

Shiley-Marcos Alzheimer's Disease Research Center Caregiver's Wish List

The caregivers' support group meeting weekly compiled this list of ideas for friends and family who wish to help alleviate a caregiver's stress.

- Calls to the home that **engage the person with dementia in conversation** are welcome. The person with dementia is stimulated and has human contact; the caregiver has some private time.
- Call the caregiver and **make an appointment to take the person with dementia for a few hours**. This scheduled time allows the caregiver to plan a haircut or other personal services.
- Playing games, **looking at photograph albums, or listening to stories** allows the caretaker a break.
- Transportation services are invaluable. Most caregivers are responsible for driving their loved one to all appointments and activities. **There is a huge need for driving help**.
- Take the person with dementia to lunch or **do other activities outside of the home** allowing the caregiver some private time.
- Sustain your friendship with the caregiver and **encourage the caregiver to keep up outside friendships and activities**. The caregiver will need these friends later on too.
- Make it a threesome. When the person with dementia becomes non-communicative, please **take a third friend along to lunch or an outing** making it less stressful on everyone.
- Become the caregiver's "eyes." The simple act of telling the caregiver that you will take responsibility for watching the person with dementia during an outing allows the caregiver to relax for a period. The caregiver is "on guard" 24/7.
- Encourage the caregiver to get **counseling or therapy to alleviate pressure**.
- Encourage the caregiver to **attend a caregiver support group**, the only place where the caregiver is fully understood.
- Suggest a **family meeting** to do short and long term planning.
- Offer to **accompany the person with dementia and caregiver on a trip** or vacation. The details of travel are eased with this support and more fun for the caregiver.
- If the person with dementia is a woman, tell the caregiver that you will **help clean the closet** and make wardrobe decisions.
- Offer "handy man" services. Most caretakers are women who sorely miss their man's knowledge about **home, tools and car repairs**.
- Offer to **be a resource person** – someone to call in an emergency or when the caregiver simply needs a safe place to talk.
- Have **groceries sent to the house** through Amazon Prime or a local grocery store.
- Give a **"Blue Apron" type certificate** to have planned meals delivered to the home.
- Give a **gift certificate for a massage** – it is relaxing and the human touch is so important.