

# CAREGIVERS

## Veterans & Family Support South Dakota

**National Caregivers Day –  
February 20, 2026**

**Month of the Military Caregiver –  
November 2025**



Caregiver duties and responsibilities can include:

1. Assisting with personal care: bathing and grooming, dressing, toileting, and exercise
2. Basic food preparation: preparing meals, shopping, housekeeping, laundry and other errands
3. General health care: overseeing medication and prescriptions usage, appointment reminders and administering medicine
4. Mobility assistance: help with getting in and out of a wheelchair, car or shower
5. Personal supervision: providing constant companionship and general supervision
6. Transportation: driving to and from activities, running errands, and help getting in and out of wheelchair-accessible vehicle
7. Emotional support: being a stable companion and supporter in all matters personal, health-related and emotional
8. Care for the elderly: orienting or grounding someone with Alzheimer's disease or dementia, relaying information from a doctor to family members
9. Back-up care (or respite) services: providing other caregivers a break
10. Home organization: help with organizing, packing or cleaning for a trip, or general house care and cleaning
11. Health monitoring: following a care plan and noticing any changes in the individual's health, recording and reporting any differences

No matter how much love is between a caregiver and an individual, caregiving isn't an easy job – and it only gets harder as recipients get older. More than ½ of caregivers say the role takes a toll on their jobs, and more than 75% say it takes a toll on their family lives. Almost all caregivers have experienced anxiety or irritability stemming from their roles, and they say it's a very demanding job.

Most have no idea how being a caregiver would infringe on her/his day-to-day life as much as it has. The responsibility as a caregiver, the expectations are pretty high.

You can no longer do everything you want, such as leave the house at a moment's notice. It is like you have lost a sense of privacy.

Caregiving can take both physical and psychological tolls on anyone, and many caregivers experience symptoms consistent with depression. Overwhelmed with their responsibilities, many caregivers forget to take time for themselves, which can lead to caregiver burnout. A caregiver burnout is hard to predict because no two caregiving roles are the same.

## **What are the benefits of caregiving?**

Caregivers take the struggle out of the everyday routine, eliminating challenges and boosting independence. While it's not an easy job, being a support system for you loved one is rewarding purely because she's caring for someone you love.

The companionship, the feeling of being needed and wanted, and the love between family members are what keep you happy in your role as his caregiver. Being able to see the positives in a caregiving role is part of what allows many caregivers to be satisfied and find pride in their jobs. Giving back to someone else is gratifying, and often caregiving gives peoples lives meaning and helps them feel successful.

## **Caregiving**

These special days are not federal holidays and you will continue to work, they are days to raise awareness of Wounded Warriors, veterans with service-connected and non-service connected disabilities, family members and friends and the people who care for them.

During the Month of November, the Department of Veterans Affairs "takes time to honor and thank" the millions of family caregivers and those they serve. It is a very important time for these under-recognized people, and they deserve their own special recognition.

Month and days of the Caregiver share the goal of raising awareness, sharing resources, and reminding us that this vital community needs support.

## **Honoring The Caregiver**

There may be no ticker-tape parades or major league sporting event half-time ceremonies dedicated to caregivers, but there are plenty of ways to show your support during the year. One particularly helpful way to show support is to volunteer by helping a caregiver in your circle of friends and family.

Assisting an existing caregiver isn't just about giving a few days of rest and time away from the daily responsibilities required; it's also about morale of all involved and fostering a sense of community with the patients and care providers.

Even if you have no training in medical needs, you can make a difference for a caregiver since many tasks don't require medical skills or training.

Some ideas of ways to help caregivers:

- Grocery Shopping

- Drive to appointments

- Drive to bank

Meal Prep

Give the caregiver a pass to get out of the house for a few hours while you stay there (Give them a much needed break)

Go and visit the caregiver/family and just let them vent

Show up for them

Listen

Help with day-to-day

Offer financial support

Help with chores

Provide emotional and social support

Negotiate time to check in on them (caregiver)

Make sure they are managing their own health care needs

There are many ways to help out and reduce the daily to-do list for someone who provides these critical services.

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### **Military Caregiver Resources**

There are plenty of government resources available for caregivers; you may not be one yourself at the time you read this, but knowing the needs and services available may be a source of motivation to get involved-the need is great, and every volunteer effort helps.

### **The VA Caregiver Support Line**

The VA Caregiver Support Line is 1-855-260-3274, and is designed to help with resources, advice, and networking. All care providers are welcome to dial in to monthly telephone education groups, ask questions, and get help with self-care.

### **VA Peer Support Mentoring**

Caregivers are invited to take part in the VA's peer support mentoring outreach; you may take part as either a mentor or as someone in need of one. This kind of support generally lasts approximately six months, but there are one-time mentoring opportunities under this program, too. Communication between mentor and learner is facilitated by whatever method works best for all involved-you can discuss care giving issues by phone, email, even regular mail.

### **Caring For Seriously Injured Post-9/11 Veterans**

Some VA caregiver support programs are open to all regardless of what era their clients have served in, but the [\*\*VA Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers\*\*](#) program offers support for those providing care for veterans with serious injuries who have served on or after 9/11.

Through VA Comprehensive Assistance, the government provides approved caregivers support options including a monthly stipend, respite care, payment of approved travel expenses, health insurance, and mental health services.

### **Family Caregiver Alliance**

<https://www.caregiver.org/connecting-caregivers/support-groups/>

### **Caregiving Resource Center**

<https://www.caring.com/caregivers/>