

HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CAREGIVER

ADVICE FROM PEOPLE LIVING WITH EARLY STAGE ALZHEIMER'S OR OTHER DEMENTIA.

Having Alzheimer's Disease or a Related Dementia is hard. Being a caregiver can be even more difficult. We hope this handout will help inspire others to do what they can to make the caregiver's experience a bit easier.

WHAT CAN PEOPLE WITH ALZHEIMER'S OR ANOTHER DEMENTIA DO TO SUPPORT THEIR CAREGIVER(S)?

Make a conscious decision to **say "thank you" often!**

Make sure your caregiver has their own support system. Inspire your family and friends to support your caregiver by spending time with them. Socializing, walks, movies, getting a meal out, etc. are all a much needed break!

Spend time with your caregiver doing something **they** enjoy, even if it is not something you necessarily love to do.

Encourage your caregiver to enjoy outside interests and to continue to pursue them early on, before they feel like they "need" a break. Let them know it is okay to do things separate from you. If they worry about you, plan an activity with someone yourself (and let them know), to **relieve their worry.**

We do not know all of what is going on with our caregiver(s). **Do your best** to support your caregiver in ways that are meaningful to them. **Encourage** your caregiver to take good care of themselves.

WHAT CAN FAMILY AND FRIENDS DO TO SUPPORT A CAREGIVER?

Send notes and emails, make calls, and check in with the caregiver regularly. **Do not wait** for them to reach out.

Be specific when reaching out to a caregiver: "I'm free on Wednesday, let's set a date to meet for lunch" is much better than "let me know if I can do anything."

Make a regular "date" to spend time with the caregiver. If you are a couple, maybe one person can spend time with the person diagnosed, while the other spends time with the caregiver.

If you think the person with Alzheimer's seems to be "doing great," do not assume the caregiver wouldn't benefit from a break. Even when their loved one is in the early stages, the caregiver needs time for themselves.

Sometimes the best thing you can do for a caregiver is to **offer** to do something with the person with Alzheimer's while they take a break. Whether this is for a few hours or a few days, knowing their loved one with Alzheimer's disease has a friend to do things with and is available if help is needed can bring peace of mind, and **give them a much needed break.**

This document was created by Angela, Cece, James, Leslie, Pam and Paul. We are all living with Alzheimer's disease or another dementia. We strive to raise awareness in a way that benefits professionals as well as caregivers, and others living with a dementia diagnosis.

