

Remember... you are never alone.

Helping Others

You've probably heard it said that the best way to help yourself is by helping others. Helping others is a powerful way to boost your own well-being. By focusing on the needs of others, you can reduce stress, create a strong sense of purpose, and gain a deeper understanding of your own life and challenges.

Science and psychology both highlight that being of service to others activates the reward centers in the brain, releasing "feel-good" chemicals like dopamine, serotonin and oxytocin. This response not only improves your mood but also fosters deeper social connections and emotional resilience. ~ [Mental Health America](#)

Remember, the key is balance. Make sure your acts of kindness are sustainable so that you can continue to help others without experiencing compassion fatigue or burnout. ~ [The Physicians Foundation](#)



Hello and Welcome!

We are so excited to have you join us!

I'll be honest...this group was created out of a labor of love. My aim with this is to provide caregivers with an opportunity to share stories, resources, and needs, and to assist and nurture one another as we navigate the challenging and demanding world of caregiving.

Here's my story and how this idea came about.

My mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2018. I was devastated. We all were. None of us knew what to expect. At that time, my stepfather was still living, and he took care of my mom. I didn't know until his passing two years ago exactly how bad mom's condition had gotten in the previous six years. He was not one to share the hardship and didn't want to put any burden on me as her only child. I only saw mild cognitive decline when we got together. But I was not living with her daily and did not know just how far her dementia had progressed. I did see that Mom had become much quieter and was not the same outgoing, friendly, happy person that she once was.

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When my stepfather passed, Mom repeatedly asked me who was going to take care of her now? They spent 43 years married and they did everything together. You rarely saw one without the other. I knew then that I was going to need to step up and become her "person", whatever that looked like.

I quickly sold my house, and moved in with her. I had no idea what I was getting myself into. I only knew that I could not abandon my mother in her greatest time of need. I soon realized my decision would become my greatest challenge in life and the true test of my ability to maintain my sense of self. The life I once knew was over, and my main focus needed to be her.

It's now been two years and here we are. We have our good days and bad days. Each day brings something new in the progression of Mom's disease. I just hope that she knows how much I love her, I'm doing the best I can, and she forgives me when I fail her.

"Caregiving often calls us to lean into love we didn't know possible".
~Tia Walker

A Caregiver's Prayer for Endurance to Persevere

Heavenly Father, as I start another day of caregiving, I turn to you, the source of endurance.

In the face of the challenges that lie ahead, I ask for the strength to persevere.

Lord, You understand the depth of my commitment and the demands placed on me in this role.

Grant me the endurance to withstand the physical toll that caregiving often brings.

Strengthen my resolve, that I may face each day with steadfastness and perseverance.

When weariness sets in and the journey seems long, remind me that I do not walk this path alone.

Fill me with a spirit of endurance that goes beyond my capabilities.

Give me renewed energy and determination in your sustaining grace.

Amen



What caregivers really need to know.

You are doing work that matters deeply, even on the hardest and most exhausting days.

What you do every day is an extraordinary act of love and quiet heroism. Even when your work goes unseen or feels unappreciated, your presence, patience and compassion change lives. You do not have to be perfect to be amazing!

To the Caregiver:

Reminders for Hard Days

- **You are enough:** Your best effort today—no matter how small it feels—is completely enough.
- **It is okay to rest:** You cannot pour from an empty cup. Rest is not giving up; it is part of keeping going.
- **Ask for help:** Lean on others when the load gets too heavy. Sharing the weight shows strength, not weakness.
- **Take it one step:** You do not have to fix the whole future today. Just get through this hour.

Some Things You Can Do For a Caregiver to Offer Real, Practical Help:

- **Offer Concrete Help, Not Just “Let me know”** (run errands, provide transportation, prepare meals)
- **Share Caregiving Responsibilities** – even short breaks can prevent burnout (cover for a few hours so the caregiver can rest, exercise, see a friend)
- **Connect Them to Support Networks** – Caregivers often feel isolated (introduce them to local or online support groups, share information, offer to accompany them)
- **Encourage Self-Care and Boundaries** – Caregivers need to protect their own health (suggest and help with small self-care habits like a 15-min. walk, deep breathing, or journaling; help set boundaries by gently declining nonessential tasks that add stress)

Examples:

- "I am ordering dinner for you tonight. What do you like?"
- "Let me sit with [loved one] for two hours so you can leave the house."
- "I am going to the grocery store. Send me your list."
- "Don't worry about the laundry or dishes. I've got them."



EYE ON IT

Current Research Trends

A multi-institutional center for Alzheimer's research led by the Cleveland Clinic has been awarded a five-year, \$21.1 million grant from the National Institute on Aging and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The funding provided will be ongoing and is a collaborative effort of physicians and scientists from the Cleveland Clinic, Case Western Reserve University, Veterans Affairs Northeast Ohio Health Care System, MetroHealth System and University Hospitals. The purpose of the grant is to accelerate research for Alzheimer's and related diseases.

DID YOU KNOW?

Alzheimer's disease is a leading cause of death in the United States, according to federal data. The number of people living with Alzheimer's is projected to double to 14 million by 2060.

Brain changes associated with Alzheimer's may begin at least seven years before amyloid plaques become detectable with current PET scans.

Researchers uncovered the signal by tracking healthy older adults with repeated brain imaging over nearly 20 years.

The discovery could help scientists identify Alzheimer's earlier and suggests that important disease processes may start before visible plaque buildup.

Keys to Caring for Yourself

It's one thing to gear up for a short-term crisis. But it takes different skills to provide care over a longer period of time. You'll be more successful if you learn to take care of yourself, starting immediately. Some things to remember:

- You cannot be perfect
- You have a right to all of your emotions
- Depression is the most common emotion of long-term caregivers
- Set realistic expectations—for yourself and your loved one
- Learn about the disease and what you can expect
- Learn the skills you need to care for the care receiver and which ones you are or are not able to perform
- Learn to say “no” to things you cannot do
- Learn to accept help from others
- Build resilience
- Identify your button-pushers/stressors
- Identify your coping skills
- Remember the big three for successful coping:
 - **Eat right**—good nutrition as opposed to stress-snacking. Limit alcohol and other drugs
 - **Exercise**—it may be hard to find time but it's the best cure for depression and increases your endorphins (“good” coping hormones)
 - **Sleep**—7-8 hours is hard to get, but essential. Admit when you are experiencing burnout and get help

Most importantly, remember that taking care of yourself is as important as taking care of someone else.

Book of the Month – Recommended Read

Creating Moments of Joy – Along the Alzheimer's Journey, Author: Jolene Brackey, Fifth Edition, Revised and Expanded



Jolene Brackey has a vision: that we will soon look beyond the challenges of Alzheimer's disease to focus more of our energies on creating moments of joy.

When people have short-term memory loss, their lives are made up of moments. We are not able to create perfectly wonderful days for people with dementia or Alzheimers, but we can create perfectly wonderful moments that put a smile on their faces and a twinkle in their eyes. Five minutes later, they will not remember what we did or said, but the feeling that we left them will linger.

This new edition of *Creating Moments of Joy* is filled with more practical advice sprinkled with hope, encouragement, new stories, and generous helpings of humor.



Coming Soon!

- Care4Y♥U Website with the opportunity to post your caregiving needs online
- Online Zoom Meetings for attending remotely
- Resource Directory
- Guest Speakers
- Caregiver Blog

Care4Y♥U

Contact: Tracey Nordahl
Phone: 773.965.1864
Email: tnordahl@care4u.biz

"At some point, stop testing the memory and start making the memory." ~ Meghan Phelan

Caregiving Resources

- Safe Return Program: www.alz.org/care/dementia-medic-alert-safe-return.asp (provides ID bracelet and online registration listing in national database)
- Ohio Area Agency on Aging – Ohio Department of Aging: www.aging.ohio.gov
- Weekly Caregiving Newsletter: www.Alzheimersweekly.com
- Caregiving blog: www.rightathome.com
- Online store for Alzheimer's products: www.alzstore.com
- National Institute on Aging: www.nia.nih.gov
- Caregiver Corner: www.caregivercorner.org
- Caregiver Corner Expert Advice/Practical Strategies: www.caregivercorner.net

Recommended Books Currently Available For Loan

- "Creating Moments of Joy – Along the Alzheimer's Journey", Author: Jolene Brackey
- "When Reasoning No Longer Works – A Practical Guide For Caregivers Dealing With Dementia & Alzheimer's Care", Author: Angel Smits
- "Alzheimer's Early Stages – First Steps For Family, Friends and Caregivers", Author: Daniel Kuhn, MSW
- "Dementia Guide For Caretakers – Essential Caregiver's Manual for Alzheimer's and Memory Care", Author: Dr. Brook V. Dominic
- "The 36-Hour Day – A Family Guide to Caring For People Who Have Alzheimer Disease and Other Dementias", Author: Nancy L. Mave, MA and Peter V. Rabins, MD. MPH
- "Alzheimer's Through The Stages – A Caregiver's Guide on What to Expect, What To Say, and What to Do", Author: Mary Moller, MSW, CAS
- "Not Alone – Encouragement for Caregivers", Author: Nell E. Noonan
- "Being Mortal", Author: Atul Gawande

Upcoming Events

- Care4You Caregiver Support Group – October 21, 2026, 6:00-7:00pm, at Urbana United Methodist Church, 2nd Floor Curriculum Room
- Care4You Caregiver Support Group – November 18, 2026, 6:00-7:00pm, at Urbana United Methodist Church, 2nd Floor Curriculum Room
- Care4You CaregiverSupport Group – December 16, 2026, 6:00-7:00pm, at Urbana United Methodist Church, 2nd Floor Curriculum Room