

WHO IS A CAREGIVER?

A caregiver can be a family member, friend or professional who provides physical, financial or emotional support for a relative or loved one whose daily activities are limited by diminished mental or physical function.

Caregivers may live with the elder or live nearby. Some may even live across the country. But no matter where they live, their responsibilities may include providing personal care or finding and managing supplemental care in the local community. They may organize an elder's home health care services, transportation to medical appointments, grocery shopping or other chores, or help manage finances.

People over 85 are the fastest growing segment of our population. And half of them need some help with personal care. For the most part, that care is provided by family members.

Nearly 60 percent of all caregivers today are also employed outside the home. They may lose time at work to cope with health care or other emergencies. It's been estimated that businesses lose upwards of \$11 billion a year due to employees' need to care for a loved one aged 50 or older.

Most adult children do not recognize themselves as caregivers. They accept additional responsibilities as a natural part of their relationship with the older person.

Does this sound like you?

WHAT'S THE CONNECTION?

Connection for Caregivers offers a home on the Internet for people balancing the demands of work and home responsibilities that include elder care. It's informative. It's interactive. And it's free!

The *Connection for Caregivers* offers:

- Live monthly support group offered on line, facilitated by licensed social worker.
- Free online classes to help you cope with your concerns, such as medication, nutrition, elder housing options and how to navigate the maze of aging network resources.
- Ongoing peer support group for informal support from others facing similar challenges, available online anytime, day or night.
- Articles by experts in the "Four Corners" section, featuring four articles each month on medical and legislative issues, ways to maintain your well-being, plus a spotlight on resources available for elders and caregivers. Previous months' articles are archived for easy searching.
- "The Caregivers' Guide," an extensive resource guide for caregivers facing new decisions on behalf of older friends or family members, available to download.
- Calendar of events of interest to caregivers and their families.
- Questions answered by email when you're not sure where else to turn.
- New ideas from you! *Connection for Caregivers* is a community effort. We are always looking for new resources on any aspect of elder care. If you have information that could be helpful to share with others, let us know.

Connection for Caregivers is part of *SeniorConnection*, a website packed with information for anyone dealing with elder service needs. It includes a searchable database with more than 1,700 agencies, programs and services for elders and caregivers, favorite links to useful Internet sources, information about specific services provided by the Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging and its periodic newsletter.



www.SeniorConnection.org
Connection for Caregivers