

Alzheimer's & Dementia

Caregiver Journal



Introduction

What’s the difference between a caregiver and a care partner?

It’s a very subtle one that can make a meaningful impact on the way you view your role during the changing, unpredictable journey you are taking with someone living with dementia, and the way that person views their role. A care “giver” is a person who provides care for someone. Care “partner” evokes a relationship based on cooperation and common goals. It’s a two-way street that fosters person-centered care and mutual feelings of purpose.

On the next pages you will find helpful hints, practical suggestions and tables that we hope will make your journey as care partners easier.

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Changes & Challenges to Discuss with a Specialist

Write down information to discuss with a specialist —

	Date & Time	Notes
Changes I'm Seeing		
Needs more support with...		
Challenge		
How I handled it: New Approach? Same Approach?		
Did Approach Help?		
Doctor Called?		

Helpful Solutions for Common Daily Occurrences

Tips and alternatives for common problems —

Bathing

Try one of these:

- Shallow amount of water
- Hand-held shower nozzle
- Beach shoes
- Bubble bath

Communication

Try one of these:

- Use few, simple words
- Don't interrupt
- Slow down
- Comfort with touch

Dry Mouth

Try one of these:

- Sipping water
- Hard candy
- Gargling
- Gum

Eating

Try one of these:

- Remove unnecessary items from table
- Serve 1 or 2 foods at a time
- Use bowl instead of plate
- Turn off the TV

Getting Dressed

Try one of these:

- Offer two choices
- Buy doubles of favorites
- Don't rush
- Hand items one at a time

Grooming

Try one of these:

- Do each action & let them copy you
- Buy favorite supplies
- Use an electric shaver
- Nail file instead of clipper

Upset

Try one of these:

- A comforting touch
- A snack
- Reminiscing
- Pets

Using the Bathroom

Try one of these:

- Put a picture of a toilet on the bathroom door
- Easy to remove clothing
- A colored toilet lid & seat

Wants to Drive

Try one of these:

- Remove distributor cap
- Hide keys
- Take a walk together
- Television

Notes for the Doctor & Changes Worth Noting

Date:	Pain or discomfort?	Any Issues with Medication	Date/Time	Dose	Adverse Reaction?	Doctor Called?
Morning						
Noon						
Afternoon						
Evening						

If Others Provide Assistance: Who Does What?

Schedule shifts among family members or other care partners to evenly distribute the workload —

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Bathe							
Wash hair							
Brush teeth							
Finger & toe nails							
Shave							
Get dressed							
Toileting							
Morning meds							
Skin care							
Breakfast							
Change linens							
Make lunch							
Exercises							
Therapy							
Afternoon meds							
Dinner							
Evening Meds							

Articles & Resources for Caregivers



Memory Care



[Home](#) > [Our Services](#) > [Memory Care](#)

Helpful articles related to caring for someone with Alzheimer's or other dementia —

- Driving/Take the keys — [Click Here](#)
- Eating Enough/Problems — [Click Here](#)
- Falls — [Click Here](#)
- Helping Kids Understand Dementia — [Click Here](#)
- Stress — [Click Here](#)
- Talking/Understanding Repetitive Questions — [Click Here](#)
- Wandering/Getting Lost — [Click Here](#)

Resources for you and your loved one —

- AARP — www.aarp.org
- Alzheimer's Association — www.alz.org
- National Institute on Aging — www.nia.nih.gov
- Support Groups — [Click Here](#)
- Brookdale Senior Living — [Click Here](#)

Important Documents & Personal Information

Name	
Address	
Phone Number	
Birthdate	
Doctor's Name & Phone Number	
Emergency Contact	
Hospital	

Is this information in a safe place?

Item	Yes/No
Supplemental Insurance	
Living Trust	
Living Will	
Power of Attorney	
Power of Attorney for Healthcare	
Non-hospital DNR	
Birth Certificates	
Insurance Policies	
Marriage Certificate	
Vehicle Titles	
Will	
Passport	
Other Documents	

Remember to Take Care of Yourself

You've probably had someone — a health-care professional, friend, colleague or family member — tell you at some point that it's important you take care of yourself, as well as your loved one. Perhaps you shrugged them off; many caregivers feel they're just too busy with the everyday demands of their role to take time out for themselves.

Caring for yourself is very important. You won't be able to help anyone else if you aren't helping yourself first. You really have to try!

If you're taking care of an aging loved one, you know how stressful your role can be. But it may help to know your feelings of stress, anxiety, irritation and even resentment aren't unusual or even unjustified. You may feel better about your caregiving tasks when you realize you can take steps to relieve your stress.

What you can do:

- **Create a care team** — Call on other family members (spouses, adult children, siblings, etc.), neighbors, friends, church members and others to be part of your care team.
- **Establish a routine** — Knowing what's coming on a daily basis can help you feel more in control of your role. A routine will also help you stay organized. What's more, loved ones with Alzheimer's or dementia may feel more secure with a set routine, too.
- **Partner with a home caregiver** — Draw on senior-assistance resources in your area to find a **professional home caregiver** who can come weekly to assist or give you time off. Begin with a test run such as leaving your loved one with the caregiver while you run errands, read a book on the porch, grab a cup of coffee or take a lunch break. When you're comfortable with the arrangement, extend the amount of time.

Remember to Take Care of Yourself - *Continued*

- **Do something that makes you happy** — Read a book, listen to music, join a support group, take a walk outside, take a class. Do something that's just for you and try to do it every day.
- **Maintain your connections** — It's easy to let caregiving take over your life, but it's important to maintain personal relationships outside your caregiving role. Skype™ or FaceTime™ with friends, stay in touch on Facebook, have a weekly phone date with your best friend. These connections not only provide you with emotional support, but they can also be a welcome break from your caregiving role.
- **Consider respite care** — Many senior living communities, like Brookdale offer respite services including development of a service and care plan, meals and snacks, clinical supervision, transportation and community events. You can entrust your loved one to the professional care of that community for a short-term or even long enough to allow you to go on vacation.

And remember to celebrate a daily success....every day.

Focus on the positive by taking time to see life as a gift and the beauty in each day.

Brookdale has cared for individuals living with dementia for more than 30 years. We have the experience to understand the complexity of Alzheimer's and dementia and know how to support those diagnosed at every stage. We understand what families coping with dementia are going through and want to share our knowledge and experience to guide your loved one through this journey.

*If you have questions, call **855-350-3800**.*