

## Care for the caregiver

The caregiver plays a key role in the patient's care. Good and reliable support is vital to the physical, psychological, social, spiritual and emotional wellbeing of people with cancer as cancer diagnosis is a life-changing experience. However, it is common for caregivers to feel stressed and overwhelmed at this time. Like your loved one, you probably have many feelings while you take care of them. There is no right or wrong way for you to feel as each person is different.

### ***What you can do***

The first step to understand your feelings is to know that they are normal. Give yourself some time to think through them. Some feelings that may come and go are: sadness, anger, guilt, grief, loneliness, and anxiety. Talk with someone if your feelings get in the way of your daily life. Seek out a family member, friend, spiritual leader or a counsellor to talk to.



Other things you may do that may be helpful:

- Let go of things that are not essential for you to do. Share or give out tasks to others so that you can focus on what is most important.
- Involve other family members or even close friends of your loved one, in the care giving role if possible
- Get respite help from hospices, nursing homes or other community organizations
- Join support groups
- Look for positive and good things in life, even when you are busy providing care. This helps you to feel and cope better.
- Write down your feelings in a journal. This can help relieve negative thoughts.
- Keep up with your own health and medical needs.
- Eat healthy meals and get enough rest. Take short naps during the day if caregiving requires you to stay up during the night.
- Make time for yourself to exercise, relax, and take a break.

### ***When to call your cancer care team***

If you find that it is difficult for you to provide caregiving, or if negative feelings are getting in the way of your daily life, speak to a counsellor or social worker. If your loved one is a patient with NCCS, you may call **+65 6436 8417** or **+65 64368088** to book an appointment to speak to an NCCS medical social worker or clinical psychologist.

### ***Useful resources***

- Agency of Integrated Care – For Seniors & caregivers  
<https://www.aic.sg/for-seniors-and-caregivers>
- NIH National Cancer Institute – Caring for the caregiver  
<https://www.cancer.gov/publications/patient-education/caring-for-the-caregiver>
- Help for Cancer Caregivers  
<https://www.helpforcancercaregivers.org/>

*The above contents are made available as part of TEMASEK FOUNDATION – ACCESS (Accessible Cancer Care to Enable Support for Survivors) PROGRAMME, a holistic care programme to support cancer patients during their care and recovery journey.*

*The contents have been approved by the Cancer Education Information Service, National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS), for people with cancer and their families and caregivers. However, this information serves only as a guide and should not be used as a substitute for medical diagnosis, treatment or advice. For specific medical conditions, please seek expert medical advice from your healthcare team.*

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