



## FINDING COMMUNITY RESOURCES

# Taking a Break from Caregiving (Respite Care)

Respite care lets you take a break from caregiving. It may be for a few hours or several days or weeks. Respite care may be provided in the home. Adult day care centers, assisted living centers and nursing homes may also provide respite care.

### Why Is It Important?

Respite care gives you a chance to take care of yourself. It allows you time to take a vacation, shop or visit friends. Taking care of your own needs will help you be a better caregiver. It can help keep your loved one at home after a stroke.

### What Do You Need to Know?

**First, include your loved one in planning for respite care** – Decide together what help you need. Ask your loved one about having help from others. Would your loved one be comfortable for a short time staying in a care facility?

**Include other family members in the planning** – Give them information. Let everyone express their concerns. Give everyone a chance to help.

**Make a plan for your loved one's future** – Plan for emergencies before you need help.

**Create a care team to help with your loved one's needs** – The team may include professionals hired to help. Use volunteers, family, friends, neighbors and church members.

### Where Can You Get Help?

- Talk with the social worker at your local VA medical center. Each VA has different types of respite care.
- Think about using a geriatric care manager. Geriatric care managers are specialists who plan and manage care for older people. They can assess your loved one's needs. They can arrange for services. Some charge a fee. Contact the National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers.

- Clergy, staff in senior centers and local organizations can help.
- Your local Area Agency on Aging can also help. Find your Area Agency on Aging through the Eldercare Locator.

The "More Resources" section at the end of this fact sheet has the contact information for these resources.

## How Can You Pay for Respite Care?

- The VA may provide free respite care for up to 30 days in a year or more. Contact the social worker in your local VA medical center. The social worker will know if your loved one is eligible for respite care. Some VAs provide free respite care in the Veterans home, in the VA nursing home or in non-VA community centers.
- Some private insurance companies pay for respite care.
- Medicare or Medicaid may pay for respite care.
- You may find other ways to pay for respite care where you live. Check with your local Area Agency on Aging.

## Helpful Tips

- Ask for and accept help. Accepting help can improve everyone's quality of life.
- Screen people before hiring them. Check at least two references before hiring anyone not from an agency. The Family Caregiver Alliance has a "Hiring In-Home Help" fact sheet. Find the link to the fact sheet in the "More Resources" section at the end of this fact sheet.

## Remember

- Respite care can give you a much needed break from caregiving.
- Check with the social worker at your local VA medical center. A number of local VA and community resources are available.
- Plan for respite care before you need it.

## More Resources

The following resources contain internet links. The location of internet pages can change. Therefore the links provided may not always work. For the most current version of this list, go to <http://www.rorc.research.va.gov/rescue/resources>. This page will be updated frequently.

**Link Disclaimer:** Links to information and Web sites outside of the Department of Veterans Affairs do not indicate an endorsement of products or services offered by the sites. In addition, these sites may have privacy and security policies that are inconsistent with those of VA.

### **ARCH National Respite Network**

Web: <http://chtop.org/ARCH.html>

Phone: 1-919-490-5577

ARCH National Respite Network has a database on respite care services available in your area. Go to this link: <http://chtop.org/Search-For-Respite.html>

### **Eldercare Locator**

Web: <http://www.eldercare.gov>

Phone: 1-800-677-1116

The Eldercare Locator can help you find your local Area Agency on Aging (AAA). Your local AAA can help you find resources in your area such as respite care.

### **Family Caregiver Alliance**

Web: <http://www.caregiver.org>

Phone: 1-800-445-8106

The Family Caregiver Alliance provides information, education and services for caregivers. Some information also available in Spanish.

The “Family Care Navigator” tool lists help for family caregivers by state.

[http://caregiver.org/caregiver/jsp/fcn\\_content\\_node.jsp?nodeid=2083](http://caregiver.org/caregiver/jsp/fcn_content_node.jsp?nodeid=2083)

### **My HealthVet**

Web: <http://www.myhealth.va.gov>

My HealthVet has information on VA services, strokes and caregiving.

Also visit the Caregiver Assistance Center on the My HealthVet Web site. This section provides more information on caregiving.

- Go to: <http://www.myhealth.va.gov>
- Click on the button that says “Enter Here”
- Click on “Research Health” on the top bar, then “Healthy Living Centers”
- Click on “Caregiver Assistance”

For more information on stroke caregiving, visit the RESCUE home page:

<http://www.rorc.research.va.gov/rescue>

## National Adult Day Services Association

Web: <http://www.nadsa.org>

Phone: 1-877-745-1440

The National Adult Day Services Association can help you find services in your area. They have an informative guide on respite services. Go to this link:

[http://www.nadsa.org/assets/library/232\\_respitebooklet.pdf](http://www.nadsa.org/assets/library/232_respitebooklet.pdf)

## National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers (NAPGCM)

Web: <http://www.caremanager.org>

Phone: 1-520-881-8008

The National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers can help you find a care manager. To find one near you click on “Find a Care Manager.”

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**References:** Family Caregiver Alliance. (2008). Retrieved July 23, 2008, from: [http://www.caregiver.org/caregiver/jsp/fcn\\_content\\_node.jsp?nodeid=2083](http://www.caregiver.org/caregiver/jsp/fcn_content_node.jsp?nodeid=2083), Houts, P.S. (Ed.). (2004). *Eldercare at home*. (2nd Ed.). New York, New York: The American Geriatric Society for Health in Aging; Connecting for Care. (2008). Retrieved September 23, 2008, from: <http://www.connectingforcare.com> ; National Family Caregivers Association. (2008). Retrieved June 27, 2008, from: <http://www.nfcacares.org/pdfs/ReachOut.pdf>.

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