

When You Need More Support Than Just a Self-Care Routine

Sometimes when you're a caregiver, a self-care routine isn't enough. If you are feeling stressed in the moment, going for a walk or doing a deep breathing exercise can help you focus and be present. Making small changes to your routine that prioritize your physical, emotional, and mental health is never a bad idea. But when your caregiving duties are leading to [feelings of burnout](#) or affecting your health, you might need more support than just a self-care routine. It's important to know what your options are.

Join a Caregiver Support Group

You might feel like you can't talk about your caregiving challenges with your family and friends because they don't have similar experiences. This can make caregiving feel especially lonely. Joining a [caregiver support group](#) can help you meet other people who understand what you're going through.

There are many kinds of support groups for caregivers. You may find one that meets locally or one that meets virtually online. Some are led by a professional moderator, and some by a peer leader. You can even find a support group that is specific to:

- Your loved one's disease or health condition, such as Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, or cancer
- Your relationship to your loved one (caring for a parent can differ from caring for a spouse)
- Your age, especially if you are a relatively young caregiver

Seeking out new connections, relationships, and even friendships with other caregivers is a big part of caring for yourself and can help you feel less overwhelmed and isolated. Having a space where you can just talk and be yourself can have a huge impact on your mental health and be a major part of your caregiving journey.

Consider Professional Home Care

When you're trying to take care of yourself and a loved one, you may feel like you simply don't have enough time in the day. Especially as your loved one's condition advances – or if they have a relapse or setback – you may find yourself too busy or stressed out to think about yourself. When are you supposed to find time or energy for a self-care routine when your schedule is already packed?

If this sounds like you, it may be time to consider additional care for your loved one. Self-care activities like taking a bubble bath aren't going to help if you're constantly [worrying about your loved one falling](#) or never have a break in your schedule.

Realizing that you need more support can be tough, but professional care can help you with anxious feelings and your busy caregiving schedule – especially as your loved one needs more assistance. You're not a bad caregiver for not being able to do everything. In fact, knowing when you need more support can help you make sure your loved one is getting the best care possible. Even occasional [respite care](#) can give you some time to rest and recharge.

Talk to a Counselor or Therapist

Although a self-care routine can help you handle and recover from everyday stress, you may find yourself with feelings of depression or anxiety that self-care just can't address. If

you are noticing feelings of anxiety, sadness, or worry that just won't go away, you may want to talk to a professional mental health expert like a counselor or therapist.

If you've never talked with a therapist before, you might wonder what they do. A professional therapist or counselor can help you:

- Talk through and understand your emotions
- Develop coping strategies to handle stress in the moment
- Improve your communication and problem-solving skills
- Identify and set boundaries in your caregiving role

Talking to a therapist can be beneficial for anyone. You don't have to have a specific mental health diagnosis for counseling to be a helpful tool in your caregiving toolbelt.

You may be nervous about sharing your feelings, and you're not the only one. Remember that a therapist is trained to help people in tough times. They are there not to judge you but to help you develop strategies and skills that can make life easier.

Schedule – and Attend – Your Annual Wellness Visit

Self-care isn't just about taking care of your mental health. It's about taking care of your physical health too. In fact, many caregivers are so focused on their loved one's health that they neglect their own, often skipping regular appointments and routine screenings.