

Family Caregivers are Filling the Gap

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MIDDLEVILLE, MICHIGAN, UNITED STATES, November 18, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In the wake of a direct care worker shortage, more than 53 million Americans serve as “informal” caregivers filling critical roles that make independent living possible for people with disabilities and chronic health conditions. However, family caregiving can take a financial, emotional, and physical toll on those performing the unpaid work. Below, we explore five opportunities to help family caregivers build sustainable and strong caregiving relationships.

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Steve Locke

Determine Whether Payment is Possible

In some cases, [family caregivers can receive financial](#)

[compensation](#) for their caregiving. Medicaid’s Self-Directed Services program, the Department of Veterans’ Affairs Veteran-Directed Care program, certain Home and Community-Based Services programs, many long-term care insurance plans, and even some employers offer stipends to informal caregivers providing necessary care.

Make a Plan for Respite Care

Creating a respite care plan helps caregivers build in time on a regular basis to take a break from caregiving and pass their responsibilities on to a trustworthy provider. The AARP outlines the process for creating a plan, including identifying what you and your loved one need and who could provide support. Professional respite care resources are available through the Senior Corps, local [Area Agency on Aging](#), and Elder Helpers.

Find Peer Support

Up to 40% of informal caregivers report that caregiving makes them feel alone, yet there are many others experiencing the same scenarios and connecting can help caregivers cope. Your local Center for Independent Living can connect you with caregiving support groups, the Area Agency on Aging can provide assistance, or even nonprofit or religious groups like Courage to Caregivers that link volunteer peer mentors with caregivers.

Ask for Help!

The digital age has brought a [wealth of apps](#) that make it easier for caregivers to communicate

their needs and get other friends and family members on board to help. Whether you need alternative transportation to a medical appointment or would love a friend to drop off dinner a few days per month, apps like Carely, Caring Village, and LotsaHands provide tools to help caregivers coordinate caregiving responsibilities among family and friends.

Pay Attention to your Mental Health

Up to 4 in 10 caregivers report that they “never relax,” and one survey revealed that more than half of caregivers polled had experienced suicidal ideation during the COVID pandemic. Caregiving while experiencing this level of mental anguish is dangerous for both the caregiver and the patient. In cases like this, finding an alternate source of care at least part of the time is necessary. Individuals in crisis can call 988 for 24/7 mental health support and the Caregiver Action Network can provide a listening ear, resources, and assistance.

Family caregivers are critical resources in the quest to promote independence and autonomy among people with disabilities, and they deserve all the support our communities can offer. As organizations like MiSILC advocate for formal and informal caregivers at the highest levels, nonprofits and community resources can provide the services necessary for effective, sustainable caregiving. Learn more about our work at [MiSILC.org](https://www.misilc.org).

Tori Sullivan-Cortez

Michigan Statewide Independent Living Council

+1 313-644-2048

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