

Department of Defense

Work-Life Programs

Health & Wellness



November 2023



November: National Family Caregivers Month

November is National Family Caregivers Month. It is a time to recognize and honor the contributions of all caregivers. According to Mental Health America (MHA), there are over 53 million Americans who are unpaid caregivers to family, friends, and neighbors. Today's family caregivers are often expected to perform highly complex tasks, including medical tasks, care coordination, administration, and technical support—activities that extend well beyond the help traditionally provided with activities of daily living. Caregivers often experience a significant impact on their lives in more ways than one. This can make it more difficult to maintain their physical and mental health. Caregivers commonly feel angry, frustrated, worn out, or sad and it is common to feel alone. They may become so focused on the care of others, that they fail to see how the stress affects them. Caregivers need help and support, too. Below are a few tips to help manage stress associated with caregiving.

Tips to manage caregiver stress:

- **Ask for and accept help.** Do not be afraid to let others know that you need help. This gives others the opportunity to choose how they wish to assist you.
- **Focus on the things that you can do.** You may feel that you are not doing enough but know that you are doing the best that you can do.
- **Get connected.** Learn about resources that may be available to you such as meal prep or meal delivery services, house cleaning, and transportation services.
- **Seek social support.** Make time to stay connected to those who support you. It can be as simple as sharing a cup of coffee with a friend.
- **Take care of your health.** Ensure that you are eating healthy, moving, and getting restful sleep. If you are struggling to sleep due to stress, seek help from a healthcare professional.
- **Set goals that you can reach.**
- **Professional Guidance:** Screenings conducted by trained professionals offer guidance and support, ensuring individuals receive appropriate care.

If you are a caregiver, it is important to make a conscious effort every day to take time to care for yourself. This is key to maintaining your own health and well-being so that you can also take better care of the ones that you love.

Additional Resources:

- Mayo Clinic: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/caregiver-stress/art-20044784>
- MHA: <https://www.mhanational.org/national-family-caregivers-month>
- Eldercare Locator: <https://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Index.aspx>
- Council on Aging: <https://www.help4seniors.org/programs-services/aging-disability-resource-center>

For additional information, email the DCPAS Work-Life Inbox at: dodhra.mcalex.dcpas.mbx.dod-worklife@mail.mil

