

# HANDOUT

## For Caregivers/Care Partners

Making changes to your lifestyle can affect those around you. Perhaps they have joined you in your healthy lifestyle journey and have been making changes themselves. Just as making changes may create stress for you, caregivers may also experience stress, though their stress may be different. We encourage you to discuss your needs with those around you and to share this handout with them.



### How to Be Supportive

Research has shown that it's easier for someone to stick with a health plan when they have support.

#### The person you care for knows best what they need.

- Discuss what kind of support they want/need and be open-minded.
- Realize that they may want support from others as well.
- Once you've started the kind of support requested, evaluate how it went and whether or not the strategy should be modified.

Here are some ideas for showing support. But remember, each individual knows best what they need!

- ✓ Be a cheerleader, not a coach. (That's our job.)
- ✓ When they've had a bad day, listen but don't judge; focus on their health, not weight.
- ✓ Let them know you are there for them; do more listening than talking.
- ✓ If desired, create healthy incentives for achieving goals (e.g., spending time together in fun, non-food ways; having a contest to see who can come up with the tastiest and most nutritious new meal or snack ideas—the winner gets out of doing dishes)
- ✓ Offer to be active with them; lead by example (e.g., "Let's do this together.")
- ✓ Start a new activity together.
- ✓ When eating out, suggest restaurants with healthy menu options.
- ✓ For holidays, avoid giving presents with food.
- ✓ Eat and prepare healthy food together.

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## Caregivers/Care Partners: Care for Yourself and Manage Stress

Stress is a normal response for caregivers/care partners. People commonly feel emotional, physical and spiritual stress. Knowing how to deal with caregiver stress is very important to your mental and physical health.

Some common signs of stress include:

Emotional	Behavioral	Physical
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Denial about the situation</li><li>• Anxiety</li><li>• Constantly feeling distracted</li><li>• Anger/Irritability</li><li>• Sadness</li><li>• Guilt</li><li>• Lack of concentration/memory problems</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Excessive or inappropriate alcohol or drug use</li><li>• Impulsiveness/acting without thinking</li><li>• Withdrawing from others</li><li>• Inability to keep a job</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stomach/digestive problems</li><li>• Stress headaches</li><li>• Problems sleeping</li><li>• Weight gain or dramatic weight loss</li><li>• Chronic or constant fatigue, back or neck pain</li></ul>

**Though you may feel overwhelmed at times, there are ways to cope.**

(Many of these are the same strategies our program teaches for a healthy lifestyle!)

- Keep a positive attitude
- Get enough sleep and eat nutritious meals
- Avoid alcohol, drugs, and nicotine
- Set realistic goals for yourself
- Seek support from trusted family and friends
- Realize that you can't control certain things
- Use relaxation techniques (breathing exercises, meditation)
- Stay hopeful
- Exercise regularly



If you have questions regarding caregiver stress or ways to successfully begin a healthy lifestyle program together, please reach out to your coach!