

Being a Caregiver Is Challenging

Category: Unsung Heroes

written by Deisha Laksmitha Ayomi | April 25, 2023

Being a caregiver is one of the noblest and most challenging roles a person can take on. It requires compassion, patience, dedication and sacrifice. As a medical doctor, I have observed how caregivers make a huge difference in the lives of my patients, and I always try to take time to listen to their struggle.

Caregivers must assist individuals not only with their basic needs, but also with emotional and mental support. Often, the patient is suffering from an illness, injury, or disability, and it is the caregiver's responsibility to ensure there is comfort, protection and support. In most cases, caregivers spend hours actively listening to the needs of their patients, providing them with companionship, and helping with various non-medical tasks like cooking, shopping and cleaning.

In my years of medical practice, I have observed that caregiving involves a high level of responsibility, which often leads to burnout, depression and anxiety. Compared to other jobs, caregivers put in longer hours, work irregular schedules and have little or no downtime. For instance, a caregiver may be required to get up early, prepare meals, help dress their patient, attend medical appointments, and even work late-night shifts. They also must care for their loved ones' emotional well-being, which can be particularly difficult if the patient's condition is life-threatening or traumatizing. I have known many caregivers who ignored their own needs to stay in hospital 24/7.

An additional challenge I have observed is the financial burden that comes with caregiving. It is common for caregivers to have to leave their full-time jobs to accommodate their patient's needs. The loss of income can create financial stress and uncertainty, particularly if the caregiver has dependents to support. It can also affect social life since the caregiver may have fewer opportunities to socialize and engage in activities that they find enjoyable.

Caregivers play a vital role in the social fabric of society. As such, they should be appreciated and supported with the resources needed to make caregiving a less challenging and more rewarding experience, for both caregiver and patient.

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