

Taking Care of Those Caring for Persons Living with Dementia

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Caregiving

Caregiving can be precarious for health, safety and well-being of the informal caregiver.

- Family caregiving can compromise caregiver's mental health, physical injury, anxiety and other stress-related conditions. (AARP, NAC, others)

Aging experts cite gaps in physician awareness of/empathy for caregiver abilities and needs to provide care.

- American College of Physicians (2009) – “The degree to which family caregivers feel supported by the physician may influence the caregiver's burden attitude and emotion health status.

Caregivers' Well-being Is a Risk

- May experience higher mortality
- Neglect their own health
- Are at high risk for stress-related disease
- Are the backbone of care provision
- Are the safety net

Providers Can Help Caregivers

- Roles and challenges of caregiving
- Shared decision making with caregivers
- Communicating with caregivers
- Helping caregivers take better care of themselves

“Taking Care of Those Caring for Persons Living with Dementia”

- ▶ **Co-sponsors:** Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and HHS Office on Women’s Health (OWH)
- ▶ **Purpose:**
 - Caregivers: To inform how to minimize risks of caregiving. (Release pending)
 - Providers: To integrate and support caregivers in care team.
<https://bhw.hrsa.gov/grants/geriatrics/alzheimers-curriculum>
- ▶ **13 Training Modules:**
 - Medical issues (sleep, eating issues, fears about abuse or anger, depression, stress, anxiety and well-being); psychosocial factors (relationship quality, guilt); transportation issues; family dynamics; respite; care decisions; Powers of Attorney (legal and medical); more.

Recommendations

- ▶ Identify current policies and practices that impede a caregiver’s ability to manage or sustain their own health.
- ▶ Differentiate the needs of, and effective support mechanisms for, diverse sub-groups of caregivers (sex, racial ethnicities, marriage and family status, location, age, sexual orientation, etc.)
- ▶ Discern effective models of healthcare provider integration of caregiver in patient care and care transitions.