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HOSPICE

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Caring for the Caregivers in Your Life

Many of us know someone who provides care for a family member or friend who is ill, injured, disabled, or otherwise in need of assistance. Caregivers often need extra help from others, even if they may not ask for it.

According to the online resource site, CaringInfo.org, those caring for another may often feel alone, stressed, tired, or unprepared. People caring for someone with a serious illness may especially need support, as they are going through different types of loss and grief while caring for a loved one.

CaringInfo offers an online brochure titled, “How to Support Someone Caring for Another,” which lists several helpful ways you might give support to a caregiver you know.

Ask how they’re doing

You can offer emotional support to someone who’s a caregiver by showing you care about how they are doing. It can help to let them know that you’re there to listen if they need someone to talk to, but be sure to respect their privacy if they don’t wish to talk.

Give a reassuring hug

If you know the caregiver feels comfortable with your physical contact, a hug can be a meaningful way to share emotional support. If you’re not sure, ask if they’re okay with being hugged.

Validate that taking a break is okay

You can remind the caregiver that caring for their own needs is important. It’s okay to take a break from caregiving tasks so they don’t get burned out. “[T]hey deserve it and need to care for themselves in order to continue providing care [to their loved one],” says CaringInfo. Otherwise, the day-to-day stress of being a caregiver can be overwhelming.



Spend time with the person who needs care

Offer to visit with the person who needs care to give the caregiver a break so they can go out to do errands, see a movie, have lunch with a friend, or simply take a walk. Not only will this help the caregiver, but your visit can also benefit the person receiving care. A caregiver is sometimes “the only link the care receiver has with the outside world,” the brochure points out. Spending time to talk or play a game can become a bright spot in their day.

Offer specific help

Caregivers might be too busy to ask for specific help, or might not want to be a burden to others. Saying something like, “Call me if you need anything,” may be too vague, and the caregiver might not know that you sincerely want to help. Instead, be specific. “Ask the caregiver if you can go shopping, make a phone call, cook a meal or sit with the person who is ill,” CaringInfo says.

To read the full brochure about supporting caregivers, visit www.caringinfo.org.

Helpful Ideas for Advance Care Planning

A Conversation Game Helps with Advance Care Planning

Medical experts have created an ice-breaker conversation game about advance care planning topics that people can play in their community, or at home among family and friends. Called “Hello,” the game asks players questions about what they would prefer in future care situations, or about the things that are most important to them.

For instance, one card in the game asks, “What do you fear most: experiencing the worst pain of your life or not getting the chance to say goodbye to your family?” Each player writes down their answer, then shares it with the group.

A team of doctors from Penn State College of Medicine in Hershey, PA, decided to evaluate the effectiveness of the game. They asked 93 seriously ill patients and caregivers to play “Hello” in small group settings. A vast majority of participants said it was an enjoyable, positive experience, which helped them better understand the importance of advance care planning.

The doctors are encouraged that two-thirds of patients included in the study completed an advance directive within three months of playing the game. Experts say only about one-third of adults have created advance directives because many people feel uncomfortable talking about such topics.

The success of “Hello” suggests that talking in a friendly, casual way about advance care planning topics may be a good way for people to start sharing with their loved ones about what they’d want in the future. To learn more, visit commonpractice.com.

Advance Directive for Patients with Dementia

Experts have created an advance directive specifically suited to people

with dementia, called the Dementia Directive. Filling out this free, online form can help people express their wishes about what type of medical care they would want to receive at each stage of dementia.

“Standard advance directives are often not helpful for patients who develop dementia,” say the creators of the document. This is because patients with dementia often experience a slow decline, and may prefer different types of care at each stage of the disease. That makes planning for the future unique and potentially challenging compared with other serious illnesses.

The Dementia Directive allows patients to express different preferences at each point of mental decline (mild, moderate, and severe dementia). For example, a patient can choose that they’d want all possible curative treatment at an early

stage of dementia, but only comfort care at home at a later stage.

Completing the advance directive isn’t only for people who already have dementia. The form’s creators stress that people who are concerned about what would happen if they were to develop dementia can also benefit from filling one out and giving it to their doctor. They say that it’s actually ideal to document your preferences now.

It’s a good idea for someone with dementia to complete the advance directive as soon as possible in the disease course, so they are better able to express their wishes for the future.

Go to dementiadirective.org if you or a loved one wish to download and fill out the Dementia Directive. Once the form is completed, be sure to give a copy to your family and to your doctor.



Some people mistakenly think hospice care is just about dying...nothing could be further from the truth. Hospice helps patients and families focus on living. Angels Grace Hospice, LLC, brings comfort, dignity and peace to help people with a life-limiting illness live every moment of life to the fullest. We also provide support for family and friends.

We are licensed in the state of Illinois, Medicare Certified, Joint Commission Accredited and are locally owned and operated by experienced professionals dedicated to providing excellent end-of-life care for Will, Cook, DuPage, Kendall, Grundy, and Kane counties. Please contact us for more information.

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To comfort always... this is our work

