



The E.WE
FOUNDATION
EQUIP. EMPOWER. ELEVATE.



Care is more
than what we do—
it's who we are.
You are not alone.

Caregiving & Mental Wellness

A Guide for Caregivers

Support. Strength. Self-Care.
You Matter. 

Any Person.
Any Diagnosis.
Anywhere.



 This guide is for every caregiver on every journey. 



PARENT TO CHILD

Every moment
of love and care.



CHILD TO PARENT

Caring with
compassion and
respect.



SPOUSE TO SPOUSE

Partners through
every season.



SIBLING SUPPORT

Standing together
through it all.



GRANDPARENT RAISING GRANDCHILD

A legacy of love
and strength.



FRIENDS & CHOSEN FAMILY

Chosen. Valued.
Essential.



CAREGIVING COMES IN MANY FORMS.
Love is at the heart of all of them.



www.theewefoundation.org



#YouAreNotAlone

Introduction

Caregiving is one of the most important—and most misunderstood—roles in our society.

Many people do not identify themselves as caregivers, even while providing daily emotional, physical, financial, or medical support to someone they love. Caregiving can look different from one family to another, but the emotional impact is often shared.



Caregivers may include:



Parents caring for children with disabilities, rare diseases, or medical complexities



Adult children caring for aging parents



Spouses supporting partners through illness or disability



Grandparents raising grandchildren



Siblings providing support within the family system



Friends or chosen family members stepping into caregiving roles



Caregiving is deeply personal, emotionally demanding, and often under-resourced.



This guide was created to support caregivers by:



Defining caregiving more broadly



Recognizing the invisible labor caregivers perform



Exploring the emotional and mental health impact of caregiving



Providing practical strategies for navigating caregiving responsibilities



Encouraging caregivers to prioritize their own well-being



You are not just caregiving.

You are making a difference.



1. What is Caregiving?

Caregiving is the ongoing act of supporting another person's physical, emotional, developmental, or medical needs.

Many people think caregiving only refers to medical tasks or physical assistance. In reality, caregiving includes far more.



Caregiving can be temporary, long-term, or lifelong.

Some caregivers provide support **24 hours a day**. Others balance caregiving with work, school, parenting, or additional family responsibilities.



One of the challenges within caregiving is that many caregiving roles remain undefined or unrecognized.

People may hear:

“You’re just being a good spouse.”

“That’s what parents do.”

“It’s simply part of family responsibility.”



But caregiving is labor.

It requires emotional energy, time, coordination, advocacy, and sacrifice.

Caregiving may involve:



Coordinating appointments and treatments



Managing medications and therapies



Providing emotional support



Advocating within healthcare or education systems



Monitoring safety and well-being



Managing finances or insurance issues



Assisting with daily living activities



Offering transportation or communication support



Providing comfort during times of uncertainty or crisis



Recognizing caregiving as a real role is an important step toward

improving support systems and caregiver well-being.



2. The Emotional Reality of Caregiving



Caregiving can bring love, purpose, and connection. It can also create emotional strain that is difficult to explain to others.

Caregivers may experience: 



Chronic stress



Emotional exhaustion



Anxiety and depression



Isolation



Sleep disruption



Financial stress



Grief and anticipatory grief



Burnout



Feelings of guilt or inadequacy



Many caregivers operate in survival mode for extended periods.

They may spend years balancing appointments, medications, emergencies, work responsibilities, and family needs while receiving little emotional support themselves.



Caregivers often feel pressure to remain strong for everyone around them.

As a result, many struggle silently.



Mental wellness is not separate from caregiving.

Supporting caregiver mental health is essential for sustaining individuals, families, and care systems.



3. Caregiving Is Under-Resourced

Despite how common caregiving is, support systems often fail to meet caregiver needs.



Many caregivers face: 

-  Limited respite care
-  Financial hardship
-  Inadequate insurance coverage
-  Workforce challenges
-  Lack of paid leave
-  Limited access to mental health services
-  Geographic barriers to care
-  Difficulty navigating healthcare systems
-  Lack of culturally responsive resources



Families managing rare diseases or medical complexities may face additional barriers because specialized services are often difficult to find.



Caregivers may also struggle to locate professionals who understand their unique experiences.



This lack of support can increase caregiver burnout and emotional distress.

Caregiving should not require individuals
to sacrifice their own well-being
in order to support others.



4. Caregiving Is Often Under-Defined

Not everyone who provides care identifies as a caregiver.

Some people believe the term only applies to paid professionals or those providing full-time physical assistance.

But caregiving exists across many relationships and situations.



You may be a caregiver if you: 



Regularly manage someone's medical needs



Coordinate healthcare appointments



Provide emotional support during illness or disability



Advocate within healthcare, school, or social systems



Help another person maintain safety or daily functioning



Carry ongoing responsibility for another person's well-being



When caregiving is properly recognized,
caregivers are more likely to receive the support they need.



Caregiving can exist even when the role is informal.

Recognizing caregiving more broadly helps:



Reduce stigma



Improve access to resources



Increase visibility



Encourage support-seeking behaviors



Validate caregiver experiences



5. Navigating Caregiving in Healthy Ways

There is no perfect way to navigate caregiving. Every caregiving journey is different.

However, there are strategies that can help caregivers protect their emotional well-being while supporting others.



Acknowledge Your Role

- ♥ Recognizing yourself as a caregiver matters.
- ♥ Your responsibilities, emotional labor, and advocacy efforts are real.
- ♥ Validation is an important step toward seeking support.



Build a Support System

Caregiving should not happen in isolation. Support may include:

- ♥ Family members
- ♥ Friends
- ♥ Peer support groups
- ♥ Faith communities
- ♥ Online caregiver communities
- ♥ Mental health professionals

 **Connection helps reduce isolation and emotional overwhelm.**



Set Realistic Expectations

- ♥ Caregivers often feel pressure to do everything perfectly.
- ♥ But perfection is not sustainable.
- ♥ Some days will feel manageable. Others may feel overwhelming.
- ♥ Give yourself permission to rest, ask for help, and acknowledge limitations.



5. Navigating Caregiving in Healthy Ways



4. Prioritize Mental Wellness

Mental health care is not selfish. 



Caregivers benefit from:

- ♥ Counseling or therapy
- ♥ Stress management tools
- ♥ Regular breaks or respite
- ♥ Sleep and nutrition support
- ♥ Physical movement and self-care routines
- ♥ Creative outlets or hobbies



*Small moments
of care matter.*

5. Learn to Navigate Systems



Healthcare, education, disability, and insurance systems can feel overwhelming.



Keeping organized records, asking questions, and seeking advocacy support can help caregivers feel more empowered.



No caregiver should be expected to navigate complex systems alone.

6. Accept That Grief Can Exist Alongside Love



Caregivers may grieve:

- ♥ Changes in identity
- ♥ Loss of routines or independence
- ♥ Unmet expectations
- ♥ Uncertainty about the future



Grief does not mean caregivers love the person they support any less.

*Both love
and grief can
exist at the same
time.*



6. Supporting Caregivers Better



Communities, organizations, healthcare systems, and policymakers all have a role in supporting caregivers.

Better caregiver support may include:



Accessible mental health services

Timely, affordable support to help caregivers manage stress, anxiety, and burnout.



Respite programs

Temporary relief that gives caregivers time to rest, recharge, and focus on their own well-being.



Paid family leave policies

Policies that allow caregivers time to care without risking their job or income.



Flexible workplaces

Work environments that understand caregiving responsibilities and offer flexibility.



Financial assistance programs

Help with medical costs, equipment, transportation, and everyday needs.



Inclusive healthcare systems

Care systems that respect, listen to, and include caregivers as partners in care.



Trauma-informed care practices

Care that recognizes caregiver stress and promotes safety, compassion, and understanding.



Community education and awareness

Increasing understanding of caregiving and reducing stigma in communities.

Caregivers should not have to prove exhaustion before receiving support.



Caregiver wellness benefits entire families and communities.



7. A Message to Caregivers

If you are caring for someone else,
your well-being matters too.

*You are more than
your responsibilities.* 



You deserve:



Support



Rest



Compassion



Community



Emotional care



Space to ask for help



Caregiving can be
meaningful and
deeply difficult
at the same time.



Both realities
can coexist.



*You do not have to
carry everything alone.* 



8. Final Thoughts

Caregiving exists in many forms and across many relationships.

Whether you are a parent caring for a child, an adult child supporting a parent, a spouse navigating illness alongside your partner, or a family member helping a loved one through medical complexity, **your role matters**.



Caregiving shows up in many ways.



PARENT

Caring for a child through illness, disability, or medical complexity.



ADULT CHILD

Supporting a parent through aging, illness, or changing needs.



SPOUSE / PARTNER

Navigating illness alongside a spouse or partner with strength and love.



FAMILY MEMBER

Helping a loved one through medical complexity and life's challenges.



This Mental Health Awareness Month,

we recognize caregivers for the invisible labor they perform every day. 



We also recognize

the urgent need for more accessible support, stronger resources, and a broader understanding of what caregiving truly means. 

Thank you for all that you do. 

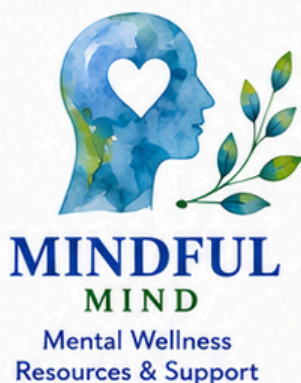




Caregivers care for others.

You matter too.

Your well-being strengthens every life you touch.



**MINDFUL
MIND**

Mental Wellness
Resources & Support



**STRONGER
TOGETHER**

Peer Connection | Community
You Are Not Alone



**CARE
FOR YOU**

Self-Care | Rest | Resilience
Small Steps, Big Impact



A *Global* Advocacy Network

*Connecting caregivers, professionals and communities
around the world.*



Breathe.
You're doing
your best.



It's okay to
ask for help.



Rest is
productive.



You are
enough.



Connection
heals.



Your mental
health matters.

*When caregivers are supported,
families and communities thrive.*

The E.WE Foundation

A 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organization

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