



# WAYNE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF AGING & YOUTH CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

MONTHLY MEETING: JULY 12, 2023

FACILITATOR: EVONNE D. POMERANTZ

# TODAY'S MEETING AGENDA

- Wayne County Department of Aging & Youth Mission Statement
  - Sharing Success
  - Caregiver's Guilt: What is It?
    - Types of Caregiver Guilt
      - What To Be Careful Of
  - Strategies For Managing Guilt
    - Open floor
  - Next Meeting Information
    - Closing Statement

# WAYNE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF AGING & YOUTH MISSION STATEMENT

The Wayne County Department of Aging and Youth exists to promote the independence, dignity, health, and quality of life of Wayne County residents and their families; to identify and prioritize community needs; and to plan, fund, and administer a coordinated system of services to meet these needs.

## SHARING SUCCESS

Success is the accomplishment of an aim or purpose...


Let's take time to recognize progress, strengths, and positive resolutions!

"Nature has given us all the pieces required to achieve exceptional wellness and health, but has left it to us to put these pieces together."—Diane McLaren

"Don't let yesterday take up too much of today." — Will Rogers

"It's not about better time management time. It's about better life management" — Alexandra of The Productivity Zone

"The most difficult thing is the decision to act, the rest is merely tenacity." —Amelia Earhart



**It doesn't matter  
what others are doing,  
it matters what you  
are doing.**

@weareteachers

## WHAT IS CAREGIVER GUILT?

Caregivers often carry undeserved guilt believing they are not doing enough for their loved ones. This guilt can make a caregivers role more stressful than it already is.

Typically the guilt is due to caregivers inability to meet unrealistic expectations successfully. Caregivers need to set realistic expectations, be forgiving of themselves, and it is important they recognize when they feel guilt as it can impact their own health and the care they are trying to provide!

# TYPES OF CAREGIVER GUILT

## FIVE AREAS OF CAREGIVER GUILT:

### 1. Guilt about doing wrong by the care recipient

Caregivers may replay incidents, wondering how they could have shown more patience, love, or how they could have made a decision that may have avoided an accident or injury.

### 2. Guilt about not rising to the occasion as a caregiver

Some caregivers balance multiple roles (spouses, parents, employees). This can leave caregivers wondering whether they're making their loved one in need of care enough of a priority.

### 3. Guilt about self-care

Self-care can take a back seat. Neglect of one's health, struggles with stress management, and letting social activities go to the wayside can all play into feelings of guilt.

### 4. Guilt about neglecting other relatives

When stretched thin by caregiving, caregivers may also find that they're missing out on time with their spouse, children, and others important to them.

### 5. Guilt about having negative feelings towards other people

Caregivers who strive to keep a positive mindset may struggle with guilt over feelings of anger or frustration with others who could have taken responsibility for their loved one, but didn't rise to the occasion.

## WHAT TO BE CAREFUL OF

The emotional load: Guilt is a bad feeling. It can occur for various reasons. Guilt can be a sign that you have acted against your values. You can also feel guilt when someone has expectations of you that you don't want to meet. Guilt may be connected to past ideas about what you are "supposed" to do or it may be connected to some standard you have set for yourself. Guilt may be connected to something you may think others expect.

Notice when someone is placing a guilt trip on you. For example; giving or getting "puppy dog eyes," or "the silent treatment" or pressuring you to do what they want. Even when someone lays a guilt trip on you, you can control how you respond. Call out a guilt trip to get a better balance in a relationship. Guilt may be connected to a sense of duty. Guilt may arise when you reach your caregiving limits.

Take charge, make wise decisions and avoid guilt. When you listen to your conscious and do what you know is right for you, guilt will not haunt you. Decide what you think is best for you and other's expectations will not cause you guilt. You may feel regret that you are not able to do what they want but you won't feel guilty.

Expect that the caregiving needs will change with time. The care needs often rise with time and as illness progresses. You may find that you are no longer able to manage the new care needs. It is OK to make changes in your role to fit what you can manage because of these changes.

Guilt can have a negative impact on your health such as elevated blood pressure, increased stress hormones, symptoms of depression, and insomnia.

# STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING GUILT

Strategies for managing guilt and how to use those feelings to improve your situation:

- Notice and admit when you feel guilty.
- Fight any urge to pass judgement on yourself for guilty feelings.
- Use guilt to help adjust your behavior and inform your choices.
- Watch out for feeling guilty as a caregiver. Make time to care for you.
- Watch out for tension among your competing values.
- If you have done nothing wrong, lay down any defenses.
- Remember that it is not selfish to care for yourself.
- Stay aware of “shoulda..., woulda..., coulda...,” type thoughts.
- Replace the word “guilt” with “regret” and express feelings of regret out loud. For example, “I regret that I have reached my limit. I need some help, now.”
- Watch out for negative self-talk.
- Own your choices and say you are sorry if you need to make amends.
- Survey home help company costs. Remember you have choices!
- Ask yourself if you are taking too much control or doing too much.
- Avoid guilt. Plan for future care needs. Discuss and file legal forms.
- Seek help from social workers, other experts, family and friends.



# TYPES OF CAREGIVING

There are many types of caregiving that can be hired out if you have the resources such as:

- Home health care which can include a range of responsibilities, such as nursing assistance for wound or medication management, help with bathing and dressing. Responsibilities vary and is important for the home health care worker to be aware of your loved ones diagnosis/illness, strengths and weaknesses.
- Professional caregivers can help with tasks of daily living. Some home care agencies also offer companion services for older adults to keep them socially active in their community or stay connected to their family.
- Respite Care Service provides short-term relief for caregivers. It can be arranged for just an afternoon or for several days or weeks. Care can be provided at home, in a healthcare facility, or at an adult day center.
- After Surgery Care aka wound care is arranged prior to discharge from hospital/surgery. This nurse will visit you to make sure your wound is healing properly, does not look infected, check any drains or IVs that are left in place, follow any post-op orders that are given for blood drawing, wound care and drain care and teach a family member how to do as much of your care (that can be safely done) as possible.
- Transportation Support can come from local agencies if you or your loved one lack the ability to transport or do not have the correct type of vehicle/equipment to transport. Typically it might come with a fee. Some insurances could help with costs and they might have limits on how many a year you can utilize. Some places provide seniors/disabled vouchers so always look into local agencies nearest you to find out what is offered.

# OPEN FLOOR

Let yourself talk about what matters. This is a time to discuss something we have faced or we want to change. Change is not possible without recognizing the issues.

Here we will provide a space for healing, reflection, respectful expression of emotion, and garnering of hope for our caregiver members.

Open Floor is intended to forge connections between us and build a community where each participant has an opportunity to speak in a supportive and open environment so we may obtain suggestions, ideas or just a listening ear.



## NEXT MEETING

When: August 9, 2023

Time: 12:30-1:30pm

Topic: Let's discuss some topics your are interested in, so that we may coordinate future meetings around those! Drop me suggestions!

Contact: (315) 946-5624 M-F 8-4pm or  
[Epomerantz@co.wayne.ny.us](mailto:Epomerantz@co.wayne.ny.us)

# Caregiver Affirmation

## The Caregiver's Daily Affirmations

I care for others with patience, love and kindness.

I live with courage and grace.

I don't have to do it all.

I let go of the things I cannot change.

I accept myself and others without judgment.

I make progress every day whether I see it or not.

I care for myself with dignity, love and respect.

I am not alone.

I am capable.

