

What Caregiving Looks Like

What do you think of when you hear the word Caregiver? Many think of the person who provides hands on, daily care for a frail adult; usually involving help with dressing, feeding, bathing and mobility. While this person certainly is a caregiver I'd like to challenge you to think about other possibilities of what caregiving looks like. There is the middle-aged son who stops for groceries on the way home from work for his mother, the daughter who takes her dad to his many doctor appointments, the man in charge of cooking and cleaning since his wife is no longer able, and the woman who must take her husband with her to her hair appointment for fear his confusion would endanger him if left home alone.

To sum it up, you don't have to be providing 24/7 care to be considered a caregiver. Anyone who helps someone with something they used to do by themselves is a caregiver. Let me give you a few examples:

- If you feel it is necessary to regularly check on your elderly neighbor and help with little jobs, then you are a caregiver.
- If you find yourself spending time making appointments for you mother and stopping at the pharmacy or grocery store for her amidst running your own errands, you are a caregiver.
- If you have stopped going to your weekly card club because you don't feel you can leave your spouse at home alone, you are a caregiver.
- If you spend time making phone calls to help your sister find an assisted living facility or to set up home care services you are a caregiver.

It is important to recognize yourself as a caregiver for several reasons. First, caregiving is often a role you do not anticipate and one that brings new challenges and responsibilities. Identifying yourself as a caregiver is the first step to handling the extra stress you may be feeling. Attending a caregiver support group, reading information on caregiver health or talking to a trusted friend or professional about your situation are all good ways to gain support.

Second, identifying yourself as a caregiver can help you connect with community resources. Getting help from a home care agency, adult day care, home delivered meals or a volunteer driver are some ways to reduce your stress as a caregiver. Information about these services is available at [the Aging & Disability Resource Center \(ADRC\)](#).

And finally, seeing yourself as a caregiver helps you understand the importance of the things you do and may result in involving others to help! Sharing tasks with family members, friends or neighbors will take some of the responsibility off of you and provide even more support for the person receiving help.

No matter what your caregiving looks like, the assistance you provide is vitally important to the life of the person you are helping. It is often the difference between the person living in their own home and living in a care facility. If you are a caregiver, call [<Your Agency and Contact Infor here>](#) and see how we can help!

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