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ADVOCACY SLIDE DECK

SERIES 4

Information for Caregivers

Have you agreed to be a caregiver for someone you care about who is living with metastatic breast cancer?

A caregiver may have many duties, including

- Coordinating transportation, needed care and services
- Helping with activities of daily living
- Accompanying family or loved ones to medical appointments
- Preparing meals
- Offering emotional support
- Assisting with family responsibilities
- Assisting with paperwork and knowing where it is, i.e. insurance coverage, medical bills, Advanced Health Care Directive, power(s) of attorney

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Caregivers may have access to protections and benefits, including:

- Protection against discrimination at work for being a caregiver through the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and state fair employment laws
- Federal and state job-protected time off, state and local paid and unpaid leave
- Employer leave programs, including paid time off and co-worker donations of leave
- State Medicaid home care programs to get paid as a family caregiver
- Respite care programs for caregivers, including state or local programs and long-term care insurance

More information can be found at TriageCancer.org/Guide-Caregiver
and at the resources linked through the QR Code listed at the end of the presentation.

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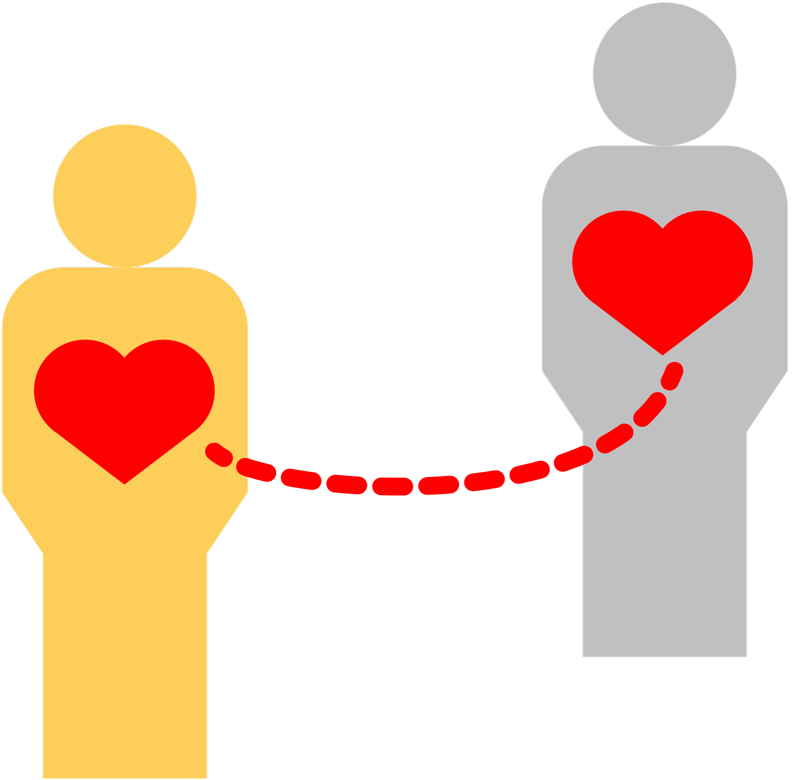
Taking Care of the Caregiver

While your heart is in the right place as a caregiver, it is important for caregivers to take care of themselves, too.

WHY?

Caregivers may focus on the needs of their loved ones or friends who have MBC and might neglect their own needs.



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Emotions Emerge During Caregiving

As time passes, you may begin to have strong feelings associated with this new role and the changing needs of your loved one.

Some common emotional reactions of caregivers include:

1. **Anger** - aimed at yourself, family members, or the person you are caring for
2. **Grief** - because of what is happening to your loved one's health or the time you had before becoming their caregiver
3. **Loneliness** – missing out on the life you had before, or the perception that no one understands what you are going through as a caregiver
4. **Fear** – about the responsibilities you have taken on and/or concerning the loss of your loved one

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Source: https://www.mbcalliance.org/projects/here-all-year/caregivers-and-mbc/

Addressing Caregiver Emotions

While such strong feelings are common, what can you do?

- Realize that you are not alone.
- Talk with a family member, friend, or spiritual leader.
- **Your doctor, a social worker or a peer support group may also help.**
- **Ask for, and accept help with caregiving duties.** More help will also benefit your loved one who is ill. Some people may not be able to help, but others will.
- Find resources that may help, such as those at the National Alliance for Caregiving (www.caregiving.org/resources).

Healing Strategies for Caregivers

Actions for Life Balance

- Keep up with your interests. It is important to maintain your own pleasurable activities
- Doing something you like to do each day, no matter how small
- Connecting with friends, exercise, playing with kids or pets, walking, gardening, pursuing a hobby
- Whatever you do, don’t neglect yourself!
- Consider joining a Caregiver Support Group so you connect with other caregivers and share ideas

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Healing Strategies for Caregivers

Actions for your Body and Spirit

- Maintaining your health check-ups
- Not skipping meals
- Taking prescribed medicines
- Getting adequate sleep
- Taking time to relax, rest, and consider meditation or yoga

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Caregiver Voice

As a caregiver, I find myself in a position I never anticipated. My wife was diagnosed with MBC in 2015. Initially, my role was more intense because the impact of her treatment on her—Taxol in particular. Through the years, I've tried to lighten her load around the house as well as go to medical appointments as needed. Because my wife is a strong, independent person, giving up duties is not easy. I believe she sees it as a loss.

My wife is my life, and I will do whatever I can to care for her, but I do not want to make her feel she can't do things on her own. As her caregiver, I feel it is my responsibility to take on that daily load on, day-by-day, as she feels it is time to relinquish things. She is a beautiful, strong, independent, and intelligent woman who wants to control her daily life as long as she is able.

It is my responsibility to care for her as she would me.

John,
Caregiver

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THANK YOU! **Questions?**

For more information and specific sources, visit:
https://mbcalliance.org/asd-series4

› MBCAlliance.org