

# Charting Your Caregiving Experience

Charting your caregiving experience in the format of an XY graph can be insightful. Here's how to do it.

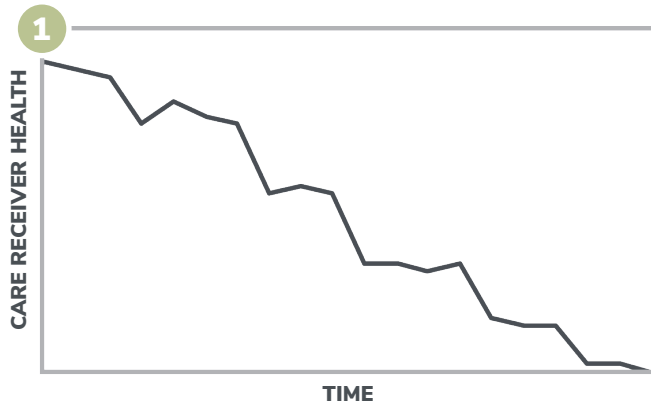
Begin by labeling the X (horizontal) axis "time." Then label the Y (vertical) axis "care receiver health." Chart #1 illustrates how a representative care receiver's health declines slowly over the course of time until end of life.

Next, add another label to the Y axis called "caregiving intensity," which describes the needs of the care receiver and corresponding supports that must be provided. Note that caregiving intensity is inversely related to the health condition of the care receiver, as reflected in Chart #2 (common in senescence or dementia), #3 (more common in cancer), and #4 (typical in cases of heart or lung failure).

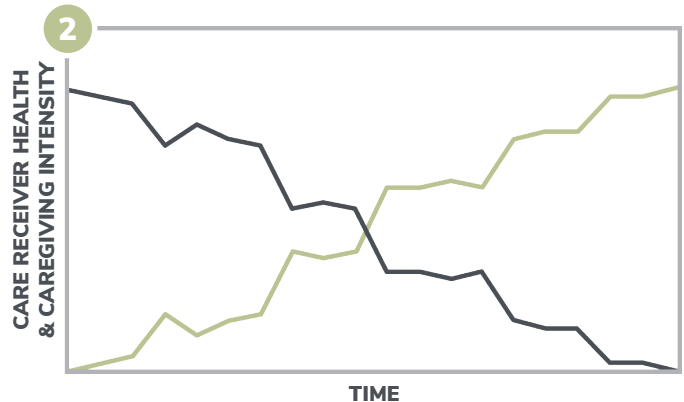
## How to Chart Your Caregiving Experience: Insights on the Dynamics of Care



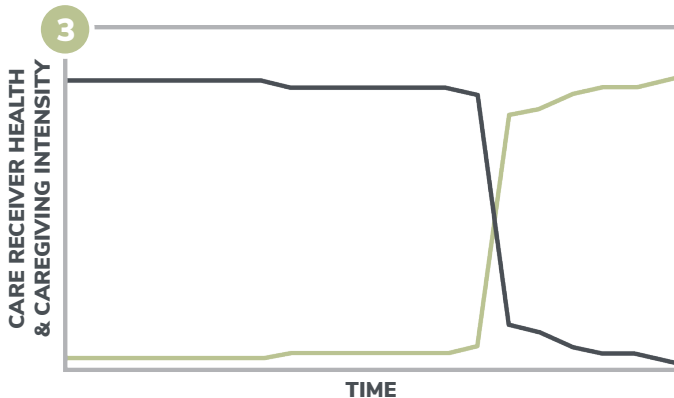
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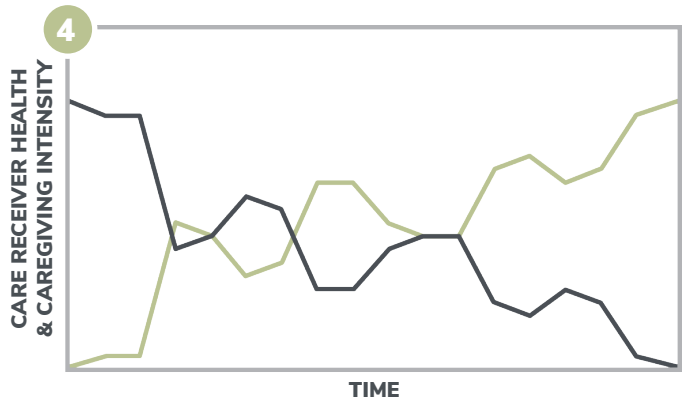
Care receiver with a chronic or degenerative condition, whose health is marked by ups and downs over time while slowly but steadily moving toward end of life.



The inverse relationship between the care receiver's health condition and caregiving intensity. When the care receiver's health is high, caregiving intensity is low. As the care receiver's health decreases over time, caregiving intensity must increase to a corresponding degree.



Care receiver who was relatively healthy and faces death quickly after the sudden onset of a terminal illness.



Care receiver who experiences intermittent, life-threatening episodes of acute sickness, followed by recurring recoveries, up through end of life.

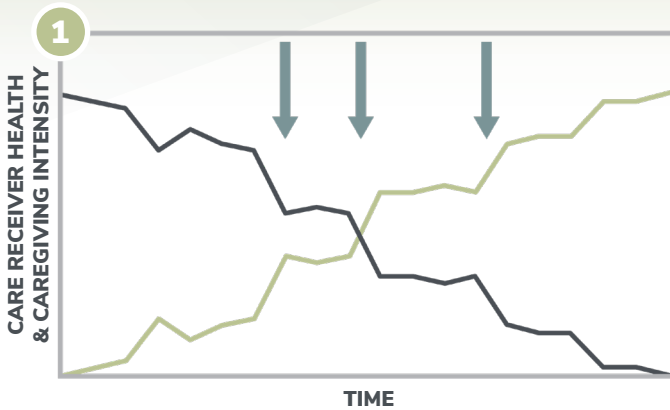
— CAREGIVING INTENSITY  
— CARE RECEIVER HEALTH



# How to Know When Caregiving Experience Requires a Change in Your Thinking

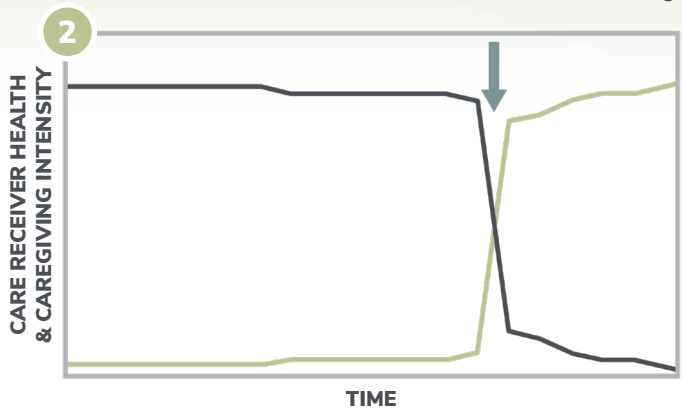


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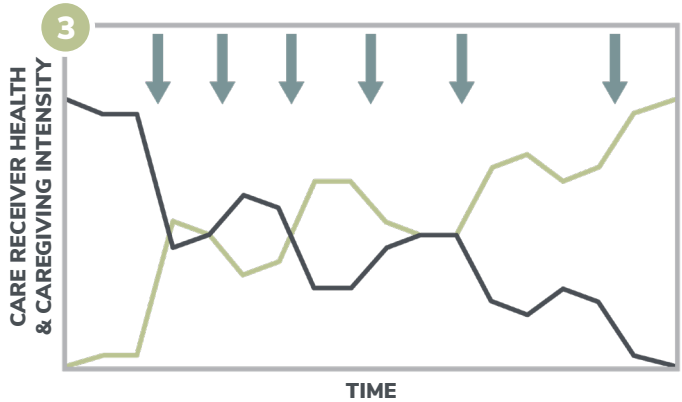


Care receiver who is experiencing health-related challenges incidental to old age and frailty. This care receiver's health follows a course of slow but steady decline, marked by occasional periods of acute care needs shown by the slope of lines representing care receiver health and caregiving intensity.

— CAREGIVING INTENSITY  
— CARE RECEIVER HEALTH



Care receiver who was relatively healthy and faces death quickly after the sudden onset of a terminal illness. The dramatic change in the slope of the lines representing care receiver health and caregiving intensity suggest that the caregiver is forced to make major unexpected adjustments to a new reality defined by a life-threatening health condition.



Care receiver who experiences intermittent, life-threatening episodes of acute sickness, followed by recurring recoveries, up through end of life.

## Chart Your Own Experience

Add an arrow at each interval where you see a heavily sloped line. These inflection points of change may require adjustments to your ways of thinking about the caregiving experience.

