregiveraction.org



nami.org



10 Tips for Family Caregivers to Balance Caregiving and Self-Care

You pour your heart into caring for someone you love—but who's caring for you? Being a family caregiver often feels like putting everyone else's needs first while your own take a backseat. Taking care of yourself isn't selfish; it's essential.

These ten practical tips will help you weave self-care into your daily routine, making caregiving more manageable while ensuring you stay healthy, energized, and resilient for the long haul.

ACCESS ONLINE
www.caregiveraction.org/10-tips-family-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 for signs of depression.** Don't delay getting professional help when you need it.


- 7** Be open to new **technologies** that can make the job easier.


- 8** **Organize medical information** so it's up to date and easy to find.

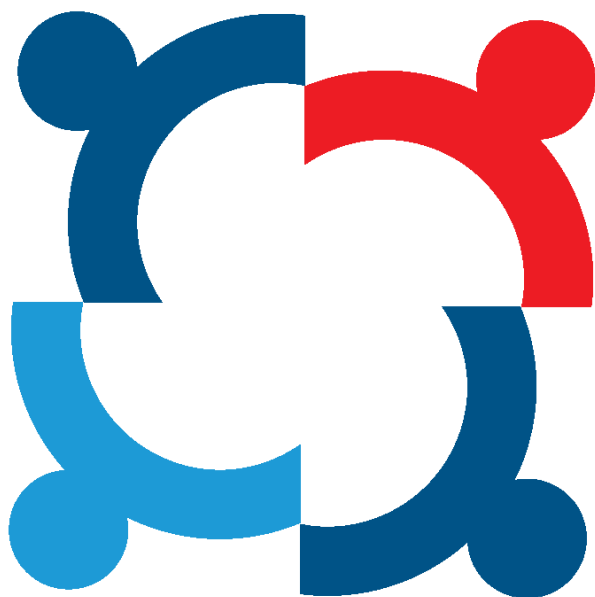

- 9** Make sure **legal documents** are in order.


- 10** **Acknowledge yourself** for rising to meet one of the most demanding responsibilities there is.



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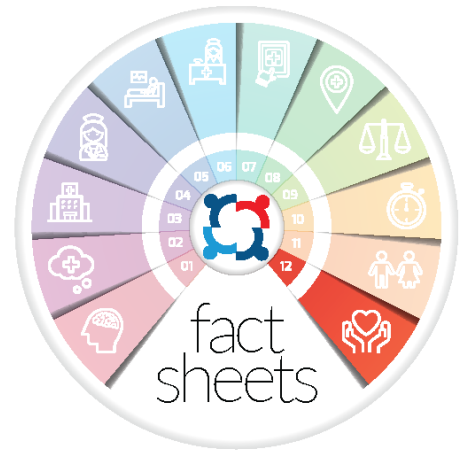
circle OF CARE

A GUIDEBOOK
FOR MENTAL
HEALTH
CAREGIVERS





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12: Taking Care of Yourself

Introduction

An estimated 8.4 million Americans provide care to someone with mental illness.⁵⁰ Being an effective caregiver is difficult, and to meet the challenge, you need to take care of yourself. Sounds simple. Those who provide care know otherwise. There are many barriers to caring for yourself such as setting aside time, finding resources, and the tendency to put yourself last.

Taking care of yourself is the most important thing that you can do, not only for yourself, but also for the person you care for and the rest of the family. Family caregivers carry the weight of not only providing personal and instrumental care (e.g., running errands, medications), but they often have to manage other responsibilities. What do you do when you get tired? Keep going? What do you do when you need help? Keep going? What happens when you cannot go anymore? Taking care of yourself includes recognizing when you need help to balance your own physical, emotional, financial, social, and spiritual needs.

Background: Mental Health Caregivers

Mental health caregivers experience many challenges. You are not alone. Millions of other caregivers express high levels of stress, financial issues, isolation, and concerns for the future. Studies of the caregivers of adults with mental illness found that:

- Mental health caregivers experience higher levels of stress than other family caregivers.
- The typical mental health caregiver provides an average of 32 hours of care per week for an average of nine years. Mental health caregivers address their care recipient's needs for more hours a week and more years on average, than caregivers for other conditions.
- Care recipients are likely to be financially dependent upon family and friends (49%-64%).
- Few parents who are mental health caregivers have plans in place for someone to care for their son or daughter when they can no longer do so (32%).
- Parents who care for people with mental illness say their caregiving role has made

⁵⁰ This is a minimal prevalence projection based on national estimates of caregiving prevalence from *Caregiving in the U.S. 2015* (see *On Pins & Needles: Caregivers of Adults with Mental Illness*, 2015).

www.caregiving.org/circleofcare



12: Taking Care of Yourself

their own health worse (62%). As they continue to age and provide care, they may be forced to rely on others, yet 65% of parent caregivers reported that there were no other family members or friends for their adult child to turn to for assistance.⁵¹

Challenges Facing Mental Health Caregivers

- Loneliness, isolation, lack of social support
- Health issues related to the stress of caregiving
- Navigating the care system
- Accurate and timely diagnosis for the care recipient
- Medication management
- Planning for the future
- Mental health caregiver training and education

What You Can Do to Take Care of Yourself

There are several ways you can care for yourself as you continue your caregiving journey. The National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC) provides a Caregiver Health Self-Assessment Questionnaire on their website (see below). The tool helps you look at your own situation, consider options, and make decisions that will allow you to take care of yourself within the context of your caregiving responsibilities.

Caregiver Health Self-Assessment Questionnaire: English

www.caregiving.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/caregiverselfassessment_english.pdf

⁵¹ National Alliance for Caregiving (2015). *On Pins & Needles: Caregivers of Adults with Mental Illness*.

Caregiver Health Self-Assessment Questionnaire: Spanish

www.caregiving.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/caregiverselfassessment_spanish.pdf

Physical Health

Taking care of yourself includes physical activity, sleep, and diet, at a minimum. Physical activity has many benefits that are well documented, although for caregivers, it is difficult to find the time to fit it in. A short walk can bring benefits and can be accomplished with a mindful approach and some planning. The following are some tips to include regular physical activity:

- Set a timer for taking a walk.
- Plan your route ahead of time.
- Bring walking shoes with you or keep them in your car.
- For smartphone users, consider downloading an app such as “Map My Walk” (free) to help provide motivation related to calories burned, distance, etc.
- Set a goal for your walk such as 20 minutes to start, which can be 10 minutes one way, 10 minutes back.
- If leaving the home is a barrier to physical activity look around your home for opportunities to exercise. For example, climbing stairs if that is accessible to you, running in place, or floor stretches. There are several online programs that provide guidance for in-home exercises.
- Although it can be a challenge at times, eating well is important. Eating a balanced diet is important for your overall health, and for your ability to care for the person you love.

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12: Taking Care of Yourself

- Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water and minimize alcohol intake during stressful times.
- Sleep is important. Get as much uninterrupted sleep as you can. When you cannot sleep through the night, find times to nap, even for short periods of time.

Spiritual Health

Attending to your spiritual side can take many forms, including prayer, meditation, yoga, spending time in nature, personal writing, or attending worship services. The main benefit of spiritual practice for caregivers is the time you dedicate to yourself. One thing we know about caregiving is that it leaves very little time for you. There are many ways to infuse spiritual activities into daily life:

- Take a walk in a place that is quiet or peaceful.
- Access to the internet allows those who can't get away to take a few moments for an online yoga class, meditation lesson, or writing group.
- Your local library can provide an escape, if even for a moment. There are many books with topics related to spirituality.
- Local groups found on meetup.com or through your community center or senior care center can often provide resources.

Emotional Health

Caregiving can be an emotional journey. It is critical to recognize when you need emotional support from friends, family, or others who are on a similar journey. Knowing that you are not alone and that others are there for you can provide much-needed comfort. Taking care of yourself emotionally will allow you to find the strength to continue

your journey as a caregiver. There are many ways to improve your emotional health:

- Caregiver support groups are a wonderful way to connect with others who are on a similar journey. There are many types of groups such as condition-specific, gender-specific, online, or in-person groups.
- Social support is critical to emotional health. Set aside time on a regular basis to meet a friend for coffee, or have a friend come visit you, if even for a short time.
- Do something for yourself. Take yourself to a movie or dinner. Although time is often the main issue, it is important to find some time for your needs so that you can continue to care for the care recipient. Your local Area Agency on Aging may be able to provide resources for respite care.

Financial Health

Taking care of yourself means taking care of your finances. Caring for a care recipient can often mean out-of-pocket expenses that quickly add up. Meeting with a financial advisor can help you feel more in control of your finances and even help you make informed decisions about your care situation. Financial advisors can be found at your local bank, or local aging network groups such as senior centers or your Area Agency on Aging.

www.caregiving.org/circleofcare



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Helpful Websites

AARP–Caregiving

www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving

Caregiver Action Network

caregiveraction.org

Family Caregiver Alliance

www.caregiver.org

National Alliance for Caregiving

www.caregiving.org

National Alliance for Mental Illness

www.nami.org/Find-Support/Family-Members-and-Caregivers

www.caregiving.org/circleofcare



Caregiver Self-Assessment*

Signs of burnout/fatigue	Never	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
I can't fall asleep or I frequently wake up.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a lack of energy during the day.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I eat too much or too little.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am sick more often (flus, colds, headaches).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel impatient or I am easily agitated.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel guilty that I am not doing enough.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have trouble concentrating on everyday simple tasks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am becoming more forgetful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I stopped doing activities I used to find enjoyable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am more socially isolated from my friends and family.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel sad or depressed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel anxious or worried.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have lost interest in doing things.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you checked “Frequently” or “Always” for any of the above, then it may be time to seek help from a healthcare provider, or your local health and social service network—because you have to take care of yourself, too!

* Not intended as a substitute for medical advice. Please consult your doctor if you are experiencing a health problem.

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At Teva, we care deeply about the well-being of the patients, caregivers and communities who rely on us. From our role as a global leader in generic and brand-name medicines to the innovative solutions we create for our healthcare partners, we offer a unique perspective on health around the world.

We are committed to working with our pharmacy partners to help make the care journey easier for you.

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