

SUNDAY MORNING Health Corner

Tips to Support Family Caregivers

Approximately 39.8 million caregivers provide care to adults (aged 18+) with a disability or illness.¹ As caregivers, African Americans reportedly experience higher burdens and spend more time caring for an older person while caring for someone aged 18 years or younger, which makes caregiver support vital. Even more, the role of caregiver often comes unexpectedly, leaving many Black Americans to adjust quickly and at times without a needed support system and resources.

So, here are three ways to support caregivers.



Listen. Family caregivers spend 20 hours on average per week caring for a loved one, which comes with many challenges. Some caregivers may want to vent and be heard without judgment at the end of a long day or week. So, offer a listening ear, empathy, and space for the caregiver to speak freely about all they are experiencing.



Ask how to help. Many caregivers may not ask for help. So, take a step forward and approach the subject first. While you cannot always anticipate the type of assistance the caregiver may need, asking, "How can I help?" is sincere and eliminates any guesswork. Be sure to follow through after asking!



Offer the gift of time. Consider offering to give a caregiver a break. Making time to care for themselves or even grab groceries can seem like impossible tasks to complete, especially if there are no backup care options. Offering to sit with the person receiving care can give the caregiver a few moments to regroup and relax.



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¹ Caregiver statistics: Demographics. (2016, February 17). Family Caregiver Alliance. <https://www.caregiver.org/resource/caregiver-statistics-demographics/>