Making Sense of Caregiving

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Definition of Terms

- Caregiving
  - Care that is provided by a family member or friend rather than by a professional who is reimbursed for services
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Informal Support</th>
<th>Formal Support</th>
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<tr>
<td>Unpaid caregiving by friends and family</td>
<td>Paid help from professional caregivers</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Advice</td>
<td>• Doctors</td>
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<td>• Affection</td>
<td>• Nurses</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Companionship</td>
<td>• Social workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Help with ADLs &amp; IADLs</td>
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<td>• Nursing care</td>
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You Are Not Alone

• Approximately 43.5 million caregivers have provided unpaid care to an adult/child in the:
  • Last 12 months
  • United States alone
• Caregiving for patients with _____ has been described as:
  • An intense, episodic, and challenging care experience
Caring for Someone with _____

• What is needed?
  • Good, reliable caregiver support

• Why?
  • Crucial to the physical and emotional well-being
What Can It Do To The Caregiver?

• _____ adversely
  • Affects the health of the patients and those who provide care to them
  • Impact the quality of life
    • Lead to physical, social, and emotional distress
• Giving care at home to patients with _____
  • Can be stressful
  • May effect long term psychologic health
Nature of the Illness

• Requires multifaceted activities that are physically, emotionally, socially, and financially demanding.

• Tasks can include:
  • Monitoring symptoms
  • Dealing with various side effects
  • Tracking medical information
  • Providing emotional and clinical support
Caregivers Primary Task

- Take care of him or herself
- Failure to do so:
  - Caregiver burden: Gerontologist call the stress due to caregiving
Caregiver Burden

Affects caregivers

• Energy
• Health
• Emotions
• Stress and work
  absenteeism
Caregiver Stress: Common Signs and Symptoms

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Irritability
- Overreacting to minor nuisances
- Difficulty sleeping
- New or worsening health problems
- Drinking
- Smoking
- Eating more
- Trouble concentrating
- Cutting back on leisure activities
- Neglecting responsibilities
Depression

- 40% - 70% of caregivers show symptoms of depression
  - A quarter to half meet the diagnostic criteria for major depression
- Not a direct result of caregiving
- Usually the result of:
  - The caregiver making an effort to provide the best possible care for a family member or friend
    - Caregiver often sacrifices their own physical and emotional needs
Resulting Feelings of Depression

- Anger
- Anxiety
- Sadness
- Isolation
- Exhaustion
- Guilt from having these feelings
  - Can exact a heavy toll
Depression: Common Signs and Symptoms

• Becoming easily agitated or frustrated
• Disturbed sleep
• Physical symptoms that do not respond to treatment
  • Headaches
  • Digestive disorders
  • Pain
Caregiver Burnout

- State of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion
- May be accompanied by change in attitude
- From positive and caring to negative and unconcerned

**Warning Signs of Caregiver Burnout:**
- Excessive stress and tension
- Debilitating depression
- Persistent anxiety, anger, or guilt
- Extreme irritability or anger with the patient
- Decreased overall life satisfaction
- Relationship conflicts and social isolation
- Lower immunity and greater need for healthcare services
- Excessive use of medications, drugs, or alcohol
Caregiver Burnout: Common Signs and Symptoms

• You are increasingly impatient and irritable with the person you are caring for.
• Your life revolves around caregiving, but it gives little satisfaction.
• You neglect your own needs, either because you are too busy or you do not care anymore.
# Caregiver Burnout vs Compassion Fatigue

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<th><strong>Burnout</strong></th>
<th><strong>Fatigue</strong></th>
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<td>• Develops over time</td>
<td>• Comes on suddenly</td>
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<td>• Normal displays of chronic stress</td>
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How to Prevent Burnout and Depression

• Embrace your caregiving choice.
• Avoid focusing on things you have no control over.
• Celebrate the small victories.
• Applaud your own efforts.
• Talk to a supportive family member or friend.
Care for the Caregiver

- R-E-S-P-I-T-E
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SAI_Nv3qWto
- Support groups
- Elder care programs
  - Counseling services
  - Information on community services and supports
  - Flexible work schedules
I Am A Caregiver.

I Try.
I Do.
I Hope.
I Care.

oldercareissues.blogspot.com
Questions?
Thank You!