Relieving caregiver loneliness
Aetna Resources For Living℠

Family caregivers often suffer from isolation, depression and loneliness. Caregivers fill roles that give them the chance to care for and "give back" to those who took care of them or other disabled people in their lives. But they often suffer too.

Why?

1. Caregiving can become all-consuming.
2. Others may not know how to help.
3. Outsiders may stay away because of their own discomfort about illness and disability.

What can you do?

If you're a caregiver or know someone who is, there's help. Here are some examples of what you can give a caregiver in your life:

1. **Support.** Stay in touch by phone or video-chat. Be ready to let the caregiver vent or cry — or even talk about something unrelated. Try to put aside your own fears and feelings to be supportive. Avoiding contact with caregivers reinforces their isolation.

2. **Help.** Caregivers may have a hard time saying what they need. But if you offer to perform a specific task, it can help. Perhaps a grocery run or a ride to the doctor, as examples.

3. **Time away.** Caregivers can get bored, depressed and overwhelmed. They may find it hard to get any time for themselves. Want to give a great gift? If you are able to and feel comfortable doing it, offer an hour or two of watching the person they're caring for. Whether they go to a spa or just take a walk — every break helps.

Loneliness can lead to physical and emotional problems. A little help can go a long way toward making a caregiver feel connected.

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