



DOVER PARK HOSPICE
Every Moment Matters

Caring for the Caregiver



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Introduction

As you dedicate yourself to your loved one in their final journey, it is easy to lose sight of your own personal needs. Stress and burnout from caregiving can creep up quietly on you when left unchecked.

This guide is intended for caregivers of all Dover Park patients, whether at home or in our inpatient services.

It focuses on self-care or self-compassion tips to allow you to see through this journey and its challenges ahead. It introduces basic tips and concepts, so you can tend to your wellbeing during this critical time.

If you need someone to speak to, please approach our clinical team.

Emotional Wellbeing of Caregivers

Being a caregiver is like going on a roller coaster ride. Just when the situation starts to pick up, something happens and you take a plunge. At times, it seems like a never-ending ride, gradually takes a toll even on the most well-equipped caregiver.

Manage Emotions

- Anger, sadness, frustration, loneliness - these are some of the common emotions that surface time to time
- It is important to remember that you are also a person with feelings. Acknowledge these feelings and find ways to manage them
- It can involve sharing your feelings with a close friend or family, writing a journal, or any activity that allows you to channel the emotions

Widen Social Support

- Widen your social support network
- Speak to your social worker of your needs to find out the available resources in the community
- You may seek support from your religious community for spiritual and other support

Seek Information

- Uncertainty causes significant stress. Not knowing what lurks round the corner prevents you from enjoying quality time with your loved one
- Empower yourself with knowledge of what is happening, what will happen and what may happen by working closely with the medical team
- Equip yourself with the skills needed to manage your loved ones more effectively

Filter Opinions

- Friend and family may express their care for your loved one by contributing their opinions. Over time, the multitude of opinions overwhelm you.
- You know your loved one best. You will be able to make decisions in his or her best interest based on your knowledge of your loved one's preferences

Accept Help

- Accepting help is not a sign of weakness. It is acknowledging that you have your limitations
- It provides opportunity for friends and family to show their care and concern in a constructive manner. Let them know what help is needed

Take Short Breaks

- Caregiving is a full-time responsibility which knows no day or night
- You are at your best in caring for others when you first care for yourself
- Adequate sleep and the occasional “me” time does wonders. Make time for exercise, meditation or other activities to pamper yourself. It makes you a better carer.

Caring for Yourself

Treat this section as a guiding compass, rather than a checklist to get through.

Use these strategies to check in with your needs and maintain your wellbeing.

Establish a Healthy Routine

Physical Health

Ensure adequate sleep, eat balanced meals, and engage in regular physical activity.

Mental Health

Practice mindfulness, meditation, or relaxation techniques to manage stress.

Emotional Health

Acknowledge your feelings, set realistic goals, and celebrate small victories.

Social Connection

Make time for supportive company. Text or call a close friend or family member. Minimise doom-scrolling on social media. Be selective.

Self-Care Tips

- Take a quick 10-minute walk
- Share your caregiving responsibilities to others (e.g. Family members, close friends)
- Call or meet a friend for support
- Write down three things you are grateful for

It helps to remind yourself that you are important, too. To be able to care for your loved one, you need to maintain your emotional health and look after yourself first.

Learn to recognise when the going is getting too tough and reach out proactively for support, rather than wait for a crisis.

Ultimately, your role is about walking alongside someone through the final chapter of life, offering dignity and love.