THE ARTFUL CARE-GIVER: DESIGNING WORK/LIFE BALANCE

Kelsey Loushin, LICDC-CS, CDP
President, Eldercare Professionals of Ohio, LLC
Care-giver Coach, Counselor, Professional Trainer
440-212-4987/kdloushin@gmail.com
» We are care-givers, where do we begin?

» Discuss common issues for care-givers/partners; stress management

» Designing a care-giving/partner map

» Offer resources
THERE ARE 4 KINDS OF PEOPLE IN THE WORLD:

• Those who have been care-givers;
• Those who currently are care-givers;
• Those who will be care-givers, and
• Those who will need care-givers.

Rosalynn Carter

• Most caregivers assist other family members, most commonly their mother
• Average age of caregiver is 50, average age of care recipient is 77
• Average length of caregiving is 4 years
CARE-GIVING RULE #1:

• On an airplane, an oxygen mask descends in front of you. What do you do?

• Rule #1: put your own mask on before assisting anyone. Only by first helping ourselves can we effectively help others.
WHERE DO WE BEGIN?
WHY IS THERE SO MUCH ELDERCARE?

• People live longer (more midlife adults have surviving parents)
• People delay marriage & having children
• Proportion of women in the workforce has increased

“The Sandwich Generation”

• The term describing a generation of people who care for their aging parents while supporting their own children.

• Merriam-Webster officially added the term to its dictionary in July 2006.
THE FACE OF CARE-GIVING

• Care-giver is responsible for person’s safety
• The care-giver directs their day
• The care-giver is many times alone on the job
• The care-recipient relies on the care-giver
• Care-recipient grows very dependent on care-giver
• The care-giver & care-recipient may experience many emotional benefits from the experience

• Care-giving can be relationally beneficial, however it’s important to preserve your primary relationship to reduce stress & mistakes!
CARE-GIVER TYPES

- **Type A**: “no-one can possibly take care of them as well as me.”
- **Genie in the Lamp**: “We must keep the promise we made 30 years ago, we will never put (name) in a nursing home” (Don’t make this promise!).
- **The General Contractor**: “I will assign all of the tasks.”
- **Co-dependent**: family of origin issues/dysfunctional dynamics may be present. No willingness to secure outside help. “My parents would never forgive me”, “they are very private”, “I visit them every weekend & leave my family…”
THE IMPACT OF ELDER-CARE GIVING

• Studies consistently reveal how care-giving (especially Eldercare giving) compromises health

• About 60% of caregivers show signs of clinical depression, & caregivers take more prescription medications, including those for anxiety & depression, than others in their age group

• Care-givers supply nearly 257 billion dollars a year in services for their loved ones, such as transportation, supervision, financial mgmt., feeding, bathing, lifting, & toileting
CAREGIVING & STRESS

Performance

Healthy
Focused
Motivated
Healthy tension
Optimum stress
Lame
Inactive & bored

Peak performance

Sick
Fatigued
Exhaustion
Panic
Anxiety
Anger
Stress overload
Burn-out & breakdown
Disease

Stress level
WHAT CAREGIVERS PROVIDE: ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING (ADLS)

• Bathing: includes grooming activities such as shaving, & brushing teeth & hair
• Dressing: choosing appropriate garments & being able to dress & undress, having no trouble with buttons, zippers or other fasteners
• Eating: being able to feed oneself
• Transferring: being able to walk, if not ambulatory, being able to transfer oneself from bed to wheelchair & back
• Continence: being able to control one’s bowels & bladder, or manage one’s incontinence independently
• Toileting: being able to use the toilet
DEMENTIA AWARENESS & SPECIFICS

• Dementia: development of multiple cognitive deficits (symptoms) including memory impairment

• 12+ illnesses with similar symptoms but different causes (Alzheimer’s most common)

• Rate doubles every 5 years after age 75, with 8.5% of people ages 85 to 89 affected; mild dementia affects almost 30% after age 90

• Researcher shows a person who provides care for someone with dementia is twice as likely to suffer from depression as a person providing care for someone without dementia
ASSESS & DESIGN A CARE PLAN: STEP 1

• Define the goals? For the care-recipient(s) & care-giver(s)

• Make a caregiving needs list; assign tasks to who is good with each task & who wants to do each task. Whatever is not covered should be assigned to an outside resource
  • Reduces mistakes
  • Reduces resentment
  • Causes balance
  • Preserves primary relationship
ELDER CARE CONTINUUM
ACCEPTING HELP; STEP 1, CALL EAP FOR CAREGIVER SUPPORT

• Decide about care location; what is truly the best location; home may not be...
• Bring in experts
• Hire a professional provider, get references, & contact them!
• Don’t have money to pay for professional help, & don’t feel comfortable asking friends, turn to volunteers
• Churches, senior centers, 4H clubs, HS community service organizations, colleges that train nurses & social workers, parish nursing
• Let volunteers sort mail, go grocery shopping, do laundry, pay social visits, help them at mealtime, drive them to appointments
BENEFITS; PRIVATE & PUBLIC, TO SUPPORT LONG TERM CARE

Each has their pros/cons/limitations

- Long term care insurance
- Medicare
- Medicaid
- VA Benefits

- Much of long term care requires private pay dollars
- Utilize an Elder law attorney to assist with preserving assets & applying for benefits
CARE-GIVER ROUTINE

• I have choice
• I will put myself first
• I will take time for myself and my partner
• I will establish a routine
• I will ask for help
• I can say yes, maybe, later, or no
• I will pay attention to my own feelings and needs
• I will remind myself that this is my one life to live
American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
www.AARP.org

National Family Caregiver Association (NFCA)
www.caregiveraction.org/

National Center on Care-giving; Family Care-giver Alliance
www.caregiver.org

Alzheimer’s Association
www.Alz.org
YOUR IMPACT BENEFIT PROVIDES

• Free and confidential assistance for:
  ‣ You
  ‣ Spouse/Partner
  ‣ Children/Dependents

  ‣ Parents/Parents-in-law
  ‣ Anyone living in your household

• Unlimited phone consultation available 24/7
• Complimentary face-to-face counseling sessions per person, per occurrence
• Legal assistance
• Financial assistance
• Identity theft prevention and recovery assistance
• Comprehensive Work/Life web site
• And much more!