



**DOES YOUR LOVED ONE DRINK NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS?**

As a caregiver, you may be eligible to receive nutritional supplements monthly for your care recipient.

For more information, contact Margie DiDono or Lisa Alley at Randolph Senior Adults Association 336-625-3389

Funds provided by the Family Caregiver Support Program

**YOUR DONATIONS MEAN THE WORLD TO OUR RANDOLPH COUNTY SENIORS!**

When you contribute to Randolph Senior Adults Association, you make an immediate difference in the lives of seniors and their caregivers. Our meal programs and family caregiver programs help seniors stay independent for as long as possible. This allows them to age at home in their community, just like we all want to do.

Donations can be made:  
**Online** - www.senioradults.org  
**Mail** - Randolph Senior Adults Association  
 347 W. Salisbury Street  
 Asheboro, NC 27203  
**Call** - 336-625-3389



Thank you for your generosity!

\*Randolph Senior Adults Association is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization

# The Nurturer



A Newsletter for Family Caregivers in Randolph County Issue 33- May 2026



**Guiding an Improved Dementia Experience (GUIDE) Model**

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS & CAREGIVERS

**What is Guide?**

Guiding an Improved Dementia Experience (GUIDE) is a new program from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to help care for people with dementia.

**Who Can Participate?**

- ◆ Patients must be diagnosed with dementia. They can be at any stage.
- ◆ Patients must reside in one of the following:
  - ◇ Their own home
  - ◇ An assisted living facility
  - ◇ A memory care facility
- ◆ Patients must be enrolled in Medicare Parts A and Part B.

**How Much Do Services Cost?**

GUIDE is a Medicare benefit for those who qualify. No request for payment will be made. All services are billed directly to Medicare.

**Who is Not Eligible?**

- ◆ Patients in a Medicare Advantage Plan
- ◆ Patients living in a Skilled Nursing Facility
- ◆ Patients receiving hospice services
- ◆ Patients enrolled in a PACE program (StayWell is our local PACE program)

**Who provides GUIDE services in Randolph County?**

**AuthoraCare Collective**  
 2504 Summit Avenue  
 Greensboro, NC 27405  
 336-621-7575

**Hospice of Randolph**  
 416 Vision Drive  
 Asheboro, NC 27203  
 336-672-9300

## Calm

Do you need to achieve some calmness in your life? We all do, but family caregivers especially do!

Reflect on activities that bring you joy and relaxation. Try to incorporate them into your life. The more often you do, the calmer and more in control you will feel.

Some things to consider are hobbies you may have put aside for years. What used to make you happy? Exercise is one way to relieve stress and ultimately bring you calm. Shutting off the TV or radio and getting out in nature is another idea.

Whatever it may be, add some calm to your days.

Free copies of *The Nurturer* can be picked up at all Randolph Senior Adult Association centers, Regional Consolidated Services and other community locations.

*The Nurturer* is also available online at www.senioradults.org.

To receive free quarterly copies of *The Nurturer* in the mail or email, call 336-625-3389 or email: rcsaa2@senioradults.org to be added to our mailing list.

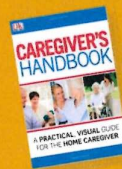
Follow Randolph Senior Adults Association On Facebook

## Free Caregiver Skills Class For Family Caregivers



Physical and Occupational Therapists will train family caregivers on how to physically care for an older adult

- Transferring
- Personal Care
- Feeding
- Fall Prevention
- Medical Equipment Use



Each caregiver will receive a copy of the Caregiver's Handbook

**Thursday, June 11, 2026**  
**5:30pm - 8:00pm**

Clapp's of Asheboro  
 500 Mountain Top Drive, Asheboro

Sandwich boxes will be provided at 5:30 with class starting at 6:00

Participants **need to register** by June 8<sup>th</sup>, contact: Margie DiDono or Lisa Alley ~ Randolph Senior Adults Association 336-625-3389

In-Home Respite Care by certified nursing assistants may be available so caregiver can attend this workshop. Call for more information



### RESOURCES

**NC Stroke Association**  
 336-713-5052  
 ncstroke.org

**National Stroke Association**  
 888-4STROKE (888-478-7653)  
 stroke.org

**American Diabetes Association**  
 800-DIABETES (800-342-2383)  
 diabetes.org

**The Foundation for Peripheral Neuropathy**  
 877-883-9942  
 www.foundationforpn.org

**National Kidney Foundation**  
 800-622-9010  
 kidney.org

**Arthritis Foundation**  
 800-283-7800  
 arthritis.org

**Parkinson's Foundation**  
 1-800-473-4636  
 parkinson.org

**Anxiety & Depression Association of America**  
 1-240-485-1001  
 adaa.org

**National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)**  
 Main - nami.org 800-950-6264  
 NC - naminc.org 800-451-9682

**Family Caregiver Alliance**  
 Online information and resources for caregivers  
 caregiver.org

**Family Caregiving**  
 aarp.org/caregiving/



## RANDOLPH SENIOR ADULTS LOCATIONS

### ASHEBORO SENIOR CENTER RANDOLPH SENIOR ADULTS MAIN OFFICE

The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Adult Resource & Education Center  
347 W. Salisbury Street  
Asheboro, NC 27203  
336-625-3389 or 1-800-252-2899

### ARCHDALE SENIOR CENTER

108 Park Drive  
Archdale, NC 27263  
336-431-1938

### RANDLEMAN SENIOR CENTER

144 W. Academy Street  
Randleman, NC 27317  
336-498-4332

### LIBERTY SENIOR CENTER

239 S. Fayetteville Street  
Liberty, NC 27298  
336-622-5844

### OUR PLACE ADULT DAY CARE

714 Farr Street  
Asheboro, NC 27203  
336-629-3787

### RCATS TRANSPORTATION

347 W. Salisbury Street  
Asheboro, NC 27203  
Randolph County - 336-629-7433  
Montgomery County – 910-572-3430

[www.senioradults.org](http://www.senioradults.org)

Follow us on facebook and Instagram!



## THE NORTH CAROLINA CAREGIVER PORTAL ALSO HAS OPPORTUNITIES FOR CAREGIVERS TO INTERACT WITH OTHER FAMILY CAREGIVERS

Under the **Forum** tab, you can chat (text) with other caregivers. There is a main feed, and there are also group feeds you can join on these topics:

- \* Emotional Wellbeing
- \* Skills and Tips
- \* Information and Resources
- \* Caring for a Spouse
- \* Caring for a Parent
- \* Dementia Care



Under the **Events** tab you can join:

- \* Webinars
- \* Virtual Support Groups
- \* Anonymous Groups—Cameras and microphone's Off. These discussions are led by a Care Educator. You can share your thoughts by typing in the chat box, or just observe and learn from others.

You can find all this at [nc-caregivers.com](http://nc-caregivers.com)

### SUPPORT GROUPS

**Diabetes Support Group**  
Third Monday each month – 4:00-5:00pm  
Randolph Health  
208-D Foust Street, Asheboro  
336-625-9400

**Dementia Support Group**  
Second Thursday of each month - 6:30 pm  
Cross Road Village Clubhouse  
1302 Old Cox Road, Asheboro  
Bernie Raymond - 336-629-7811

**Asheboro Parkinson's Support Group**  
Second Friday of each month - 10:30 am  
Hospice of Randolph  
416 Vision Drive, Asheboro  
Annette Caughron - 336-580-9937

**Duke Dementia Family Support Program**  
Various Support Groups via Zoom  
Various dates and times  
Natalie Leary - 919-660-7542  
[dukefamilysupport.org/support-groups/](http://dukefamilysupport.org/support-groups/)



## North Carolina Caregiver Portal

Powered by Truaita

Access free training and resources to help you build skills and confidence to provide care at home.

With articles, videos, tip-sheets, and professional level training, there is something for everyone.

[nc-caregivers.com](http://nc-caregivers.com)

I'm a caregiver. I don't have a problem with caffeine, I have a problem without caffeine.



### ARE YOU OR A LOVED ONE STRUGGLING TO PAY BILLS?

Medicare beneficiaries may be eligible for **Medicare Savings Programs**. *Part D Extra Help* is available to lower drug costs for individuals with gross monthly income below \$1,995 or \$2,705 for a married couple living together.

Those with income below \$1,816 (or \$2,455 per couple) may also be eligible to have their \$202.90 monthly Medicare Part B premium paid by the state.

To apply contact: **Margie DiDonna or Lisa Alley—SHIIP Coordinators\*** at Randolph Senior Adults Association **336-625-3389**

\*Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) is a division of the NC Department of Insurance.



## FAQ CORNER

Straightforward Answers You Can Trust

Questions and misconceptions about hospice are common. Let's separate fact from fiction.

### Who can make a hospice referral?

It's a common misconception that you need to wait for a doctor's office or hospital to contact us. The good news is that family members, caregivers, or even the person needing hospice services can reach out to us directly.

After you reach out to Hospice of the Piedmont, we evaluate to see if hospice services might be helpful.

Then, we coordinate and inform the people involved in

your care—including your doctors and nurse practitioners—who are important parts of your care team.

We'll help you understand your care options no matter where you are in your health journey. There is no obligation. Just compassionate support—and honest answers.

If you or someone you love is living with a serious illness and their quality of life is declining, start the conversation with Hospice of the Piedmont today.

Watch a video from a hospice team member to learn more on this topic:



We are here to help.

If you would like to make a referral or for more information about our care and support programs, please call our team:

336-889-8446



## DEMENTIA RESOURCES

**Alzheimer's Association**  
800-272-3900 (24 hours/7 days)  
[alz.org](http://alz.org)

**Dementia Alliance of NC**  
919-832-3732  
[dementianc.org](http://dementianc.org)

**Positive Approach to Brain Change**  
877-877-1671  
[teepasnow.com](http://teepasnow.com)

**Lewy Body Dementia Association**  
LBD Caregiver Link: 800-539-9767  
[www.lbda.org](http://www.lbda.org)

**Duke Dementia Family Support Program**  
800-646-2028  
[dukefamilysupport.org](http://dukefamilysupport.org)

## TUNE IN: care on your terms

Over the last five years, Hospice of the Piedmont has produced more than 80 educational episodes of its podcast, The E-Series. This year, the podcast has a new sound and feel as we launch "Care on Your Terms". Born out of a desire to answer some of the most common questions about hospice care, "Care on Your Terms" features honest conversations aimed at helping people find the right support at the right time.

Episode 1: The Choice and Episode 2: Redefining Hope are out now! These episodes include informative discussions answering our most frequently asked questions and real-life conversations with those who have experienced our care in a practical way. Be sure to search for Hospice of the Piedmont wherever you listen to podcasts and subscribe to receive notifications about new episodes or visit:

[www.hospiceofthepiedmont.org/ourpodcast](http://www.hospiceofthepiedmont.org/ourpodcast)



"Some days there won't be a song in your heart. Sing anyway."

EMORY AUSTIN

## INCONTINENCE SUPPLIES

Incontinence supplies can be an expensive part of caregiving. Randolph Senior Adults receives donations of pullups, taped briefs, bladder pads, gloves, and bed pads. If you or a family member is in need, please contact:

**Margie DiDonna or Lisa Alley**  
at Randolph Senior Adults Association  
336-625-3389

## SITTERS LIST

Randolph Senior Adults maintains a list of sitters willing to sit, assist with personal care, homemaker chores, errands, etc. This is an option for someone needing in-home help and able to pay out-of-pocket. It is up to the individual or family member to check references and conduct interviews.

A copy of the Sitters List can be mailed or emailed to you.

Please contact:  
Margie DiDonna or Lisa Alley  
at 336-625-3389 or [rcaa2@senioradults.org](mailto:rcaa2@senioradults.org)

You are doing \*GREAT!\*  
YOU GOT THIS!

## BALANCING WORK & CAREGIVING

Life as a working caregiver can feel like a constant tug-of-war. You're trying to do your best at your job, and at the same time, you're caring for someone important in your life. Feeling tired, guilty, or like you're being pulled in a million different directions is normal. With the right support strategies to organize your time, you can find a better balance.

### WHAT BALANCE REALLY LOOKS LIKE

When it comes to balancing work and caregiving, it's not about doing it all. Rather, it's about prioritizing, making needed trade-offs, and reframing your expectations to recognize that it's not about perfection. Here is what trade-offs can look like when trying to achieve balance:

Situation	Trade-Off	Result
Urgent last-minute deadline at work.	No time to make dinner, need to order takeout instead.	Deadline was met, and care recipient was fed.
Care recipient had a fall and needed to go to the hospital.	Can't attend the meeting at work, will ask for meeting notes instead.	Care recipient was safe and taken care of, and you caught up on missed work.
Personal doctor's appointment during care recipient's regular shower time.	Wash their face and armpits with a washcloth and plan for a shower tomorrow after work instead.	Hygiene needs met, you took care of your medical wellness, and planned around work schedule.

### 1. TALK TO YOUR EMPLOYER

Although talking to your employer about your caregiving responsibilities may feel uncomfortable, it can lead to support, understanding, and a better balance between work and home life.

**Know what you need**—Before the meeting, consider what support, such as remote work, different hours, or time off, would help.

**Keep it simple**—Share only what you're comfortable with. Focus on the facts and how your caregiving affects your work.

**Pick the right time**—Talk when your manager is calm and not busy.

**Offer solutions**—Show that you want to find a plan that works for you and your team.

**Follow up**—After the discussion, send an email summarizing the plan.

### 2. EXPLORE YOUR WORK OPTIONS

Different workplaces may provide different options for working that suit you better, depending on your caregiving responsibilities:

- Remote Work
- Reduced Hours
- Hybrid Work
- Freelance & Contract Roles
- Flexible Hours
- A Leave Of Absence
- Job Sharing
- Phased Retirement

### 3. KNOW YOUR BENEFITS

**Talk to your boss or human resources (HR) department**—Ask about flexible hours, leave options, remote work, caregiver-specific benefits.

**Use your Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**—EAPs may offer free counseling, legal help, or referrals for caregiving support.

**Check government programs**—Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and VA programs may offer respite care or payment for family caregivers.

**Ask for help**—Social workers, caregiver coaches, and HR can guide you through your options.

### 4. REDEFINE SUCCESS & MANAGE GUILT

Instead of aiming for perfection, focus on small wins that show your effort and care.

### 5. BUILD A NETWORK & SUPPORT TEAM

A list of people or organizations you rely on is important for balancing responsibilities on your plate.

**Personal connections**—These can be friends, neighbors, and family members who can offer help with daily tasks or a listening ear.

**Professional resources**—Social workers, paid home care providers, therapists, and respite care can provide strategies and services.

**Workplace allies**—Understanding supervisors, HR staff, and trusted coworkers can support you.

**Community support**—Faith-based organizations, online communities, and support groups connect you with others relating to your situation.

### 6. USE RESPITE CARE

Respite care provides you with temporary relief of caregiving duties. **In-home respite**—Aides come to your home to provide help with daily care. These services can be paid out of pocket or through respite care programs through State or Federal programs.

**Adult day programs**—Structured care provided in a group setting.

**Residential respite care**—Temporary overnight stays with structured, professional daily care, meals, medication management, and more.

### 7. PRACTICE SELF-CARE

This is crucial to improve emotional, physical, and mental well-being. **Build wellness foundations**—Ensure you get adequate sleep, eat nutritious meals, incorporate movement and exercise in your routine, and keep up with your own medical appointments.

**Include self-care in daily routines**—Scheduling self-care can help you stay on top of it and create boundaries that protect your needs.

**Stay connected**—Keep in touch with family, friends, and your community, and don't forget to ask for help when needed.

**Reframe guilt**—Remind yourself that taking care of yourself allows you to better care for your care recipient.

**Check in on your mental health**—If you're noticing signs like a loss of interest in activities you used to love, feelings of depression, anxiety, or burnout, it's time to ask for help from a professional.

### 8. MASTER TIME MANAGEMENT

**Time blocking**—Assign blocks of time for types of tasks, like *Care Tasks*, *Work Focus*, or *Errands*. This helps you shift from "everything's urgent" to "this is what I'm doing now."

**Automate and outsource**—Save time with grocery delivery, pre-packaged medication blister packs, or automated bill payments.

**Pair tasks mindfully**—Listen to voicemails while folding laundry or take a walk while calling a friend.

**Find hidden pockets of time**—Keep a "tiny task list" for when these come up, like confirming an appointment or replying to one email.

### 9. USE TOOLS & TECH

Can reduce stress, reduce repetitive tasks, and help you feel in control. **Smart home devices**—Smart speakers provide voice reminders, smart plugs control appliances from your phone, smart lights help with fall prevention, and sensors can alert you to wandering.

**Synced calendars**—Instead of juggling multiple paper notes and emails, bring everything together in one place with a digital calendar.

**Delivery and automation apps**—Can deliver groceries, medications, and essential household items.

**Digital file storage**—Google Drive or Dropbox allow you to keep important documents organized, searchable, and accessible.

### 10. ENCOURAGE INDEPENDENCE

Helping your care recipient do more for themselves can reduce your daily responsibilities and boost their confidence and dignity.

**Shift from "doer" to "coach"**—Demonstrate how to do a task and let them try instead of doing it for them.

**Break tasks into smaller steps**—Ex: hand one piece of clothing at a time and give step-by-step instructions, "put your arm through this sleeve".

**Make the environment more supportive**—For example, keep frequently used items within reach.

**Be patient**—Let them try first. Mentally count to ten then offer help.

**Use tools and devices**—For example, shower chairs, button hooks, and large grip utensils.

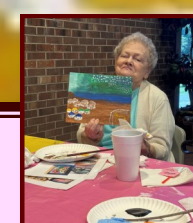
**Celebrate progress, not perfection**—For example, getting dressed even if their socks don't match.

**Know when to step in**—If safety is at risk, step in and help.

nc-caregivers.com



## NEED A BREAK FROM CAREGIVING?

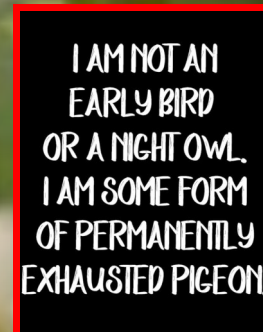
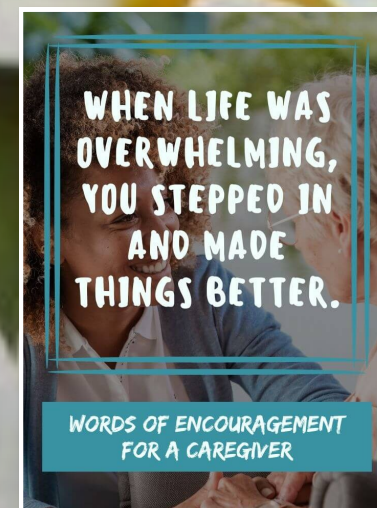


**Of course you do!** All family caregivers need a rest from caregiving now and then. What better stress reliever than to get away for a few hours with others. If you are 50 or over, you can enjoy fellowship and fun by participating in Randolph Senior Adults Association's classes or day trips!

You can find more information at:  
[www.senioradults.org](http://www.senioradults.org)

For questions on trips and classes, contact Susanne Allen, Community Engagement & Volunteer Coordinator at 336-625-3389 x212.

**COME JOIN US FOR SOME FUN!**



WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR A CAREGIVER

### JOIN US AT THE MOVIES!

**FREE Over 50\***

Upcoming Movies . . .  
... at the **SUNSET THEATRE**

**June 4**  
To Hell and Back (1955)

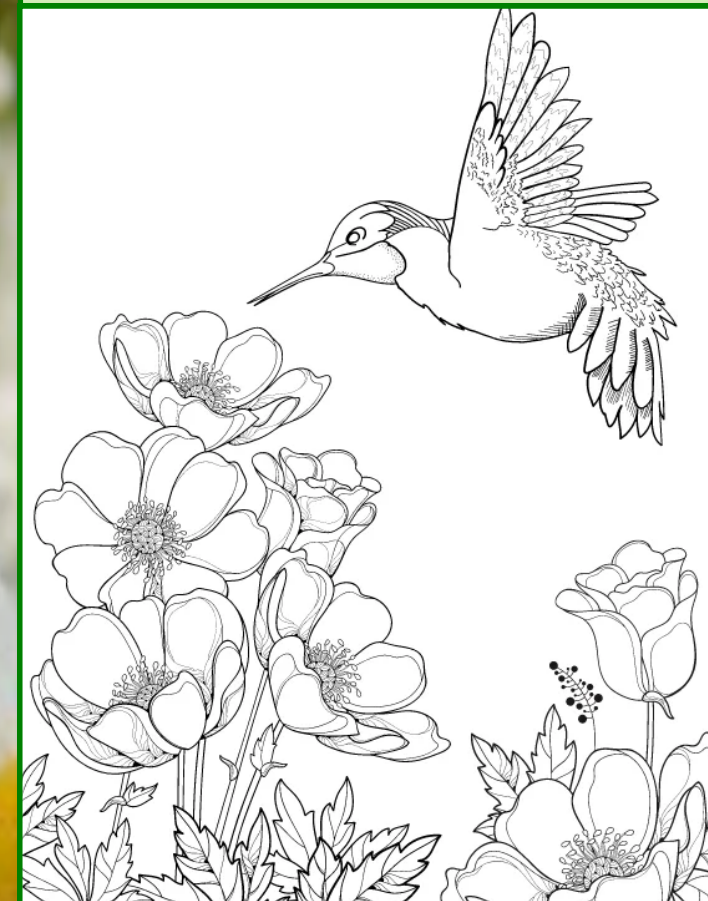
**July 2**  
Raiders of the Lost Ark (1981)

**August 6**  
Secondhand Lions (2003)

**Doors open at 12:00 - Movie starts at 1:00**

\*Free admission, popcorn & small soda for ages 50+

## Coloring Corner



## DID YOU KNOW?

**The Randolph County Sheriff's Office has a Citizens Well-Check Program**

Citizens who participate in this FREE program are automatically checked on by phone five days a week. A live call will be made around the same time each day, Monday through Friday. Sometimes it is just someone to talk to when they are alone. If they don't answer after a series of attempts, law enforcement responds to check on their welfare.

Why is this program important?

This law enforcement service is an important tool for building safe communities and ensuring the safety of our most vulnerable citizens. The program ensures that our citizens, especially our seniors, are routinely contacted and that their health, safety, and well-being are important to us.

[www.randolphcountync.gov/sheriff](http://www.randolphcountync.gov/sheriff) 336-318-6689

## 12 WAYS FOR FAMILY CAREGIVERS TO DEAL WITH THEIR TOUGHEST DAYS

Some days, it can feel like every day is the toughest day for family caregivers. That's because what can go wrong often does go wrong. Additionally, every family caregiver is, first and foremost, human. Then — wham! — along comes a doozy of a day, and you're certain that this one is your worst day as a caregiver. It's a day when your caregiving duties challenge you emotionally, physically, financially — or all three simultaneously. How can a loving family caregiver specifically respond to such an impossible situation?

AARP reached out to a handful of experts — two academics and two who have written books about family caregiving — for advice on the things that family caregivers can do to deal with the physical and emotional stress of their roughest days as caregivers.

Here are their top tips:

### 1. Control your anger when your loved one messes up

What caregiver hasn't experienced this challenge a million times:

their loved one accidentally makes a big mess — perhaps without even leaving their bed. Or the person they care for accidentally falls and hurts themselves. Or their loved one momentarily gets lost — perhaps in a big department store — during an outing.

The natural reaction for any caregiver would be to get angry. That's okay, but only if you hold off and get angry in private and not in front of your loved one, says Dolores Gallagher-Thompson, active professor emerita in the Department of Psychiatry at Stanford University and author of *Family Caregiver Distress*. "If you approach something with a negative attitude, you'll only foster more negativity, and you'll feel guilty later," she says. For example, when your "lost" loved one in the department store is finally found, hug them with joy instead of yelling at them and tell them how happy you are that you found them. "If you focus on that, you can take joy in being together again," she says.

### 2. Allow bureaucratic stress to roll off your back

Sometimes, your toughest days will have nothing to do with your loved one's behavior or condition and everything to do with the massive bureaucracy that almost every caregiver is forced to deal with, says Gallagher-Thompson.

She says that bureaucratic stress can be the worst kind of stress because it can feel so out of your control. For example, when you're on the phone for an hour waiting for someone to pick up at the other end, or when the pharmacy messes up on a prescription and can't quickly fix it.

"Take deep breaths," she advises. "If you don't do that, you won't be able to think clearly." Practicing yoga or meditation can help you avoid a feeling of helplessness, Gallagher-Thompson says this is also where a support network can be invaluable. "You may have a friend, relative, or acquaintance who has previously had success with this problem."

### 3. Remind yourself why you're a caregiver

On the most challenging days, it can be easy to forget why you chose to become a caregiver in the first place. That's when it's most important to stop and remind yourself that you're there because you care, says Connie Baher, author of *Family Caregivers: An Emotional Survival Guide*.

"When the daily grind has ground you down, you have to find a way of grounding yourself," she says. She suggests on those difficult days, every caregiver should take a moment to spell out the word C-A-R-E and think about what each of the four letters stands for. "C," she says, stands for your compassion for your loved one. "A" is for the admiration you also feel for them. "R" is for the lack of recognition that your loved one often feels. And "E," she says, is a reminder to embrace the caregiver experience. "You are there to embrace and lean in."

### 4. Rediscover past passions

Sometimes, says Baher, long-haul caregivers, in particular, experience such difficult days that they feel as if they have nothing left inside to give.

"They are numb," he says. "They have no time to go to the spa or have lunch with a friend."

This is when family caregivers should consider looking back to their own pasts. "You need to rediscover what you used to love — and do it now," she says.



Maybe you used to love quilting. Perhaps you used to enjoy painting with watercolors. Or maybe you still have the flute, French horn, or violin that you used to play.

"You have to have something left of who you are," says Baher.

### 5. Find time to vent

Family caregivers know better than most that problems tend to come in bunches.

Perhaps, for example, your loved one soiled the bed and when you tried to move them to change the sheets, you hurt your back. With your back aching, you're suddenly uncomfortable helping them into their wheelchair and pushing them outside for a walk. So now everyone is unhappy.

"Negative things come in multiples some days," says Baher.

First, she says, you can only solve one problem at a time. Once you solve one problem, she says, it's incredible how the others can seem more minor or even start to solve themselves.

Even then, it's important to vent your frustration privately. Baher knows of one family caregiver whose favorite way to vent is to step into her car, close the door, bang on the steering wheel and shout. No one hears her, but it helps her feel better.

### 6. Know your loved one's wishes for your peace of mind

Perhaps nowhere is it more difficult to be a family caregiver than in the hospital emergency room. The toughest days for many caregivers involve moments when they are suddenly faced with making life-or-death decisions for their loved one without knowing their true wishes.

Whenever possible, it's always best to find out (and write down) your loved one's wishes about medical treatment before an emergency happens, says Lynn McNicoll, director of education for the Division of Geriatrics and associate professor of medicine at Alpert Medical School of Brown University.

If you are unaware of what your loved one wants, "the stress can be exponential, she says. "Second-guessing can be difficult." McNicoll says the best place to have this conversation is with their primary care doctor so that everything can be documented and the caregiver can have peace of mind.

### 7. Gravitate toward positive people

Particularly difficult days can also be influenced by the company you keep. McNicoll says that as a family caregiver, you want to surround yourself with people who provide support. It's difficult to comfort your loved one if you are not receiving a similar sense of comfort from compassionate family, friends, or professionals.

"If you are having a particularly difficult day, try not to interact with those who are negative," she says. "Stay focused on what's positive."

### 8. Unburden by journaling

On those really rough days, writing down your feelings can bring an unexpected sense of comfort, says Judith Henry, a caregiving expert and author of *Dutiful Daughter's Guide to Caregiving*.

It doesn't matter if you use a pencil, pen, typewriter, or laptop. Heck, you can even write or record your feelings on your cellphone.

"Writing allows you to express your emotions on paper rather than at people," says Henry.

Journaling can also help loving caregivers clarify their own feelings and determine the next steps in care.

For Henry, who provided care for both parents, journaling also helped her deal with harder feelings like anger and resentment.

"This is about getting the jumble of thoughts in your head out of your head."

### 9. Create a list of accomplishments

The frustration of being a family caregiver can multiply when your to-do list gets too long. Henry says adding more items to this list for your loved one will likely make you feel even worse and unaccomplished.

So, try this instead: Create a list of your caregiving accomplishments, suggests Henry. This list should mention all of the things you've managed to juggle as a caregiver for your spouse or parent, even small things like grocery shopping or getting to a doctor's appointment. If you've done the list accurately, the sheer number of impressive accomplishments on it might blow you away.

"When you see this list, you will be amazed at what you are achieving under difficult circumstances," says Henry.

### 10. Stop chasing perfection

Too often, caregivers are at their wits' end because they feel it is somehow their duty to respond perfectly to the needs of their loved ones. "Ban the word 'perfect' from your vocabulary," says Henry. Not only is it unachievable, but constantly striving for it can make

caregivers sick.

"You will be constantly dealing with flawed institutions, flawed practices, flawed people, and situations where there is no easy answer," says Henry. "So, perfection is an unreasonable expectation for yourself and for your loved one."

She suggests substituting the word "acceptable" for "perfect." Sometimes, she says, "Acceptable is as good as it gets."

### 11. Schedule specific times for self-care

The most challenging days may feel a lot less rough if you have pre-scheduled time for self-care that day and every day, says Gallagher-Thompson. The minimum, she says, is at least four times every day.

"It's a buffer against the ups and downs of caregiving," she says.

Gallagher-Thompson says the key is to spread short self-care breaks throughout the day. It's also important to mix them up a bit instead of always doing the same thing during your breaks. This can be a walk to the neighborhood store instead of a drive, or it can be 10 to 15 minutes in a quiet place reading a chapter in a book.

Early morning self-care often works best for many caregivers because it might afford them a bit more time to feel more in control of their lives, says Baher. She calls these self-care breaks "minute mood hacks."

She suggests setting a clock or kitchen timer for 10 or 15 minutes so you don't have to keep track of time while taking your break. "This allows your brain to run free," she says.

### 12. Reject codependency

Sometimes, we set ourselves up for our toughest days by allowing codependency to rule. This can occur when the person we care for tells us we are the only ones who can properly care for them, says Henry. We take these words to heart and believe them to be true.

"I wanted to be the good daughter who knew what to do in every situation," she says. "You come to feel as if you are the one only who can make everything OK." But of course, that's not true, she notes.

Yes, you can feel proud that your loved one might feel that you are the only person who can help them through everything, says Henry. But it's important that you know, in your heart, there are times you simply can't make things right or can't be there to help them. Accept that some things are out of your control, and you will probably have fewer "toughest days."

[aarp.org/caregiving](http://aarp.org/caregiving)

## Family Caregiver Support Program provides a range of supports that assist family caregivers

### Eligible family caregivers are:

- A caregiver of any age providing care for an older adult age 60 or older or providing care for a person with Alzheimer's disease or related brain disorder.
- A caregiver (who is not the birth or adoptive parent) age 55 or older, raising a related child age 18 and younger or an adult with a disability.
- A caregiver age 55 or older (including parents) who provides care for a related adult with a disability.

### RANDOLPH COUNTY AGENCIES PROVIDING SERVICES WITH FCSP FUNDS:

**Randolph Senior Adults Association** provides Care Planning Assistance, Liquid Nutritional Supplements, Caregiver Skills Class, Powerful Tools for Caregivers workshop, and *The Nurturer* newsletter.

**Call Margie DiDona or Lisa Alley at 336-625-3389 for more information.**

**Regional Consolidated Services** offers caregiver respite care, minor home improvement, and medical equipment.

**Contact Evelyn Perez at 336-629-5141**

