

THE CAREGIVER • FREE COMPANION TOOL

You count too

"Where quality of life counts" was never only about your mom or dad. You cannot pour from an empty cup, and the truth is plain: caregivers who don't get support often get sick themselves. This isn't a lecture about bubble baths. It's a short plan for keeping *you* standing — because they need you for the long road, not the sprint.

First, permission

You are allowed to find this hard. You are allowed to grieve someone who is still here. And you are allowed to need help. Needing support is not failing them — it is how you keep showing up for them.

01 Signs it's time to bring in more support a signal, not a verdict

- ☐ You're tired in a way that sleep doesn't fix.
- ☐ You've let go of the friends, the walk, the one thing that used to be yours.
- ☐ You're crying, snapping, or numb in ways that don't feel like you.
- ☐ You're leaning on wine, food, or scrolling more just to get through the day.
- ☐ You've stopped going to your own doctor.
- ☐ You can't remember the last time you felt like yourself.

If you recognize yourself in a few of these, please treat it as a signal to bring in more support — and to talk to your own doctor. This is common, it is treatable, and it is not weakness. **And if you've had moments of feeling hopeless, or that everyone would be better off without you, reach out today** — call your doctor, or in the U.S. call or text **988** (the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline). That feeling is a measure of how much you're carrying, not the truth about your worth.

Where Quality of Life Counts

Educational information from Senior Advocators Inc. It is not medical or mental-health advice. If you are struggling, please reach out to a licensed professional or, in the U.S., call or text 988.

02 Build your team — and ask like you mean it

- ☐ **Stop saying “let me know if you can help.”** It never works. Ask for the specific thing: “Can you take Dad every Tuesday evening?” A clear ask is easy to say yes to.
- ☐ **Give the far-away sibling a real job.** Research, phone calls, paying for a cleaner, covering one weekend a month. Distance is not an excuse — it's just a different role.
- ☐ **Let your faith community or friends do the small things.** Meals, rides, sitting with them an hour. People want to help; they need a task.

03 Respite that actually exists pick one and use it this month

- ☐ **Adult day programs** — often the most underused resource there is. A full day, structured and safe, so you can work or breathe.
- ☐ **In-home respite care** — a few hours of paid help; sometimes covered by benefits you haven't checked yet.
- ☐ **One trusted person, two hours** — the smallest real break. Schedule it like an appointment, because it is one.

One promise to make yourself

Protect one thing that is yours — a walk, a service, a phone call with a friend, ten minutes with the door closed. Keeping one thing that is only yours is not selfish. It is the thread that keeps you whole enough to do the rest.

Two different kinds of help — and it's worth knowing which is which

For finding local respite, benefits, and a workable care plan, **a consultation with Ginell Butler, MAASM, MSA** can lift a real weight. For the heavier stuff — depression, grief, thoughts that frighten you — a doctor or therapist is the right call, and reaching for them is a strength. senioradvocators.org

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