

THE PRACTICE PACKS / PK05

Caregiver Support and Shared Load

Name the load. Ask for help that actually fits.

Seven resources help adult unpaid caregivers identify demands, practical support, and a feasible break. A fictional handoff example and a concrete request rehearsal emphasize shared responsibility and safe care arrangements.

Adult caregivers | 7 original resources

A sequence you can adapt

Explore an explanation or fictional example. Choose an activity, rehearse, try an optional practice, and review what helped. Use the facilitator guide to adapt the sequence; every page is optional.

Choose with care

Recognize that time, money, available helpers, care complexity, and the care recipient's preferences limit options. Support concrete service navigation when needed; do not prescribe self-care as a substitute for respite or adequate care.

Large print fillable edition

Type into response areas and save a separate copy in a PDF reader that supports forms.

Inside this pack

1. The Load Is More Than the Visible Tasks

Recognize practical, mental, and emotional caregiving work without blaming the caregiver.

2. Dev Asks for a Specific Kind of Help

Follow a fictional caregiver as they turn a vague offer into a feasible support.

3. Map the Load and Find One Opening

Identify a caregiving demand that could be shared, changed, or supported.

4. Rehearse a Clear Help Request

Practice a bounded request with an explicit agreement and a fallback.

5. Plan a Feasible Break

Arrange an optional small break with appropriate coverage and a fallback.

6. Did the Support Reduce the Load?

Evaluate whether a support arrangement actually eased work and what to change.

7. Facilitating a Shared-Load Conversation

Help a caregiver identify a practical support while respecting the care recipient and real constraints.

Caregiver Support and Shared Load | Understand

The Load Is More Than the Visible Tasks

Adult caregivers | 5 to 8 minutes | Handout

Recognize practical, mental, and emotional caregiving work without blaming the caregiver.

Caregiving can include appointments, meals, transport, paperwork, coordination, and being the person who remembers what comes next. Some work is easy to see; some stays in your head. Feeling stretched does not tell us that you care too little.

How to use this page

Read the three areas and choose one that fits today. You do not need to list everything or prove that your situation is difficult enough to deserve support.

Notice the hidden work

Planning, checking, anticipating, and explaining can take effort even when no visible task is underway. A useful support may be someone taking responsibility for a whole small task, including arranging it, rather than asking you to direct every step.

Match help to the actual need

A short visit may offer company but not enough support for you to leave. A ride or meal may ease one practical demand. Respite and care services vary in availability and suitability. Ask about options that match the person's care needs and your circumstances.

PK05-01 | continued

Your care matters too

Consider one need of your own: rest, an appointment, food, privacy, connection, or relief from a task. A brief pause may help in the moment, but it cannot solve an unsafe or unmanageable care arrangement. Professional or community support may be needed alongside personal coping.

1. One part of the load I want another person to understand**Facilitator notes and adaptation**

Validate material and service barriers. Avoid guilt-based claims that self-care is required to be a good caregiver. Assess urgent unmet care needs through appropriate channels rather than relying on a worksheet.

About this resource

AI-assisted original draft for More Than Therapy. Version 1.0. Source and editorial checks: 27 October 2026. Independent clinical review pending; no human clinical reviewer is recorded. The references below inform concepts and do not validate or endorse this original page.

Conceptual references

PA08 | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | Healthy Habits: Caring for Yourself When Caring for Another

<https://www.cdc.gov/caregiving/caring-for-yourself/index.html>

PK05-01 | continued

PA09 | National Institutes of Health | Social Wellness Toolkit

<https://www.nih.gov/health-information/your-healthiest-self-wellness-toolkits/social-wellness-toolkit>

Caregiver Support and Shared Load | Example

Dev Asks for a Specific Kind of Help

Adult caregivers | 5 to 8 minutes | Handout

Follow a fictional caregiver as they turn a vague offer into a feasible support.

This fictional example concerns Dev, who supports an adult relative at home. A friend says, "Let me know if you need anything." Dev appreciates the offer but feels too tired to decide what to ask for.

How to use this page

Read the example and notice how the request is limited. Dev's arrangement is only an illustration; a helper's skills and the care recipient's wishes must shape any real plan.

Choose a task with clear edges

Dev chooses grocery pickup rather than asking the friend to provide personal care. Dev asks, "Could you collect the prepared order Thursday between four and five and leave it at the door?" The request includes a time, task, and endpoint.

Check the arrangement

The friend can do Friday instead. Dev checks that Friday works and confirms the order will be ready. The relative agrees with the delivery plan. Dev does not share unnecessary health information. No one assumes the friend is now responsible for future weeks.

PK05-02 | continued

Review the actual relief

The pickup saves one trip, but Dev still needs uninterrupted time for a personal appointment. Dev keeps the grocery arrangement and asks a service coordinator about suitable care coverage. One useful favor does not solve the entire load, and Dev does not treat it as a reason to stop asking for other support.

1. What made the request easier to answer and follow through on?**Facilitator notes and adaptation**

The example uses a nonclinical task. Do not imply that an untrained friend can safely take over transfers, medication, or supervision. Arrange suitable support for the individual care needs.

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PK05-02 | continued

PA09 | National Institutes of Health | Social Wellness Toolkit

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[Caregiver Support and Shared Load | Explore](#)

Map the Load and Find One Opening

Adult caregivers | 8 to 10 minutes | Worksheet

Identify a caregiving demand that could be shared, changed, or supported.

Choose a typical part of the day or week. Include the planning and waiting as well as the task itself. The aim is to find one opening for help, not to produce a perfect schedule.

How to use this page

Use broad task descriptions and leave out identifying health details if the page may be shared. Choose one demand to explore first. You can complete the rest later or with support.

Separate the task from its coordination

For example, transport may include booking, checking access, preparing, traveling, and waiting. Ask which part someone else could own. A smaller task with clear responsibility may be more useful than a vague promise of help.

Identify what cannot simply be handed over

Some care requires training, consent, professional guidance, or a suitable service. Write the need for support rather than assigning it to someone unprepared. Include the care recipient's preferences and communication needs in planning.

PK05-03 | continued

Choose an opening

Could a nonessential task wait? Could someone take one errand? Is information about respite or benefits needed? Name the barrier if no option is currently available. That can become a concrete question for a care team, social worker, or community organization rather than a personal failure.

1. One demand, including the hidden planning it takes

2. What could be shared, changed, postponed, or requires qualified support?

PK05-03 | continued

3. A person or service to ask, and the specific question

Facilitator notes and adaptation

Do not encourage postponing essential care or delegating tasks beyond a helper's competence. Help identify realistic services and eligibility questions without promising access, funding, or immediate availability.

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Caregiver Support and Shared Load | Rehearse

Rehearse a Clear Help Request

Adult caregivers | 8 to 10 minutes | Session guide

Practice a bounded request with an explicit agreement and a fallback.

A clear request lets another person understand what you need and decide what they can offer. It also helps protect you from the extra work of managing an unclear promise. You can ask without apologizing for having limits.

How to use this page

Select a nonclinical task or a request for information. Draft a message or rehearse with a supportive person. Do not send anything until the wording and recipient feel appropriate.

Specify the request

Include the task, timing, and endpoint: "Could you make two calls to ask about accessible transport and send me the options by Tuesday?" State what would count as complete. Share only information the helper actually needs and has permission to receive.

Check capacity and ownership

Ask whether the person can manage the task, including the follow-up. If they offer a smaller action, decide whether it still helps. Avoid assuming an agreement from silence. Confirm who will tell whom if the arrangement changes.

PK05-04 | continued

Make a fallback visible

If the person cannot help, consider another contact, a different task, or a service inquiry. You do not have to keep making the same request to an unreliable person. If essential care is at risk, seek appropriate professional help rather than relying on an unconfirmed favor.

1. My request, how we will confirm it, and my fallback

Facilitator notes and adaptation

Consider power, conflict, consent, and privacy within the care network. A request is not a safe handoff until capability, availability, and necessary instructions have been established.

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PK05-04 | continued

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Caregiver Support and Shared Load | Practice

Plan a Feasible Break

Adult caregivers | 5 to 10 minutes | Worksheet

Arrange an optional small break with appropriate coverage and a fallback.

A break is useful only if the care arrangement allows it. Start with the support needed, then decide what you would like to do. You do not have to spend the break being productive or making it look like self-care.

How to use this page

Plan one possible break over the next few days. The time shown is for planning. Choose a duration that fits confirmed support, care needs, and your own preference; do not leave someone without necessary care.

Check coverage first

Who is available and appropriately prepared? What has the care recipient agreed to? What information and contact plan are necessary? If suitable coverage is not available, the next step may be asking about respite services rather than scheduling time away.

Choose what the time is for

You might rest, attend an appointment, see someone, sit quietly, or do nothing planned. Choose the activity yourself. Protect the time from becoming another coordination task where possible. It is acceptable to prefer a practical personal errand.

PK05-05 | continued

Prepare for a change

Agree on how a cancellation will be communicated and which needs remain essential. If the break cannot happen, note the barrier without treating it as a failed effort. Bring the barrier to someone who can help reconsider support or services.

1. My preferred break and the confirmed support it requires

2. The agreed handoff, relevant contact plan, and privacy limits

3. If coverage changes or is unavailable, my next support question

PK05-05 | continued

Facilitator notes and adaptation

This is a planning aid, not a clinical handoff or emergency plan. Medical care, supervision, and specialized tasks require appropriate individualized arrangements. Avoid making essential care dependent on an informal worksheet.

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Caregiver Support and Shared Load | Review

Did the Support Reduce the Load?

Adult caregivers | 5 to 10 minutes | Worksheet

Evaluate whether a support arrangement actually eased work and what to change.

An offer can sound helpful and still leave you doing most of the organizing. This review looks at the practical effect of support, including its hidden cost. Gratitude and a need for change can exist together.

How to use this page

Choose one request, handoff, break, or service inquiry. If nothing happened, review why. Use ordinary descriptions rather than identifying health information when sharing the page.

Compare the expected and actual help

Was the task completed as agreed? Did you need to remind, explain, supervise, or repair something afterward? Did the care recipient feel respected? A smaller amount of reliable help may fit better than an ambitious arrangement that adds uncertainty.

Name the remaining need

What demand is still pressing? Perhaps the help addressed errands but not overnight care, emotional strain, cost, or your own health appointment. Notice what one arrangement could never reasonably have solved. Avoid asking one person to carry every kind of support.

PK05-06 | continued

Decide on the next arrangement

Keep a helpful agreement, clarify an endpoint, change a helper, or seek a service conversation. If there was no attempt, identify the access barrier and the next question. If care is unsafe or unmanageable, pursue timely appropriate assistance rather than extending the experiment.

1. What support actually happened, and what extra work did it create?

2. What need remains for me or the person receiving care?

3. One agreement to keep or change, or a service question to pursue

PK05-06 | continued**Facilitator notes and adaptation**

Use the review to address system and resource barriers, not merely coping style. Do not infer neglect or caregiver competence from one worksheet; use appropriate professional assessment and procedures when concerns arise.

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Caregiver Support and Shared Load | Facilitate

Facilitating a Shared-Load Conversation

Professionals | 10 to 15 minutes | Session guide

Help a caregiver identify a practical support while respecting the care recipient and real constraints.

Begin by recognizing the caregiver's existing knowledge and effort. Ask what would make today's conversation worthwhile. A person seeking relief may need information, service coordination, financial support, or someone to listen rather than another personal coping assignment.

How to use this page

Choose one page together and check whether it adds useful clarity or unwanted work. Explain privacy and documentation practices. Include the care recipient's perspective and consent where appropriate to your role and the situation.

Map responsibility realistically

Distinguish hands-on care, coordination, emotional labor, and tasks that require specific competence. Explore what the caregiver can choose and what is constrained by service access, income, employment, disability, or family conflict. Avoid assuming a willing helper or safe family network exists.

PK05-07 | continued

Turn the need into an actionable question

A useful next step may be asking a provider about training, a social worker about respite, or a friend about one nonclinical task. Identify who owns the follow-up and how the answer will reach the caregiver. Do not promise eligibility, funding, or a service place without checking.

Review safety, burden, and choice

Ensure a proposed break includes suitable care coverage. Review whether the support reduced work or merely moved it. If the current arrangement cannot meet essential needs, use appropriate care coordination and safeguarding pathways. Respect the caregiver's right to discuss limits and alternatives without interpreting limits as a lack of love or commitment.

1. The need identified together, the responsible next contact, and the follow-up plan

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Facilitator notes and adaptation

The pack is educational and awaits independent clinical review. It does not provide a clinical care plan, legal capacity assessment, benefits determination, or emergency protocol.

PK05-07 | continued

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