

## Caregiver Support Mental Health Information for Caregivers Program in a Box



### Purpose and Justification

Almost a quarter of Americans provide care or assistance to a friend or family member. Caregiving can be rewarding and challenging. This program aims to provide caregivers with essential mental health information and resources to support their well-being and improve their caregiving experience.

Caregivers often face significant mental health challenges as they balance the demands of caregiving with their well-being. These challenges can include stress, burnout, anxiety, and depression. Addressing these issues is crucial for the overall effectiveness of caregiving and the caregivers' mental health.

The program will provide caregivers access to up-to-date and reliable mental health information from respected sources such as the National Library of Medicine (NLM), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and other government agencies. This information is crucial for caregivers to learn strategies to manage these challenges effectively.

By offering active and passive programming, the program ensures that caregivers can access information and support in ways that best fit their schedules and preferences. Your organization can choose either option or both, depending on your resources.

This program contributes to improved caregiver well-being and overall caregiving effectiveness by addressing the mental health needs of caregivers through accessible information and community support. It also helps to bridge gaps in mental health support and resources, ensuring that caregivers have the tools and knowledge needed to thrive in their roles.

**Remember**, the goal of this program is to help people find the information they need by providing access to reliable, evidence-based resources. This program does not offer medical advice or provider recommendations.

### Target Audience

People who provide care for others.

## Program Objectives

- Educate participants on how to locate resources for caregiver mental health.
- Foster a supportive community for caregivers.
- Understand the mental health challenges caregivers face.

## Planning

### Potential Partners

You do not have to go it alone when providing mental health programming. In fact, it's better to partner! Partnering to provide mental health programming amplifies the impact and reach of initiatives by combining the strengths, resources, and expertise of multiple organizations. Collaborative efforts not only broaden access to vital mental health resources but also foster a sense of community support, breaking down stigmas and ensuring that individuals receive comprehensive care and education tailored to their unique needs.

- **Local Libraries:** As hosts and community hubs, libraries can play a central role in organizing and promoting the event.
- **Mental Health Organizations:** Partnering with organizations like NAMI Iowa, local community mental health centers, and Your Life Iowa can provide expertise and resources.
- **Healthcare Providers:** Collaboration with local hospitals, clinics, and individual mental health professionals can offer participants firsthand insights.
- **Educational Institutions:** Schools, colleges, and universities can help reach younger audiences and provide venues.
- **Nonprofits and Community Groups:** Organizations focused on health, wellness, and community support can help with outreach and participation.
- **Faith-Based Organizations:** Churches, synagogues, and other religious institutions often provide mental health support within their communities.
- **Local Public Health Department:** Engaging with local public health departments can enhance the event's reach and effectiveness by integrating public health perspectives and resources.
- **National Alliance on Mental Health, Iowa** - find your local office. NAMI Iowa serves residents across the state with free mental health support, online groups, resources, and education.

**Guest Speakers:** Mental health professionals, including psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, counselors, public health professionals, etc. to provide expert advice and answer questions.

## Active Program: Sharing Resources

This program aims to bring caregivers together and provide them with instruction on online resources to help care for their mental health and well-being. It is an instructor-led presentation and demonstration of health information resources.

### Objectives:

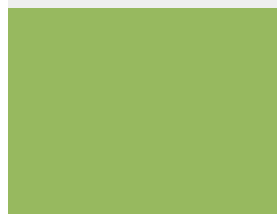
- Understand the mental health challenges caregivers face.
- Learn about mental health resources and strategies for support.

### Outline

- Introduction (5 minutes)
  - Welcome and Introduction:
    - Brief introduction of the presenter and purpose of the session.
    - Overview of the importance of mental health for caregivers.
- Understanding Mental Health for Caregivers (15 minutes) Use the resources to pull out facts and create these slides
  - Common mental health issues faced by caregivers (stress, burnout, anxiety, depression).
  - The impact of caregiving on mental health.
  - Feeling Isolated
- Caring for Your Mental Health: Resources (15 minutes) Select and demonstrate 2-5 sites below. You can include all of them in a handout, but showing all of them will overwhelm attendees.
- Q&A and Discussion (5 minutes)
  - Open the floor for questions and discussions about mental health resources and strategies.
- Share any related upcoming programming.

### Handouts

- Distribute a handout with the links included here and any local resources.
- Provide contact information for local mental health support services.



## Organization

### Event Planning:

- **Timeline:** Start planning at least 4 months in advance.
- **Venue:** Choose a venue with adequate space for the expected audience, accessible to individuals with disabilities.
- **Format:** Decide whether the program will be in-person, virtual, or hybrid. Consider the needs and preferences of the target audience.
- **Speakers:** Invite mental health professionals or experienced speakers to lead discussions and workshops.
- **Materials:** Ensure all necessary materials are prepared in advance, including printouts, digital resources, and promotional items.

### Promotion

Promotion is the key to increasing event attendance. Work with your partners to share information about your program. Some ways to promote your event:

- Social Media Campaign
- Newsletters
- Press Releases
- Word of Mouth
- Flyers
- Handouts

## Day of the Event

1. Have your handouts ready
2. Track attendance, anonymously
3. Don't forget time for Q&A.
4. Feedback Collection: Distribute feedback forms – see evaluation section.

## Post Event Follow-Up

- **Resource Distribution:** Post sources and links on your blog, website, and social media. This lets people who were not able to attend access them and allows attendees who misplace their handouts to locate information later.
- **Survey:** Send out a post-event survey to assess participant satisfaction and gather ideas for future events.
- **Thank You Notes:** Acknowledge the contributions of partners, speakers, and volunteers.



## Passive Program: Caregiver Support Circle

The purpose of this passive programming is to allow caregivers to connect with and support each other. A staff member may coordinate with a guest speaker, provide resource handouts, or a short demonstration of a resource at each meeting.

### Objectives:

- Facilitate the creation of a support network by connecting caregivers with each other and with community resources.
- Enable caregivers to engage with and gain insights from mental health experts through interactive sessions.
- Identify mental health resources and apply strategies for support by exploring available tools and resources.

**Duration:** 1 hour

**Frequency:** Bi-weekly or monthly

### Structure Options:

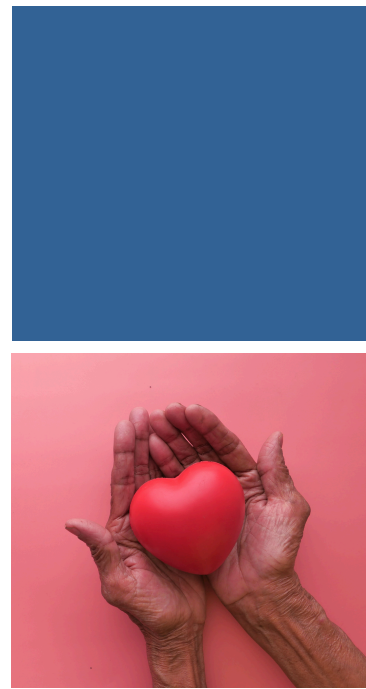
- Group Discussion: Provide information resources as a handout or introductory presentation. Then, allow discussions where caregivers can share experiences, challenges, and coping strategies.
- Expert Q&A Sessions with mental health professionals or experienced caregivers to address questions and provide guidance.

### Handouts

- Distribute a handout with the links included here and any local resources.
- Provide contact information for local mental health support services.

## Evaluation and Impact

- Attendance: Track the number of attendees
- Outcomes: Use a tool like [Project Outcome](#), which is free for public libraries, to track outcomes for the event using print or online surveys.
- Feedback: Use participant and partner feedback to refine future iterations of the program.



## Resources

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline – call or text. Free, confidential, 24/7 crisis line providing emotional support and crisis counseling to people in crisis.

- Caregiver Depression (Alzheimer's Association)
- Caregiver Health (AGS Health in Aging Foundation)
- Caregiver Health and Wellness (American Academy of Family Physicians)Also in Spanish
- Caregiver Stress (Alzheimer's Association)
- Caregiver Stress (Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health)Also in Spanish
- Caring for the Caregiver (National Cancer Institute)Also in Spanish
- Coping With Caregiving Stress (Mental Health America)
- Coping with Caregiving: Take Care of Yourself While Caring for Others (National Institutes of Health)Also in Spanish
- Get Support If You're a Caregiver (Health.gov)
- I need a break from caregiving! (Mental Health America)
- LGBT Caregiver Concerns (Alzheimer's Association) - PDF
- Long-Distance Caregiving (National Institute on Aging)
- Memory Loss among Caregivers (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Support for Caregivers of Cancer Patients (National Cancer Institute)Also in Spanish
- Support for Caregivers of People With Mental Illness: A Practical Guide (National Council on Aging)
- Support for Caregivers of People With Mental Illness: A Practical Guide (National Council on Aging)
- Taking care of someone is too stressful! (Mental Health America)
- Taking Care of You: Self-Care for Family Caregivers (Family Caregiver Alliance)
- Taking Care of Yourself (National Alliance on Mental Illness)
- Taking Care of Yourself When You're a Cancer Caregiver (American Cancer Society)
- Taking Care of Yourself: Tips for Caregivers (National Institute on Aging)
- What Is Caregiver Burnout? (American Heart Association) – PDF
- What is Long-Distance Caregiving? (National Institute on Aging)

Access the full Mental Health Information Community Partnerships Toolkit  
<https://www.nlm.gov/guides/mental-health-information-community-partnerships-toolkit>