



WINTER 2022: Volume 43

---

## ***In this issue:***

- Caregiver Resources
- Article: Family Caregivers: How to ask Others for Help
- Article: Why Aren't Family Caregivers Asking for Help?
- Article: How to Share Caregiving Responsibilities with Family Members
- Program Updates

## **In Support of Caregivers**

A Publication of the Caregivers' Resource Center and Alzheimer's Support Unit at the Tompkins County Office for the Aging



# Caregiver Resources

## Local Caregiver Support Services

### ***Tompkins County Office for the Aging***

Caregiver's Resource Center: Amy Jackson 607-274-5486

Project Care Services: Dawn Sprague 607-274-5499

***The Caregiver's Resource Center & Alzheimer's Support Unit*** offers family caregivers information, consultation services, workshops, this newsletter, packets of information that are helpful to caregivers, and a lending library of books on family caregiving topics. Stop by or call Amy for an appointment.

***The Tompkins County Long-Term Care Unit*** may be able to arrange for paid home care services or short-term respite for stressed caregivers having difficulty paying for those services. Call 607-274-5278 to discuss your needs.

## Caregiver Counseling

*Family and Children's Services - 607-273-7494*

A caregiver counselor will meet with family caregivers periodically in office to help them work through complex caregiving issues or provide emotional support. Special circumstances may be considered for in-home service. No charge. Donations accepted.

## Adult Day Program

**(This program has been on hold due to COVID-19 - call directly for information on when it may be re-starting)**

*Longview Adult Day Community*

Monday through Friday, 9am-3pm; contact Pamela Nardi at 607-375-6323 for more information.

Adult day programs offer older adults companionship along with planned social and recreational activities. It often provides a break from caregiving and time for other matters. Fee: \$60/day includes lunch and snack.



# SUPPORT GROUPS

***Note: Some Support Groups are still meeting virtually.***

## **Family Caregiver Support Group**

**Every Tuesday at 11 am** in-person or online via Zoom, offered by the Tompkins County Office for the Aging. To register or for more information call Amy at 274-5486.

## **Caregiver Support Group**

**Last Thursday of every month at 5:30pm** in person at Brookdale Ithaca. For more information contact Eisha at 607-643-8021.

## **Alzheimer's Caregiver Groups**

**1st Wednesday of the month at 5:30pm** online via Zoom. For information, call the Alzheimer's Association at 1-800-272-3900.

**3rd Wednesday of the month at 12:30 pm** online via Zoom through Walden Place, Cortlandville. Call 607-756-8101 for information.

## **Cancer Caregiver Group**

**2nd Tuesday of the month, 5:30-7:00pm** online via Zoom through the Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes. For family, friends and caregivers of individuals with Cancer. For information call 607-277-0960.

## **Parkinson's Caregivers Group**

For more information, call Carol Grove at 607-279-8257

## **Funding for Family Caregiver Respite**

The Tompkins County Office for the Aging has a limited amount of funding to help family caregivers afford to hire substitute care that enables them to take a break from caregiving, usually a few hours a week. We have some uncommitted funds available if you know a family caregiver who might want to take advantage of this opportunity.

**Title III E Respite:** This is federal funding that pays for respite service for family caregivers who are caring for an older adult (60 or older) who needs assistance with 2 or more ADL's (dressing, bathing, incontinence, transferring, toileting, eating) **OR** needs substantial supervision due to cognitive impairment (e.g., Alzheimer's or other dementia).

**Alzheimer's Respite Scholarships:** This is New York State funding granted to Tompkins County through the CNY Alzheimer's Association. This funding pays for respite service (at home or in a licensed care facility) to give a break to family caregivers of persons diagnosed with Alzheimer's or other dementia.

Although neither program is means-tested, we do try to target these funds to those who find it difficult to privately hire enough substitute care.

### **To Apply or Inquire:**

Please encourage family caregivers to contact **Joanne Wilcox** or **Terry McCann** at **Tompkins County Adult and Long Term Care Services (607-274-5278)**. Due to the overall shortage of aides, or if clients prefer it, they may be able to use this funding to privately hire friends or relatives or aides listed with the Finger Lakes Independence Center (FLIC) through FLIC's Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP).

# Articles of Interest to Caregivers:

## Family Caregivers: How to Ask Others for Help

October 22, 2021

By *HomeInstead.com*

In a perfect world, caregiving is a shared responsibility. Unfortunately, if a spouse or other family member is unable to lend support, the caregiving role tends to fall to one person – and that person alone.

According to Home Instead research, 72 percent of primary caregivers provide care to a parent or loved one without any outside help. Not surprisingly, 31 percent of those surveyed admit they'd like more help with caregiving, and one in four resents other family members who don't help.

If you are a sole caregiver, look for ways to [avoid burnout and stress](#). It's important to take care of [your own health](#), or you won't be any good to the person you are providing care. Start with a plan that includes family members like the [Action Plan for Successful Aging](#). A plan can help identify what [hurdles](#) could stand in the way of providing an aging adult care.

One of the best ways to avoid becoming overstressed is to [enlist the help of siblings](#), other family members and friends – without feeling bad or [guilty](#) for reaching out.

Asking for help is difficult for many people. These suggestions could help get other family members or close friends involved in the care of an aging adult.

## How to Effectively Ask for Help as a Caregiver

### **Give each person a responsibility**

Even if the tasks required are small, make sure everyone gets one. If your brother lives 1,000 miles away, make it his responsibility to call your elderly parent once a week to check in or to visit for a week each year to allow you to take your own family vacation.

### **Divide up the tasks**

Designate a specific family member to handle the medical aspects of your relative's care (talks with doctors, medication information, etc.), while another takes on the responsibility for groceries/meals and another handles paying the bills. By dividing up the tasks, each person becomes more involved with the details of these tasks and can keep each other abreast of changes, issues, problems, etc.



### **Converse about issues**

If you don't express your concerns (e.g., debilitating health, amount of time you are spending caring for them, etc.), you can't expect your other family members to know what you are thinking and feeling.

### **Don't be a control freak**

If you want to control every aspect of the care, other family members may be less apt to step in, thinking you have it all under control. They'll be less able to understand your stress level if they believe you are the one creating it.

### **Find Support**

If you don't have other family members to help, consider joining a [local caregiver support group](#) or involving outside friends, church members or [professional caregivers](#) to share the duties.

---

## **Why Aren't Family Caregivers Asking for Help?**

**By Sally Abrahms, [www.FamilyCaregivingCouncil.com](http://www.FamilyCaregivingCouncil.com)**



A new [AARP study](#) shows that *only* 46 percent of family caregivers ask for, or look for, help. That means there are a lot of haggard and harried family members who are doing the care themselves. And, no surprise here—it's often one adult child (typically a daughter and/or child who lives closest) who does more than her fair share—sometimes way more.

Why is asking for help so hard? Do family caregivers not want it, or are they just not doing anything to get it?

We know that one in charge often neglects their own health and needs. We also know that they may be performing complex medical tasks, thanks to increasingly brief hospital stays.

### *What Are They Thinking?*

Over the years, caregivers have given me many reasons for going it alone. Here are the top ten:

1. If I request help, my siblings will view me as selfish and uncommitted
2. A control issue: No one can do as good a job or get it "right"
3. My parent refuses help, guilt trips me or insists that I do everything
4. I guilt trip myself. I'll feel bad if I don't do it all. The adult child may be trying to make up for the past, or improve it.
5. No one else has stepped up. (Hmm, have you asked?)
6. Hiring help is too expensive. It may be the case, but might your Mom and siblings just not want to part with their money?
7. My siblings are jockeying for power or reverting to old family dynamics—The Favorite, The Chosen, The Most Reliable, The Caver and Yes "Man" or The Selfless One
8. I don't know how or where to get help—or how to ask for it
9. No time
10. I don't trust outside help ("strangers"). How do I know what they're doing when I'm not there?

### *Quick Strategies for Getting Help*

- **Change your mindset.** Realize that asking for help is smart, not selfish. You know the expression "Many hands make light work"? It was coined by a 16th British playwright. And, 500 or so years later, it's still true.
- **Test the waters.** Ask for something little. Can your brother take Mom on an errand, to an appointment, out to lunch, or stay with her while you duck out?

- **Offer choices.** Provide options so sibs can decide what they can do. Consider each family member's strengths. If a sister is organized, can she manage care coordination?

Could another sibling pay Dad's bills online or take charge of house repairs? How about ferrying Mom to adult day care or arranging for her to get there?

- **Be inclusive.** They may want to help but are given go-away vibes. Keep family members informed and able to access health information. Is it easier through an app (i.e. [CaringBridge](#) or [CareZone](#)), email or conference call?
- **Think outside the family box.** Can a nearby niece be on the care team or at least a backup in an emergency? How about a friend or neighbor? An Aging Life Care Professional (aka geriatric care manager) can put all the moving parts together and knows community resources.

If Mom lives at home, there may be a "village" in her area. It's a members' neighborhood organization that often provide transportation, vetted service providers referrals (home repair, a dog walker) and hold social get-togethers and events (movie, traveling, a yoga class).

- **Have resources in your back pocket** just in case.
  1. Your [Area Agency on Aging](#)
  2. Organizations such as the [National Alliance for Caregiving](#), [Caregiver Action Network](#), [Family Caregiver Alliance](#) and [AARP](#)
  3. Online websites like the [Family Caregiver Council](#)
  4. Their local senior center or Town Hall.
  5. Your company may provide eldercare help to employees. They may range from flextime to elder care resource and referral services, Dependent Care Assistance Plans, access to senior care advisors and financial and legal experts
  6. Have your list before there's a crisis. You will have many more options and it will be right there!

It's possible that you or your family member doesn't want help. Others need to respect those wishes. But at least you'll know the next step if circumstances or attitudes change. Caregiving is not a one man—or woman--job!



# How to Share Caregiving Responsibilities with Family Members

By: National Institute on Aging, [www.nia.nih.gov](http://www.nia.nih.gov)

Caring for an older family member often requires teamwork. While one sibling might be local and take on most of the everyday caregiving responsibilities, a long-distance caregiver can also have an important role.

As a long-distance caregiver, you can provide important respite to the family caregiver and support to the aging family member.

## Talk About Caregiving Responsibilities



First, try to define the caregiving responsibilities. You could start by setting up a family meeting and, if it makes sense, include the care recipient in the discussion. This is best done when there is not an emergency. A calm conversation about what kind of care is wanted and needed now, and what might be needed in the future, can help avoid a lot of confusion.

Decide who will be responsible for which tasks. Many families find the best first step is to name a primary caregiver, even if one is not needed immediately. That way the primary caregiver can step in if there is a crisis.

Agree in advance how each of your efforts can complement one another so that you can be an effective team. Ideally, each of you will be able to take on tasks best suited to your skills or interests.

## **Consider Your Strengths When Sharing Caregiving Responsibilities**

When thinking about who should be responsible for what, start with your strengths. Consider what you are particularly good at and how those skills might help in the current situation:

- Are you good at finding information, keeping people up-to-date on changing conditions, and offering cheer, whether on the phone or with a computer?
- Are you good at supervising and leading others?
- Are you comfortable speaking with medical staff and interpreting what they say to others?
- Is your strongest suit doing the numbers—paying bills, keeping track of bank statements, and reviewing insurance policies and reimbursement reports?
- Are you the one in the family who can fix anything, while no one else knows the difference between pliers and a wrench?

## **Consider Your Limits When Sharing Caregiving Responsibilities**

When thinking about who should be responsible for what, consider your limits. Ask yourself the following:

- How often, both mentally and financially, can you afford to travel?
- Are you emotionally prepared to take on what may feel like a reversal of roles between you and your parent—taking care of your parent instead of your parent taking care of you? Can you continue to respect your parent's independence?
- Can you be both calm and assertive when communicating from a distance?
- How will your decision to take on caregiving responsibilities affect your work and home life?

Be realistic about how much you can do and what you are willing to do. Think about your schedule and how it might be adapted to give respite to a primary caregiver. For example, you might try to coordinate holiday and vacation times. Remember that over time, responsibilities may need to be revised to reflect changes in the situation, your care recipient's needs, and each family member's abilities and limitations.



## How to Support a Local Caregiver from Far Away

A spouse or the sibling who lives closest to an aging parent often becomes the primary caregiver. [Long-distance caregivers](#) can help by providing emotional support and occasional respite to the primary caregiver. Ask the primary caregiver what you can do to help. Staying in contact with your parents by phone or email might also take some pressure off your parent or sibling. Just listening may not sound like much help, but often it is.

Long-distance caregivers can also play a part in arranging for professional caregivers, hiring home health and nursing aides, or locating care in an [assisted living facility or nursing home](#) (also known as a skilled nursing facility).

Long-distance caregivers may find they can be helpful by handling things online—for example, researching health problems or medicines, paying bills, or keeping family and friends updated. Some long-distance caregivers help a parent pay for care; others step in to manage finances.

## How to Help a Parent Who Is the Primary Caregiver

A primary caregiver—especially a spouse—may be hesitant to ask for help or a break. Be sure to acknowledge how important the caregiver has been for the care recipient. Also, discuss the physical and emotional effects caregiving can have on people. Although caregiving can be satisfying, it also can be very hard work.

Offer to arrange for respite care. Respite care will give your parent a break from caregiving responsibilities. It can be arranged for just an afternoon or for several days. Care can be provided in the family home, through an adult day services program, or at a skilled nursing facility.

The [ARCH National Respite Locator Service](#) can help you find services in your parents' community. You might suggest contacting the [Well Spouse Association](#). It offers support to the wives, husbands, and partners of chronically ill or disabled people and has a nationwide listing of local support groups.

Your parents may need more help from home-based care to continue to live in their own home. Some people find it hard to have paid caregivers in the house, but most also say that the assistance is invaluable. If the primary caregiver is reluctant, point out that with an in-home aide, she may have more energy to devote to caregiving and some time for herself. Suggest she try it for a short time, and then decide.

In time, the person receiving care may have to move to assisted living or a nursing home. If that happens, the primary caregiver will need your support. You can help select a facility. The primary caregiver may need help adjusting to the person's absence or to living alone at home. Just listening may not sound like much help, but often it is.

# Program Updates



## Personal Emergency Response Systems

Are you worried about a friend or a family member falling while you are away and not getting the help that they need right away? Do you have a plan in place if they do have a fall or a medical emergency?

Our office may be able to help! We contract with Doyle Medical Monitoring to supply our older adults in the community with Personal Emergency Response Systems (PERS). Whether they are homebound, or on the go, our units are waterproof and wearable for easy access whenever it is needed.

For more information, or to sign up for one, please call our office to speak with an Outreach Worker at 607-274-5482!





Are you looking for an incredible  
volunteer opportunity?

Become a certified Long-Term Care Ombudsman!



Office of the State  
Long Term Care  
Ombudsman

**Do you have:**

- excellent communication skills?
- the ability to problem solve?
- a commitment to dignity and respect?
- two hours a week?
- a desire to make a *REAL* difference?

The New York State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program in Chemung, Schuyler and Tompkins Counties is looking for volunteers to serve as **advocates** for residents in long-term care communities.

Volunteers conduct regular facility visits, help identify and resolve concerns and act as an advocate for residents. *Get involved today!*

**Contact your local**

Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program:

**P: 607-274-5498**

**E: [pchevallard@tompkins-co.org](mailto:pchevallard@tompkins-co.org)**

Do you live in  
**Chemung,  
Schuyler  
or  
Tompkins  
County?**



## Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)

While the outdoor temperature keeps steadily going down, you may be seeing your heating costs steadily going up. If you, or someone you know, is having a tough time keeping up with the rising heating costs, encourage them to apply for the Home Energy Assistance Program. Our office handles applications for clients who are 60+, and we can be reached at 607-274-5482. For those who are under 60, please call the DSS HEAP Unit to apply at 607-274-5264. The income guidelines are listed below. Clients who are eligible will receive a HEAP benefit that will go directly to their heating vendor as a credit on their account. For more information, please give our office a call. Here's to staying warm!

**Household Size**

**Maximum Gross Monthly Income**

<b>1</b>	<b>\$2,729</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>\$3,569</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>\$4,409</b>



## **Project CARE**

**Would you or someone you know benefit by being matched with a community volunteer who can visit you weekly in your home, virtually, or by phone?**

Seniors aged 60 or over & living in Tompkins County, can request to have a friendly visitor through our Project CARE program at no cost.

### **Weekly visiting option:**

Project CARE's **friendly visitor program** provides companionship by matching you with a community volunteer who will make weekly contact in a way you are comfortable with. Project Generations is a part of Project CARE where Seniors are matched with a local college student. Home visits are available with safety precautions in place, or if you have internet access – visits can be done virtually, or a volunteer could provide a weekly phone call.

Many Seniors in our community greatly benefit and find comfort from a weekly visit. Volunteers can provide conversation and so much more. This service can provide in-home support to Seniors who are socially isolated, experiencing loneliness or those that are homebound, especially during the pandemic.

**If you are interested in more information or registering for the Project CARE program, please contact:**

**Dawn Sprague, Project CARE Coordinator**

**Tompkins County Office for the Aging**

**Phone (607)274-5499**

**Email [dsprague@tompkins-co.org](mailto:dsprague@tompkins-co.org)**

# CAREGIVERS SUPPORT



## Informational Webinar:

### **Community Resources for Caregivers**

#### **Featuring:**

**Fingerlakes Independence Center (FLIC)  
Foodnet Meals on Wheels  
Gadabout**

**Thursday, 2/3  
10:30 am to 12 pm**

#### **To Register:**

**(607) 274-5486  
[ajackson@tompkins-co.org](mailto:ajackson@tompkins-co.org)**



TOMPKINS COUNTY  
OFFICE FOR THE AGING

*Aging Better, Together*

214 W. Martin Luther King/State St.  
(607) 274-5482  
[www.tompkinscountyny.gov/cofa](http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/cofa)



## **The Registry at FLIC**

The Registry is a compiled list of private pay aides who have been screened through a face to face interview with the Registry Coordinator at FLIC. References are provided and verified to make sure the aide has the necessary skills and compassion that are important for someone to have when taking care of people in their homes. The Registry also contains a list of skilled nurses varying from pediatrics to palliative care.

For more information **contact Teressa Sivers at 272-2433.**

*The Registry program is made possible through funding from the Tompkins County Office for the Aging and the New York State Office for the Aging.*

## **Contributions Welcome!**

If you can afford a contribution to the Caregivers' Resource Center, it will help support this newsletter, our lending library, and other caregiver services. You can make a contribution in person, or by mail at:

Tompkins County Office for the Aging

214 W. Martin Luther King Jr./State St.

Ithaca, NY 14850

Please don't feel pressured to contribute financially if you are not able to do so.

Thank you!





## **The Caregiver Resource Center at the Office for the Aging**

**Powerful Tools for Caregivers Classes**—stay tuned for upcoming classes in the Spring!

**Caregiver Workshops**—Monthly workshops on topics of interest to caregivers

**Caregiver Supportive Group Discussion**—We are currently a caregiver supportive group discussion weekly, and welcome any family caregiver to join us. Contact us to discuss!

**Caregiver Library** - We loan out books on caregiving. We can mail you a book from our library, or you can pick it up! Reach out for the list of available books.

**Caregiver Counseling** - We are available by phone to help caregivers navigate services available in our community.

**For more information about these services please contact the Caregiver Resource Center at the Tompkins County Office for the Aging. We'll be glad to help you!**

**Phone:** 607-274-5486

**Email:** [ajackson@tompkins-co.org](mailto:ajackson@tompkins-co.org)

## **Websites of Interest to Family Caregivers:**

**Tompkins County Office for the Aging:** [www.tompkinscountyny.gov/cofa](http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/cofa)

- *Click on "Local Resources for Older Adults" to access our Tompkins County Resource guides.*

**Family Caregiver Alliance:** [www.caregiver.org](http://www.caregiver.org)

**CaringBridge:** [www.caringbridge.org](http://www.caringbridge.org)

**Caregiver Action Network:** [www.caregiveraction.org](http://www.caregiveraction.org)

**AARP Caregiver Resource Center:** [www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving](http://www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving)

**Next Step in Care:** [www.nextstepincare.org](http://www.nextstepincare.org)

*Note that articles marked "reprinted with permission" may not be further reproduced, except for private use, without permission of the original publisher. Other material in this newsletter may be freely copied with proper credit given to its original source.*

*This newsletter is made possible in part by a grant from the NYS Office for the Aging*