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What is a Caregiver?

By David Bull - www.caregiver4caregivers.com

Simply stated, a Caregiver is just a name for all those family, friends or relatives who care for or about another person. There are also the professional Caregivers. Taking on the role of caregiver may mean having to make changes in your social life, work schedules, stretching time and money, chronic fatigue, uncertainty of what the future holds, extra strain on you, your family, and those you come into contact.

Your family's lifestyle and your own, will change. It may mean less time to spend with your spouse or children, revised work and home schedules, increased emotional and physical stress which could result in a weight gain or loss, depression, chronic colds or fatigue, tardiness to family, work, or social related engagements.

Taking on the role of caregiver is not an easy one ... Adjustments, time, and understanding are a must.

Each person responds to the crises, demands and pressures of caregiving in his/her own way. Whether you have moved into the role of caregiver suddenly or gradually over time, you may feel alone, unprepared, and overwhelmed by what is expected of you. These feelings, as well as other emotions — fear, sadness, anxiety, guilt, frustration, and even anger are normal, and may come and go throughout your time of providing care. Although it may not seem possible, you will also experience the unanticipated gifts of caregiving — forgiveness, compassion, courage — that can turn hardship into hope and healing.

Caregivers have told their stories and eloquently conveyed their feelings of isolation, helplessness, anger, grief, guilt, and frustration. Generally, they all speak of the need for better solutions for themselves or for their peers, the current caregivers.

More importantly, Caregivers need to understand that they are not selfish, unfeeling individuals. On the contrary, someone in a caregiving role is seen as a courageous person brave enough to speak in open forum about their problems which are so personal and yet are amazingly common to all who undertake such responsibilities.

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