

Respite Care

What is Respite Care? It is part of “care for the caregiver!” Respite Care is short-term care provided temporarily so that the caregiver can focus on other things for a while. It can be for a few minutes or days. It depends on the need. Does that sound selfish? Should a caregiver feel guilty about care for themselves? The answer is a definite “NO!” Respite Care is one of the most requested caregiver services. A successful caregiver can not keep up the pace without a break and they require some rest. Even where physical demands are light, mental stresses can take their toll.

Employers have long known that workers are much more productive and less liable to “burn-out” if they have some time off from work. Examples of “Time-off” which Respite Care supports include:

- A caregiver may be exhausted and need a block of time to get rest
- They may need to go shopping or attend to errands.
- They may need a little diversion such as going out to a movie with friends.
- Maybe a Caregiver Support group meeting might be part of the time-off.

One of the keys to successful respite programs is to evaluate what the caregivers needs are and to address them through a planned program. There are different types of respite depending on how much and how often recharge activities are offered. As an example, the Caregiver Support Meeting might fall at lunch time from 11-1pm every Tuesday at the local Area Agency on Aging. Respite Care during those scheduled hours could make attendance possible.

Respite – types

- Respite Care – In-Home

In-home respite care is popular as the care receiver never leaves their familiar surroundings. The In home respite service provider can be a friend, relative or professional. The regular caregiver may not even leave the home, but simply need a block of time to pay the monthly bills and organize the finances periodically. In some States, Medicaid or Medicare may cover part of the expenses.

- Facility Respite Care – specialized

There are many diverse needs and specialized facilities may be available close by to address these requirements. You or your care advisor may be able to tailor a program which can be managed by a facility for a few days or even weeks. These can be non-medical or provide medical components of care and allow an extended break. A caregiver may have a trip or other demand that can be possible with

these services. Often the State Aging Unit or Area Agency on Aging (AAA) can be very helpful in getting the caregiver pointed in the right direction.

- Emergency respite

This is especially effective if the caregiver has already done their research and knows what resources are available when the situation changes for either the caregiver or recipient. Thus, if the caregiver must respond to a different family crisis, they already know who to call. Waiting until a crisis is the worst way to uncover respite options and often the first option found will be the only one chosen as there is no longer any time to evaluate alternatives. Assisted Living, Nursing Homes, and a variety of other provider types can be of help, but know your options ahead of time!

- Companion services

This service type provides a few hours a week of companionship. This does not include homemaker, medical, therapeutic or other services. Companions can be from a regular service provider, civic group, faith-based organization or other trusted source. Examples of activities can be walking, reading aloud, playing cards, watching movies or discussing world events. Sitter services is another keyword for this service type.

- Therapeutic adult day care

This may be offered locally Monday-Friday at a facility away from the home, and are useful if the care receiver has difficulty managing independently. Usually stimulating planned social activities are offered in addition to nutritional meals and snacks. Programs and included services vary and some day care facilities have specialties.

How to arrange Respite Care? Your Area Agency on Aging and Disability (ADRC) may be a big help in sorting through your priorities and the available options. A keyword search using ADRC or Respite may be a good first step. That you have found this article and are reading this is certainly a good sign!

Tags: Respite, Sitter, caregiver, break, rest, breather, hiatus, relief, time off, time out
Timeout

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