

# Caregiver Respite Action Plan

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## What is respite?

- Respite can be thought of as a break between the caregiver and the care recipient.
- This break can be formal – through an agency, for example – or informal – through a friend or family member.
- The amount and length of time needed for respite depends on individual needs.
- Sometimes, we know enough about ourselves to seek respite ourselves while others might begin to consider respite only after an outsider – such as a physician or friend – mentions the caregiver could use a break.

## What personal strengths have assisted you on your caregiver journey thus far? (Circle/Highlight/Underline yours below)

**Resilience:** *“I can land on my feet.”*

**Patience:** *“I can accept delay without getting upset.”*

**Flexibility:** *“I am ready and able to change course in the moment.”*

**Confidence:** *“I’m sure of my abilities.”*

**Optimism:** *“I expect a favorable outcome.”*

**Humor:** *“I can see and appreciate what’s funny in a given situation.”*

**Compassion:** *“I want to alleviate suffering.”*

**Other strengths:**

What gets in the way of seeking respite? (Circle/Highlight/Underline yours below)

Intense feelings of guilt

- “I just can’t dump them somewhere.” Or “I’d hate to give the impression I think my loved one is a burden.”

Discomfort with asking for help

- “Everyone’s just so busy with their own lives.”

Feeling overwhelmed

- “There’s so many agencies and ideas, and I have no idea where to begin, so I just keep going.”

Poorly defined goals

- “I’ll get some help one of these days.”

Goals dependent on another person changing

- “Once my sister comes to her senses, she’ll help me out more.”

A general tendency to over-commit

- “I just have so much going on already, I can’t imagine adding another thing.”

Comparison to others

- “My friend, Bonnie, took care of her husband for three years before he passed away, so I should be able to handle all of this myself.”

Other:

**If I had some help, then I could (Circle/Highlight/Underline yours below):**

- Rest and relax
- Go on a vacation
- Spend time doing something I enjoy
- Attend to my own health needs more
- Spend more *quality* time with my loved one
- Give other people the opportunity to do something nice
- Reduce my stress load
- Other:

**What are my additional needs?**

Transportation

Meal Preparation

Childcare

Grocery Shopping

Cleaning the House

Keeping Family/Friends  
Informed

Giving Medications

Managing Finances

Laundry

Prescriptions

Companionship

Pet Care

Managing Symptoms or Side  
Effects of Medication

Handling Insurance Issues

Advance Directives/POA

## A SMART Respite Plan

- SMART goals are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely
- A non-SMART goal: I want to get more respite.
- A SMART goal: Starting next week and extending into the future, I would like to find an agency who can send someone to spend time with my loved one over a four-hour period each week.

## Your Turn!

My caregiver respite goal:

My first step is to:

I'll have that done by (set a date for your goal):

*Example: My first step is to call my local Area Agency on Aging and find out what services are available. I will do that by one week from today.*

My second step is to:

I'll have that done by (set a date for your goal):

*Example: My second step is to call three of the options I come up with and decide which one I'd like to pursue. I will do that by two weeks from today.*

My third step is to:

I'll have that done by (set a date for your goal):

*Example: My third step is to schedule the respite and decide what I would like to do with my time. I will do that two days before the scheduled respite date.*

## I know this will help me in the following ways (Check all that apply):

\_\_\_\_\_ I will feel accomplished

\_\_\_\_\_ I will have more time freed up for other things

\_\_\_\_\_ I will feel relieved

\_\_\_\_\_ I will be more organized and focused

\_\_\_\_\_ Other: