Age Positive Conference
Kauffman Foundation Conference Center
Kansas City, MO
Tuesday, April 24, 2018

Self-Care for the Caregiver
Martha Childers, LPC, EdS
9:45 am to 10:45 am
What Is a Caregiver?

Someone who is providing care for another person in need
Who Are Caregivers?

- 36% of adult Americans, unpaid
- Number expected to increase
- Mostly women
- 3 in 5 have paid employment elsewhere
What Is Caregiver Stress?

• Anxiety resulting from emotional and physical strain of caregiving
Who Gets Caregiver Stress?

- Anyone
- If care needs are constant, such as Alzheimer’s disease or dementia
- Caring for a spouse, especially women
What Are the Signs of Caregiver Stress?

(cont’d)

• Feeling helpless and angry
• Making mistakes in medication and care
• Turning to alcohol, food, and smoking
• Feeling overwhelmed
• Feeling alone, isolated, or abandoned
• Sleeping too much or not enough
What Are the Signs of Caregiver Stress?
(cont’d)

• Losing or gaining weight
• Feeling tired most of the time
• Losing interest in activities you used to enjoy
• Becoming easily irritated or angered
• Feeling worried or sad often
• Having headaches or body aches often
How Does Caregiver Stress Affect Health?

- Depression and anxiety, increasing risk of heart attack and stroke
- Weakened immune system
- Overweight, increasing risk of heart disease, stroke, and diabetes
- More chronic diseases, such as diabetes, cancer, arthritis, heart disease
- Short-term memory loss, especially among caregivers of Alzheimer’s patients
How to Avoid or Relieve Caregiver Stress

• Attend classes on caregiving: ask your doctor or contact your Area Agency on Aging
• Find adult daycare and respite services
• Ask for help
• Join a caregiver support group
How to Avoid or Relieve Caregiver Stress (cont’d)

- Be organized
- Connect with friends and loved ones
- Do things you enjoy
- Eat healthily, sleep, and exercise daily
- Meditate and pray
- Get regular check-ups
What Community Resources Are Available?

- Meal delivery
- Psychotherapy
- Nursing or physical therapy
- Housekeeping, cooking, or companionship
- Home modifications, such as installing ramps or hand railings
- Legal and financial services
- Respite care
Where Can I Find Resources?

• **Area Agency on Aging**
• **National Eldercare Locator**
• *Ask your librarian*
How Can I Pay for Resources?

• Medicare
• Medicaid
• Private insurance
• Check [HealthCare.gov](http://HealthCare.gov) for insurance
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