

HomeTimes



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How Family Caregivers Can Manage Stress

If you are a family member caring for an older adult, you probably have many other tasks to juggle, such as work, childcare, errands, and more. Keeping other aspects of your life running smoothly and efficiently while meeting a senior loved one's needs can be overwhelming and stressful. You may also struggle to find time for yourself to relax.

Tips to Manage Caregiver Stress



Caring for an elderly loved one can be rewarding but also draining—physically and mentally. Fortunately, there are opportunities and resources to help you alleviate stress and enhance the quality of life for your senior loved one and you.

Here are a few tips that can help you manage caregiver stress and maintain a healthy balance in your life:

Delegate Senior Care Tasks

Delegating senior care tasks can help lighten your load and reduce stress. If you're busy, consider asking family, friends, or

neighbors to help with tasks like picking up prescriptions, preparing meals, or providing companionship. Professional home care services, like those from Visiting Angels, can also offer skilled support.

Hire Assistance with Personal Errands and Chores

During hectic times, consider time-saving resources like grocery delivery, online shopping, or cleaning services. If budget allows, hiring help for lawn care, repairs, or overdue projects can free up time to focus on your well-being.

Reduce Other Stressors, If Possible

Manage the aspects of your life that cause unnecessary stress. Although it is impossible to eliminate stress 100 percent, you can take simple steps to streamline your life—such as meditating, going outside more, reducing your time on social media and news, and avoiding activities that cause anxiety.

Prioritize What is Most Important in Your Life

Figure out what is essential in your life and devote your energy to those pursuits—making sure that self-care ranks high on the list. Focusing on what matters most will allow you to establish priorities and place the less-important commitments lower.

Let Go of Guilt

Manage sources of unnecessary stress. While you can't eliminate it entirely, simple steps like meditating, spending time outdoors, limiting social media, and avoiding anxiety-inducing activities can help.

Consider Respite Care

Respite care offers temporary relief from caregiving, letting you take a break for vacation, work, or personal time. A Visiting Angels caregiver provides compassionate, in-home support tailored to your needs, schedule, and budget.

Assisted Living Vs. Home Care

If you're contemplating senior care, you've probably heard about "assisted living." You may have looked for information on local assisted living facilities. Did you know in-home care can be an option—even if your loved one is living with a condition that causes health, cognitive, or mobility challenges?



The main difference between assisted living and home care is the location of care. Assisted living provides support in a residential facility, such as an apartment, townhome, or a suite with a private bathroom attached.

Home care is provided in your loved one's residence without the need to relocate to a facility. Home care enables seniors to age in place in the comfort of their own homes with familiar surroundings and routines.

What Services Are Provided by Assisted Living vs. Home Care?

Assisted living facilities and home care offer similar personal care services, including help with the following:

- Hygiene Assistance
- Bathing & Dressing Assistance
- Toileting Assistance
- Errands & Shopping
- Meal Preparation
- Laundry & Light Housekeeping
- Mobility & Transfers
- Medication Reminders
- Incidental Transportation to and from Appointments

However, in-home care offers dedicated, one-on-one care at your loved one's home. An in-home caregiver will focus entirely on your loved one's preferences, comfort, and safety.

Assisted living care is provided by facility staff members, who may support multiple residents during each shift. As a result, it may be more challenging for team members to provide the level of personalized care your loved one may need.

The Cost of Assisted Living vs. Home Care

Costs vary across the country for both services. However, assisted living usually comes with a higher price tag—and often requires residents to make a significant, up-front financial deposit before moving into the facility.

In-home care can offer flexibility and financial savings if your loved one needs assistance at certain times of day. For example, Visiting Angels will customize your caregiver's schedule so you're not paying for services that aren't needed.

At an assisted-living facility, residents pay one price for 24/7 care. While these facilities often offer amenities, such as exercise equipment, social activities, and meal plans, they also increase the overall cost. When considering options, ensure your loved one will use these amenities to justify the higher price.

What Else Do You Need to Know About Assisted Living vs. Home Care?

Other differences between assisted living and home care include:

- Assisted living facilities often have a waiting list for openings, while home care services can typically start within a few days.
- In-home care can be canceled with two weeks' notice, while assisted living involves a permanent move to a new facility.
- In-home personal care providers do not offer medical care, but some assisted living facilities may have medical providers on staff who can deliver health care services.
- Living in a congregate setting may increase the risk of colds, flu, and other contagious illnesses compared to aging in place with in-home care.

Learn More About Visiting Angels' Personalized Home Care Services

Choosing between in-home care and an assisted living facility is a complex decision, and it's essential to explore all options. If you are considering in-home personal care services, Visiting Angels offers free in-home consultations to answer your questions and learn about your loved one's care needs.

To learn more about how professional in-home care can assist, contact Visiting Angels West Springfield at 413-733-6900.

What's New at Visiting Angels West Springfield?

Check out what's happening in our West Springfield office.

On Monday, December 23, the Visiting Angels staff celebrated with a holiday party in the West Springfield office. Caregivers and their families stopped in for hot chocolate, cookies, cupcakes, and community.



Candy is January's Caregiver of the Month



Congratulations to Candy, our January Caregiver of the Month!

Candace, better known in the office as “Candy,” is our first award recipient of 2025. She is known, both in our office and with her clients, as a ray of sunshine whose main goal each day is to celebrate life. Her caring, professional, positive demeanor makes her an ideal Caregiver of the Month for January.

The most prevalent comment about Candy among the office staff is her infectious humor and personality. “She’s just funny,” Michele commented. “She’s a big talker; you’re just drawn into talking to her because every other sentence is hilarious.”

Her love of life and desire to celebrate each day has made a lasting impact on those around her. She is so positive that her client even reported that she can never tell if Candy is having a bad day because she is always in a shining, happy mood. “She even decorates her client’s

room for every holiday and season,” Natali reported. “Her clients love seeing her.”

Outside of work, Candy is known for loving to travel with her friends, always visiting a new part of the world. “This is just a retirement gig for her,” Michele explained. “She’s a caregiver because she loves to be.”

Candy is our January Caregiver of the Month because of her contagiously cheerful personality that she brings with her each and every day. She doesn’t treat her work like a job, but instead as a way to spread her love of life to those who need it most: our elderly community. She makes everyone around her, from administrative staff to her clients and their family members, want to have a better day and see the positive in each situation.

Congrats, Candy!

Visiting Angels West Springfield Receives Shoutout in Prime Magazine

We’d like to give a special thank you to Debbie Garner at Prime Magazine for the shoutout in her recent article on chair yoga!

Every week, Sheila Magalhaes from Heartsong Yoga in East Longmeadow teaches a chair yoga class sponsored by Visiting Angels of West Springfield. The class is held each Monday at 1:30pm in the community room at Brownstone Gardens, an independent living facility for adults 62 and over in East Longmeadow. All are welcome to join!

Chair yoga
A practice for every body and ability
By Debbie Gardner
dgardner@thereminder.com

It's the latest "fountain of youth" discovery -- and you don't even have to leave your chair to do it if you don't want to.

It's called chair yoga - and it's rapidly gained popularity on social media channels as well as in elder living communities.

Prime turned to local yoga studio owner and longtime contributor Sheila Magalhaes of Heartsong Yoga in East Longmeadow for the lowdown on the chair yoga craze.

"It's a reflection of the aging of America," Magalhaes said, noting yoga itself became mainstream when the baby boom generation was reaching its 40s and 50s. "It's a natural process of people who want to be moving and know that movement brings joint mobility, bone strength, balance, flexibility, focus and concentration, and that chair yoga makes it accessible to those who might not feel as able-bodied (as they were,) yet are looking for a practice that can help them with their overall health and wellness in their later years."

"The chair feels safe and stable," Magalhaes continued, explaining the appeal of the practice. "In the chair, seated, you can do almost all of the traditional [yoga] poses otherwise you might do sitting on the floor."

Prime gets a taste of chair yoga

To illustrate this concept, Magalhaes invited Prime to visit a weekly chair yoga class she leads for residents of Brownstone Gardens, a 62 and older independent living community in East Longmeadow, Massachusetts. The class, which has been a weekly function since COVID-19, is sponsored by Visiting Angels Living Assistance Services of West Springfield.

Sheila Magalhaes of Heartsong Yoga leads Brownstone Gardens residents in a leg stretch during a weekly chair yoga session.
Prime photo by Debbie Gardner

Angel Cookbook



Cream of Mushroom Soup

5 cups sliced fresh mushrooms
1 ½ cups chicken stock
½ cup chopped onion
⅛ teaspoon dried thyme
3 tablespoons butter
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
1 cup half-and-half or heavy cream
1 tablespoon sherry

Instructions:

Gather all ingredients.

Simmer mushrooms, stock, onion, and thyme in a large heavy saucepan until vegetables are tender, 10 to 15 minutes.

Carefully transfer the hot mixture to a blender or food processor. Cover and hold lid down with a potholder; pulse until creamy but still with some chunks of vegetable.

Melt butter in the same saucepan. Whisk in flour until smooth. Whisk in salt and pepper. Slowly whisk in half-and-half and mushroom mixture.

Bring soup to a boil and cook, stirring constantly, until thickened.

Stir in sherry. Taste and season with more salt as desired.

Serve and enjoy!

Serving Size: 6 servings • Calories: 165

www.allrecipes.com/recipe/13096/cream-of-mushroom-soup-i/



Vasilopita (Greek New Years Cake)

2 cups white sugar
1 cup butter
3 cups all-purpose flour
6 large eggs
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 cup warm milk (110°F/45°C)
½ teaspoon baking soda
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
¼ cup blanched slivered almonds
2 tablespoons white sugar

Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Generously grease a 10-inch round cake pan.

Beat sugar and butter together in a medium bowl until lighter in color; stir in flour and mix until the mixture is mealy. Add eggs one at a time, mixing well after each addition. Combine baking powder and milk; add to egg mixture, mix well. Combine lemon juice and baking soda; stir into the batter. Pour into the prepared cake pan.

Bake in the preheated oven for 20 minutes. Remove and sprinkle the nuts and sugar over the cake, then return it to the oven until cake springs back to the touch, about 20 to 30 additional minutes. Gently cut a small hole in the cake and place a quarter in the hole. Try to cover the hole with sugar. Cool cake on a rack for 10 minutes before inverting onto a plate.

Serve cake warm.

Serving Size: 12 servings • Calories: 447

www.allrecipes.com/recipe/15723/vaselopita-greek-new-years-cake/

About Visiting Angels West Springfield

The West Springfield franchise of Visiting Angels has announced that Michele Anstett, co-founder of the business, has transitioned to full ownership and assumed the role of President and CEO. Visiting Angels offers **in-home care services** to **seniors** and **elderly veterans** throughout the Pioneer Valley in Western Massachusetts. Anstett started the business in 1999 is the Owner, President, and Director for the West Springfield franchise.

Since 1999, the home-care industry has changed dramatically in the Pioneer Valley and Greater Springfield Area. Anstett's experience growing the business for the past 25 years in an evolving sector makes her uniquely equipped to handle the modern challenges of the industry and successfully direct the business. Anstett's franchise was the ninth franchise in the Visiting Angels network, which has since increased in size to over 600 agencies internationally. With her guidance as Owner and President, the franchise has grown to provide over 80,000 hours of care annually, helping seniors to maintain a sense of independence, dignity, and quality of life in their own home setting. Anstett brings dedication, compassion, experience, and attention to detail to the role – fundamental skills for successful leadership in the ever-evolving home-care industry.



Now, with over two decades of servicing the Hampden County region, Visiting Angels has helped over 4,000 seniors maintain a sense of independence, dignity and quality of life in their own home or assisted care setting. While Visiting Angels West Springfield has grown since 1999, they continue to build lasting relationships by offering that same, family-like compassionate care and dependability since day one. Visiting Angels has been a *Homecare Provider of Choice since 2015!*

Visiting Angels West Springfield provides [in-home care](#), senior homecare, elderly care, [Dementia care](#) and [Alzheimer's care](#) in Southampton, [Westfield](#), Southwick, [Holyoke](#), [West Springfield](#), [Agawam](#), [Chicopee](#), [Springfield](#), Indian Orchard, [Longmeadow](#), [East Longmeadow](#), [Wilbraham](#), [Ludlow](#), Feeding Hills and [Montgomery](#). The franchise covers the entire Greater Springfield Area and most of the Lower Pioneer Valley region.

Visiting Angels West Springfield can be reached at [413-733-6900](tel:413-733-6900) to request more information about in-home care services for your loved ones or to inquire about [current employment](#) opportunities (CNA, HHA, and PCA).

Visiting Angel West Springfield

33 Westfield St. #1

West Springfield, MA 01089

413-733-6900

America's Choice In Home Care®

Since 1998, Visiting Angels has been providing adults and seniors with the needed assistance to continue living at home. At our nationally known, locally owned agency, it is our mission to maintain the independence and familiar surroundings for those in need.

We offer help with personal care, light housekeeping, meal preparation, transportation, shopping, companionship, respite care for families, live-in care and assistance with daily living activities. Call us today for a free, no obligation consultation! We care every day, in every way!

