

Support for Families and Caregivers of People with Dementia

Caring for someone with dementia is one of the most loving and demanding roles a person can take on. Whether you're a spouse, child, friend, or extended family member, you're likely balancing complex emotions, changing routines, and challenging decisions—all while wanting to do what's best for the person you love.

This article is here to support **you**, the caregiver, and the wider family network around the person living with dementia. You are not alone, and your well-being matters too.

The Caregiver Wellness Hub: Taking Care of You

Many caregivers find themselves on autopilot—juggling appointments, medications, meals, and household duties. While your focus may naturally be on your loved one, your health and mental wellness are just as important.

Let's be honest: caregiving can be exhausting. Feelings of **stress**, **burnout**, and even **grief** (yes, even before loss) are common. If you've felt overwhelmed, angry, guilty, or hopeless—you're not a bad person; you're a human doing a hard job.

Here are a few reminders:

- **You deserve rest.** You are not more helpful when you're running on empty.
- **Grief is normal.** Many caregivers grieve the slow changes in the person they once knew.
- **You don't have to do it all alone.** Asking for help is a sign of strength, not failure.

Consider carving out even 15 minutes a day just for yourself. That could be a walk, a quiet coffee, journaling, or simply doing nothing. These small acts help recharge your mind and heart.

Navigating Family Dynamics

Every family has its own rhythm, and dementia often tests that in new ways. It's not uncommon for caregiving responsibilities to fall unevenly—sometimes on one sibling more than others. There may be disagreements about care decisions, finances, or whether it's time to consider outside help.

If you're in this situation, here are some gentle strategies to guide your family through it:

- **Start with shared values.** Remind each other that the goal is your loved one's safety and dignity.
- **Have structured conversations.** Set time aside to talk through tasks and responsibilities without blaming or accusing.
- **Use outside voices.** Sometimes, having a doctor, social worker, or care manager offer an outside perspective can ease tension.

You might also benefit from family counseling or webinars that explore common family dynamics in dementia care. The goal isn't to agree on everything—it's to work together respectfully, even when you see things differently.

When Is It Time to Ask for Help?

Many caregivers wait too long to ask for support. That's completely understandable—it's hard to know when and how to get outside help. But here's a helpful truth:

You don't need to wait for a crisis to get support.

Here are a few signs it might be time to bring in help:

- You're experiencing caregiver burnout—constant exhaustion, resentment, or health problems.
- Your loved one's needs are increasing beyond what you can safely provide.
- You're feeling isolated and overwhelmed.
- Your family member is showing behaviors (wandering, aggression, late-stage symptoms) that require professional oversight.

Support can come in many forms: hiring a home aide a few hours a week, enrolling in adult day programs, or—when needed—transitioning to **memory care** communities that specialize in dementia. It doesn't mean giving up; it means adapting to what's needed now.

Peer Support: You Are Not Alone

One of the best sources of support is **others walking the same path**. If you feel isolated, connecting with fellow caregivers—even online—can offer relief, advice, and community.

Consider joining a **private caregiver forum** or **Facebook group** where you can safely share your story, ask questions, and listen to others. These spaces are often moderated and focused specifically on dementia care.

You'll find people at every stage—from those just beginning their journey to those who've walked it for years. And sometimes, simply knowing someone else understands what 3:00 a.m. feels like is all the comfort you need.

Caring for someone with dementia is deeply personal, often invisible, and profoundly meaningful. It's okay to feel tired. It's okay to need support. And it's okay to still laugh, live, and find joy in the in-between moments.

You are doing something extraordinary—and you don't have to do it alone.