

## How You Can Support a Family Caregiver

The five ways to support a family caregiver can be viewed as a step ladder, with each step requiring a little more investment from you. Please know that whatever you do for support — whether acknowledging, affirming, allowing, asking, or acting — your concern will demonstrate empathy for both the family caregiver as well as their loved one.



If you know a family caregiver and are aware of their situation, you may not know how to help. Although you may not be able to “fix” the situation, you can certainly offer meaningful support. Use this tool to identify steps you can take to better support the family caregiver you know.

## ACKNOWLEDGE

Family caregivers are rarely acknowledged. For this reason, when someone acknowledges them, it is significant. Acknowledging the family caregiver reduces the sense of invisibility that can hover over those who selflessly serve in the role.

**How can you acknowledge the efforts of your caregiver?**

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## AFFIRM

Affirming the importance of the family caregiver validates efforts made on behalf of a loved one. Family caregivers usually serve out of love and duty, expecting nothing in return. However, affirmation of their invaluable service is usually appreciated.

**What specifically would you say to affirm your caregiver’s important role?**

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## ALLOW

Due to the constant focus on a loved one’s condition, family caregivers can become bottled up emotionally or physically. If you, without judgment, allow a family caregiver to share how they feel or do something for themselves, it’s a great way to offer relief.

**What would be required to allow your caregiver a “safe space” to express feelings or take time for themselves?**

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## ASK

Ask how you can help. Some family caregivers may consider your question to be a token gesture. But if you ask sincerely, without being overbearing, they will understand that you’re genuinely interested in helping, which may open a dialogue about their needs.

**Honestly and without judgment, how would you ask your caregiver how to help?**

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## ACT

If you’ve asked the family caregiver what you can do and they’ve given you the answer, then act by following through on that request. By acting in accordance with their specific request for help, you’re showing respect for their situation, their decisions, and their family.

**How can you act to deliver the help requested by your family caregiver?**

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