



# March 2021: Avoiding Caregiver Burnout

**MINES  
& ASSOCIATES**  
*A National Business Psychology Firm*



***“Compassion brings us to a stop, and for a moment we rise above ourselves.” — Mason Cooley***

Welcome to the March 2021 edition of **TotalWellbeing**, your guide to the **8 dimensions of wellbeing**. This month’s topic is centered around caregivers. According to a recent study, approximately 44 million caregivers have provided unpaid care to an adult or child in the last 12 months. Not only do these individuals go unpaid since they are usually caring for family or friends, but they are often paying out of their own pocket for supplies, transportation, and lost wages due to missed work in the line of caregiver duty. This is on top of the already mentally and emotionally exhausting work they do every day, so it is easy to see how burnout can be a very serious issue. Selfcare and the support of their loved ones (and even employers) are crucial elements.

If you yourself are a caregiver, we say **“Thank You!”** and please reach out to us if we can help support you in any way. And if you know someone who is a caregiver, please reach out to see how you might support them, even in little ways, to make a big difference. See below for some tips on both self-care as a caregiver or for ways you can help support the caregivers in your life.

Please remember that your EAP is here for you to provide a variety of resources to manage stress and burnout and we even have caregiver-specific resources and training. You have access to free and confidential

## ***This Month’s Focus***

### ***Free Webinar:***

[Stress Relief for Caregivers](#)

### ***MINESblog:***

[New to TW? Check out our past Blogs!](#)

[Pandemic Fatigue](#)

[Thank You Caregivers!](#)

### ***Important Links***

[COVID19 Resource Page](#)

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[MINES and Associates](#)

[Current Training Catalog](#)

[Balanced Living Magazine](#)

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counseling, wellness coaching, work/life balance tools, and more plus an online resource library full of proactive self-help tools! Visit [PersonalAdvantage](#) for helpful articles, tips, health assessments, stress tests, and more!

To your total wellbeing,  
The MINES Team

## ***Caring for the Caregiver***

In Oregon, Nicki makes weekly phone calls to her sister Rebecca, who has Alzheimer's. Rebecca lives 3,000 miles away in New York City. Stephanie and Doug share a New Jersey home with Stephanie's frail mother. They give her round-the-clock aid. And Ruth, who lives in Maryland, does the food shopping and cooking for her neighbor Scott, 93.

These people have one thing in common: They're family caregivers. "Family caregiving is the fastest-growing unpaid and often unacknowledged occupation in this country," says Lorraine Sailor, operations coordinator at Children of Aging Parents, a nonprofit charitable organization based in Levittown, Pa.

### **How to succeed**

These tips are drawn from professional, government, and charitable groups: the American Society on Aging, the Federal Administration on Aging, the Family Caregiver Alliance, Children of Aging Parents, and the National Family Caregivers Association.

### **Don't go it alone**

- Ask others for help. Start with family and friends. Keep less engaged family members informed. Set up a family conference, seek suggestions, and talk about disagreements.
- Ask families with similar problems how they handled them.
- Involve the person you're caring for. If possible, help the person take responsibility and join in decisions.
- Learn about your loved one's condition. Find specialists for information and guidance.
- Tap local, state, and national resources. They can offer help with transportation, nutrition, or daycare.

### **Watch for problems**

- Mental and physical signs of caregiver stress:
- A lot of anger or fear
- A tendency to overreact
- Feeling depressed, isolated, or overburdened
- Thoughts of guilt, shame, or inadequacy
- Taking on more than you can handle

- Headaches
- Digestive upsets
- Weight loss or gain
- Trouble sleeping
- Fatigue
- Illness

[Read more...](#)

Remember, if you or a household member is a caregiver, or know a caregiver, and need support, your employee assistance program is here for you. Resources include free and confidential counseling, self-help tools, trainings, work/life balance tools, and more. **If you need additional information or to access services, please call MINES and Associates at 1-800-873-7138 today.** Also, [PersonalAdvantage](#) has a ton of great resources and FREE [webinars](#).

## *Tips & Self-Care for the Caretaker*

### **Support them**

Caregiving can be a long, difficult road, so it is important that you are prepared and know the best, most practical ways to help and support your loved ones. First, as mentioned above, it is critical that you research their cancer diagnoses, treatment courses, side-effects, and anything else that you may be concerned about. This will help you be a more effective support source. Once you have a better understanding of the situation you can help your loved one seek out the best treatment, with the direction of their doctor of course. Rely on the experts but use your education to ask good questions to manage expectations on treatments and to know when a second opinion on things may be appropriate.

Aside from helping with the logistics of care, you can also make a huge difference by offering help in other areas of their lives. To make things easier, instead of simply telling them that you are there if they need anything, take the burden off of them and offer to do specific things they may need. These can be things like offering to walk their dog, do the dishes, go to the grocery store or pharmacy for them; be specific and timely and you will be a huge help to them without being overwhelming.

### **Support yourself**

Being a caregiver or go-to person for someone with a chronic illness, especially for a loved one, can be extremely draining, both physically and emotionally. It will be critical that you take care of yourself as much as you take care of your loved one. The most common areas where caretakers' wellbeing is affected include; trouble sleeping or finding time to sleep, poor eating habits and lack of meal preparation time resulting in less healthy

diet, lack of time to exercise or lack of motivation to be active, being unable to stay in bed when sick, and also the failure to keep up on their own medical needs and doctors appointments. All of these can be detrimental to your personal wellbeing so it is imperative that you take steps to limit your stress and maximize your self-care as much as you are able. Some ways that you can manage this include asking for help. Don't be afraid to ask others for assistance now and again. Be specific in how they can help you and let them decide what they are willing and able to do for you. Even little things like someone willing to cook a dinner for you or the one you care for once a week can make a big difference.

Sleep is another huge concern. Remember that if you are sleep deprived you not only become a less effective support-giver, but you actually can become a danger to yourself and the ones you care for. Make sure that you are getting adequate sleep. Ways to help with this include setting a maximum amount of time that you can spend with your ill loved one. You may feel the need to be by their side 24/7 but that is just not realistic. Remember that you are human and need to take care of your own needs as well, as much as you would like to be superman. Set sleep goals and take a nap or go to sleep early if you are feeling tired.

[Read more...](#)

### **Question(s) of the Month**

**Are you, or someone you know, a caregiver? If so, what do you (or they) do to care for themselves? What is one way they could use more support, and if it's yourself, what is one thing you could ask from your loved ones to help you practice better self-care?**

### **Training Suggestions to Support This Month's Topic**

Check out these training suggestions that help support caregivers. Use them in a series or by themselves. MINES is always happy to consult on care giver support, stress, and burnout, and suggest trainings that can help in these areas. Check out our training manual [here](#) to see other training offerings:

1. [The Savvy Caregiver](#)
2. [Elder care - Preparing for Caring](#)
3. [Strategies for Caregivers](#)

***If you or a member of your household needs assistance or guidance on any of these wellbeing topics, please call MINES & Associates, your EAP, today for free, confidential, 24/7 assistance at 800.873.7138.***

To access past issues of *TotalWellbeing* please visit our [newsletters page](#). This newsletter is aimed at providing helpful information about various aspects of your wellbeing and then connecting it all back to important and relevant parts of everyday life. If you have any thoughts, questions, or content you would like to see covered here please get in contact with us. You can email us directly by clicking [here](#).

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