

Being a resilient caregiver in times of transition

Life & Work Connections
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Physical distancing has shaken up our caregiving routines. Our approaches, roles and goals have shifted as we have responded to the new challenges of taking care of our loved ones – parents, siblings, children – during the coronavirus pandemic.

We have dealt with these changes with incredible resilience. With the University now planning a gradual return to campus, let us consider **refreshed guidelines** on caregiving and life-work integration.

Set realistic goals.

Evaluate your caregiving goals while considering your return to campus. Think about the social, emotional and physical needs of your loved one and yourself. Assess what you can do, along with family, friends and community resources, to ensure quality care.

Review information.

Reviewing diagnoses can give you a renewed perspective on care needs. With updated guidance from local, state and national agencies, you may find more insight into caring for your loved one in a time of change. You can also reevaluate service offerings, such as [respite care](#) ^[1] and support groups.

Accept the emotions of your loved ones, and yourself.

Caregiving has always been stressful. Caregiving with physical distancing may have dredged up old emotions or thrown you for a loop with unexpected feelings. Keep conversations going with the people you care for, continue to seek support groups (in person and virtually), and get professional help when you need it.

Ask for help, accept help and trust others.

Previous ideas of "ideal" caregiving may have told you that you had to do it all yourself. Stress and guilt became constant companions on the road to burnout. But there is strength in reaching out to family, friends and community to ensure the best care possible. Be willing to accept help with shopping, meals, cleaning, respite care, etc., if not hands-on care.

Renew a commitment to self-care.

With less access to support during physical distancing, some caregivers have had even less opportunity for self-care – whether remote or under the same roof. You have been creative and quick to act, and you have dealt with profound stress. Short- and long-term approaches to self-care include respite care, meditation, journaling, movement and, of course, pausing to breathe.

Keep conversations going with your loved one, your family and your workplace.

Stay prepared for what lies ahead by keeping discussions open, and continue to use [creative resources for connecting](#) ^[2] while at work. Discuss the feasibility of medical alert systems and ensure that emergency documents will be accessible to whomever is caring for your loved one while you are in the office. Also, talk about your schedule with your supervisor and team. See if you can explore flextime options that help you achieve your caregiving and work goals.

As we emerge from physical distancing, life and work integration is an ongoing exercise of endurance. Caregiving requires constant awareness and communication, which means the return to campus might very well bring questions, cautious steps and complicated emotions.

You don't have to go this alone. Life & Work Connections is here to help you get the answers, plan those steps, and stay positive and balanced.

Eileen Lawless ^[3] is a dependent care adviser at Life & Work Connections, where she provides support and resources to University employees who care for adults from age 18 to end of life. She holds a master's degree in social work from Hunter College and has more than 20 years of experience working in hospice, skilled nursing and assisted living communities. To schedule a virtual consultation for adult or elder care, contact her at elawless@arizona.edu ^[4].

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A [version of this article](#) ^[6] originally appeared on the Life & Work Connections website.

Source URL:<https://uaatwork.arizona.edu/lqp/being-resilient-caregiver-times-transition>

Links

[1] <https://www.pcoa.org/ways-we-help/case-management.html/> [2] <https://uaatwork.arizona.edu/lqp/wfh-how-maintain-powerful-connections-despite-physical-distancing> [3] <http://lifework.arizona.edu/person/eileen-lawless-msw> [4] [http://elawless@arizona.edu](mailto:elawless@arizona.edu) [5] <http://arizona.us9.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=0aeb616343625dbd0d696bf1f&id=de6ad6ff97> [6] <http://lifework.arizona.edu/news/2020/06/resilient-caregiving-times-transition>