

alzheimer's association

100+ Ways to Support Caregivers by Sharing the Care

Becoming a caregiver adds a new role with many tasks and responsibilities. The time, emotional, mental, and sometimes physical energy needed as a caregiver may mean it is harder to maintain the routine of the household.

Friends and family can create a community of care by sharing caregiving tasks or by sharing tasks of everyday life. One important way to provide support is caring for the caregiver. Another way is to spend time with the person with dementia, allowing the caregiver the flexibility to do other things or rest. Here are some ideas to get you started ...

Errands

- Pick-up/return library books
- Pick-up/return videos
- Pick-up/drop off dry cleaning
- Pick-up firewood/gas for grill
- Pack & mail packages to others
- Vacuum/wash the car(s)
- Bring car for repair/oil change
- Go food shopping
- Buy stamps
- Pick-up/drop off prescriptions

Emotional Support

- Stay in touch
- Remember birthdays
- Remember anniversaries
- Create special day celebrations
- Help find a support group
- Attend support group together
- Silently sit together
- Stop by with favorite beverage or snack at tough time of day
- Establish a phone support ritual
- Listen
- Learn what you can about dementia
- Continue to share your life
- Continue to invite
- Join in hospital visits
- Accompany for other appts or medical visits if desired (take notes if requested)
- Laugh together
- Cry together
- Be a sounding board
- Create respite opportunities
- Insist on fun events/activities

Household Chores/Maintenance

- Rake leaves
- Shovel snow
- Clean the refrigerator
- Dust the blinds
- Clean the guest rooms
- Troubleshoot computer problems
- Set up email account or website
- Do laundry, ironing or mending
- Balance the checkbook
- Weed/tend the yard
- Fill the bird feeder
- Set up & remove outdoor/indoor holiday decorations
- Help clean out a closet or room
- Help clean out the garage
- Clean the bathroom(s)
- Collect & drop off recyclables
- Change air filter on heater
- Change batteries in smoke detectors
- Frame favorite photos
- Help create a photo album
- Change the bed linens
- Replace light bulbs
- Address thank you notes
- Throw out junk mail
- Shred old documents
- Buy greeting cards
- Upgrade sound system in house
- Arrange for restaurant meal delivery
- Arrange for or do a safety evaluation of the home
- Arrange for seasonal home maintenance (sprinkler blow-out)
- Wash the windows

Family Routine

- Walk the dog
- Bring pets for check-ups/shots
- Help coordinate a family dinner
- Clean the pet areas
- Keep pet food/water supplied
- Help the caregiver satisfy other family roles
- Attend kids' or grandkids' events
- Take children or teens to park, pool, rec center or events
- Share carpool duties

Logistical Support

- Coordinate schedule of visitors or other help
- Help create a phone list
- Arrange for home services
- Create forms (things to discuss with doctor; medicine logs, etc)
- Help with legal or financial or insurance paperwork
- Find someone to do taxes
- Find someone to clean house
- Find services that pick up or deliver
- Disseminate Five Wishes or other documents to important parties
- Research community programs
- Help apply for respite grants or medical benefits
- Offer to keep extended family or friends informed
- Create a calendar for appts or birthdays, special events
- Schedule medical & dental appts and remind and/or drive
- Help inform/involve the neighbors

Pampering

- Offer to cut or perm or dye hair
- Offer a manicure/pedicure
- Offer a massage
- Provide special health beauty aids (e.g. scented lotions)
- Bring comforting music
- Plan a special time together
- Plan a special break for the caregiver including care for the care recipient
- Shower the caregiver with love
- Arrange for loved ones to come visit

Spiritual Support

- Offer to drive to/from and/or attend worship together
- Offer to drive to/from and/or set up clergy visit
- Pray together
- Read spiritual book aloud
- Discuss favorite spiritual sayings that provide comfort & support
- Discuss rituals of importance
- Help bring spiritual symbols into home
- Discuss end-of-life planning
- Provide spiritually meaningful music

Provide Respite Care

Spend time with the person with dementia. Not sure what to do?

Call the Alzheimer's Association 24/7 **HELPLINE** at **800.272.3900** for tips and to request "101 Activities To Do With A Person Who Has Dementia"

Adapted by the Alzheimer's Association, Colorado Chapter, Inc. from:

- "101 Things You Can Do for a Family Caregiver: Ideas to Support the People Who Care for Patients with Alzheimer's Disease" compiled by Mary Frances De Rose and the VESTA Project Caregivers
- "Jobs Caregivers Can Share" from Share the Care: How to Organize a Group to Care for Someone Who Is Seriously Ill" by Cappy Capossela and Sheila Warnock, @ 2004, Fireside: New York.

For information on Creating a Community of Care, please contact Colorado Share the Care™ Coordinator: **Jane W. Barton**, MTS, Community Educator, Life Quality Institute; **303.398.6230**; **jbarton@denverhospice.org** or visit **www.lifequalityinstitute.org**