

# Caring for the Caregiver

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Welcome!

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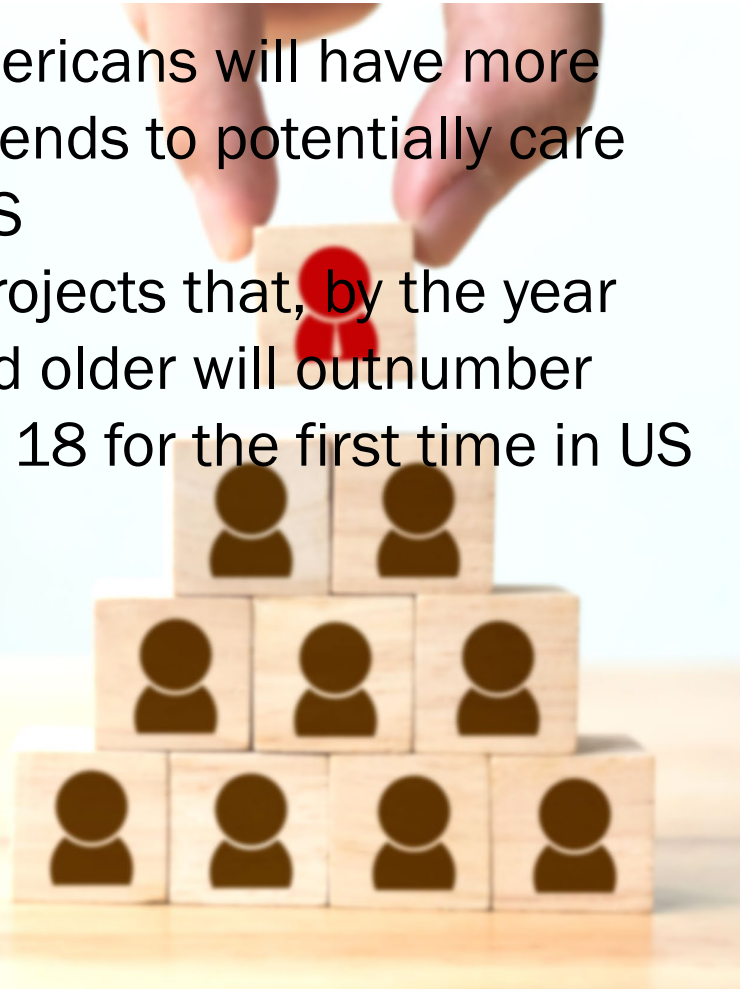
# Caregiver Mental Health: Overview

- **Trends in Family Caregiving**
  - Caregiver statistics in the US
- **Why Caregiver Mental Health**
  - The importance of caring for family caregivers
- **Struggles of the Family Caregiver**
  - Your brain on caregiving
  - What makes caregiving so hard
- **Addressing Caregiver Mental Health**
  - Strategies and resources



# Trends in Family Caregiving

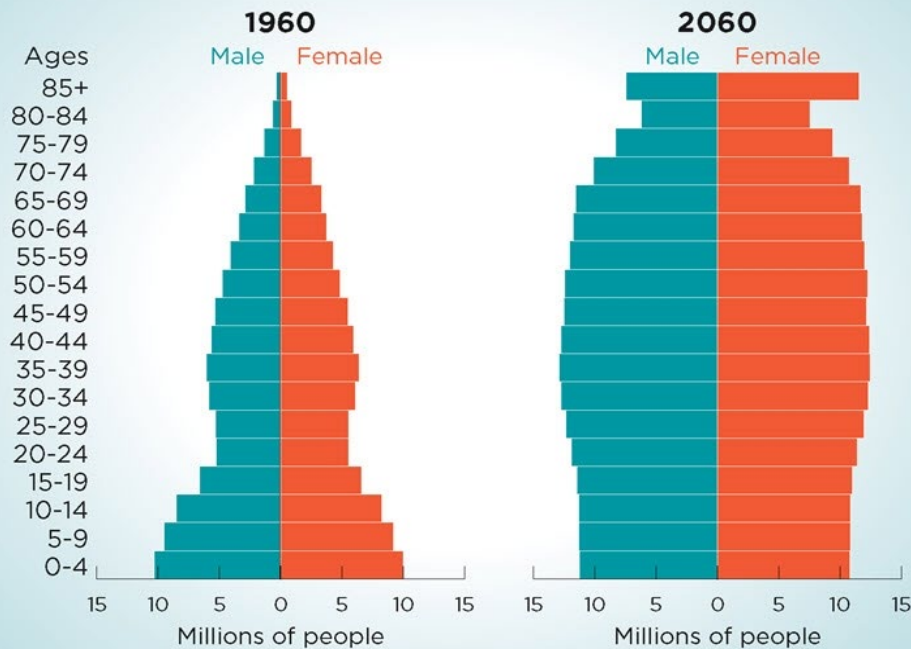
- In less than 15 years, Americans will have more older relatives or close friends to potentially care for than children in the US
- The US Census Bureau projects that, by the year 2035, adults ages 65 and older will outnumber children under the age of 18 for the first time in US history.



# Trends in Family Caregiving

## From Pyramid to Pillar: A Century of Change

Population of the United States



United States<sup>™</sup>  
**Census**  
Bureau

U.S. Department of Commerce  
Economics and Statistics Administration  
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU  
[census.gov](http://census.gov)

Source: National Population  
Projections, 2017  
[www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popproj.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popproj.html)



# Trends in Family Caregiving

- Increased diversity of family caregivers
- Greater complexity of care needs
- Larger numbers of employed family caregivers balancing paid work, caregiving responsibilities, and the employment-related and out-of-pocket costs of care
- Growing care gap between the demand for and supply of family caregivers



# Know Your Worth

- Unpaid family caregiving is on the rise in the U.S. with 38 million caregivers providing a collective 36 BILLION hours of care in - the equivalent of approximately \$600 BILLION in unpaid assistance. (2021)
- Putting that in context: the economic impact eclipses all out-of-pocket spending on U.S. health care by over \$130 BILLION dollars that same year.



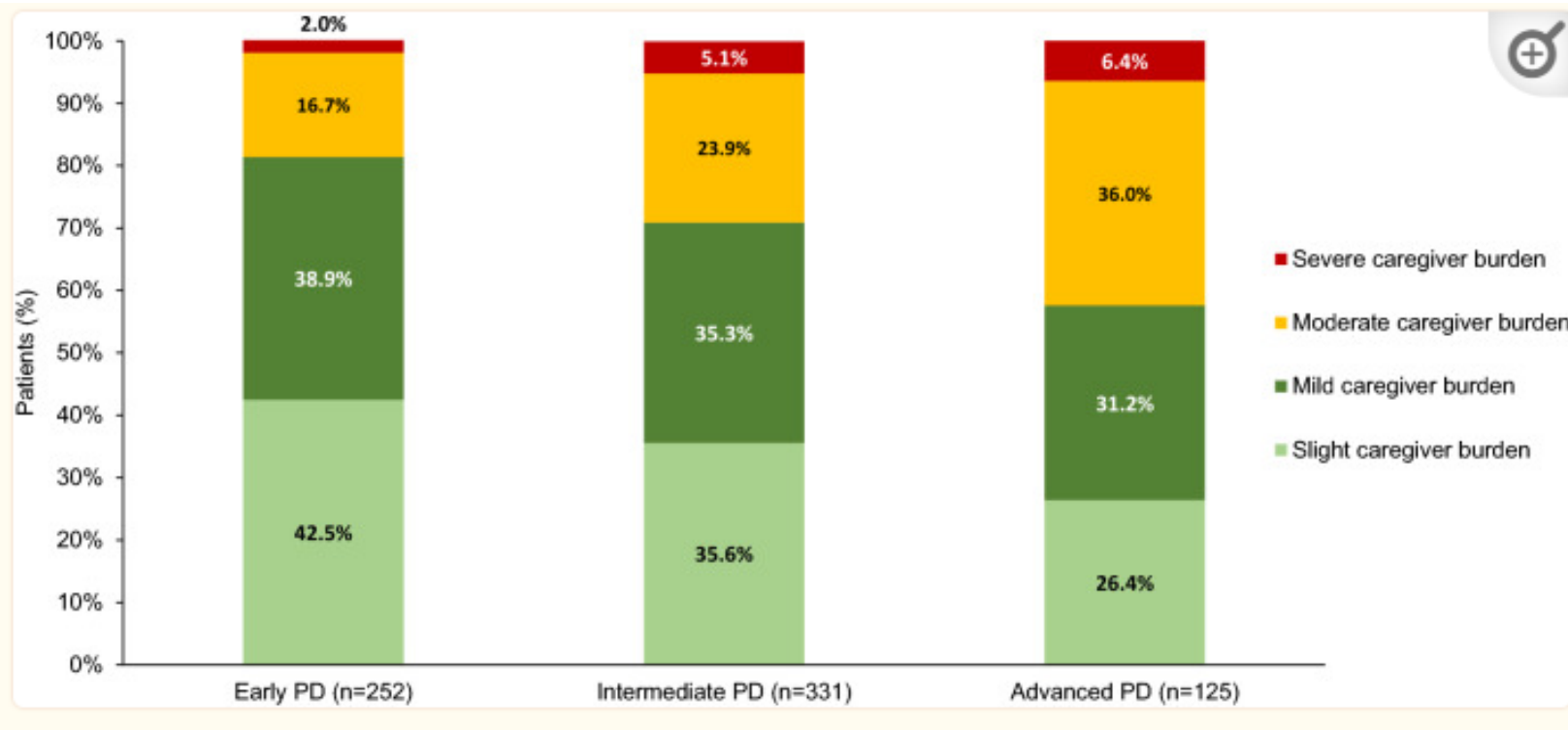
# Why Caregiver Mental Health?

- 40-70% of family caregivers have clinically significant symptoms of depression. About a quarter to half of these caregivers meet the diagnostic criteria for major depression. (Zarit, S. 2006. Assessment of Family Caregivers: A Research Perspective.)
- Roughly 4 in 10 (36%) family caregivers find their situation highly stressful (score 4 or 5), 28% report moderate stress (score of 3), and 36% report little to no stress (rating of 1 or 2 based on a 5-point scale).  
[National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP. (2020). Caregiving in the U.S.]
- About 40% of family caregivers of people with dementia suffer from depression compared to 5-17% of non-caregivers of similar ages. Rates of depression increase with the severity of cognitive impairment of the person with dementia (Alzheimer's Association. 2015. Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures.)



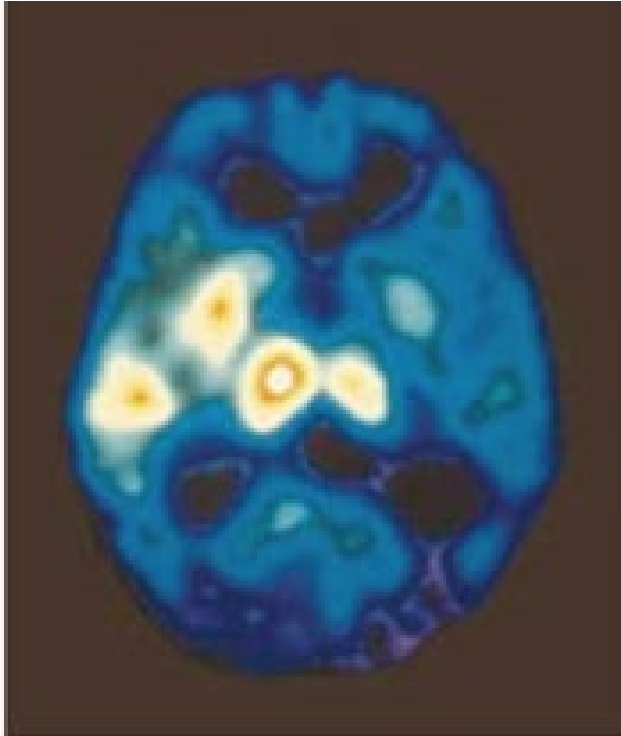
# Why Caregiver Mental Health?

Caregiver perceived burden by Parkinson's disease severity

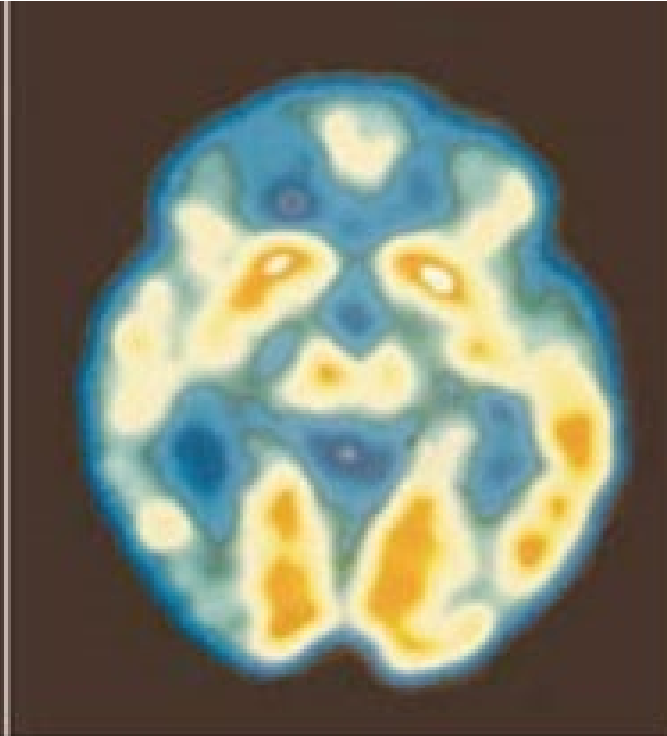




# Your Brain on Caregiving



**Stressed and  
Depressed Brain**



**Normally Functioning  
Brain**

# Struggles of the Family Caregiver

- Role changes
- Family dynamics – past relationship to the care receiver, family support
- Increased responsibilities
- Lack of disease education and communication from medical professionals
- Decreased support from friends and family
- Financial stress
- Less sleep
- Physical challenges
- Decision fatigue
- BURNOUT



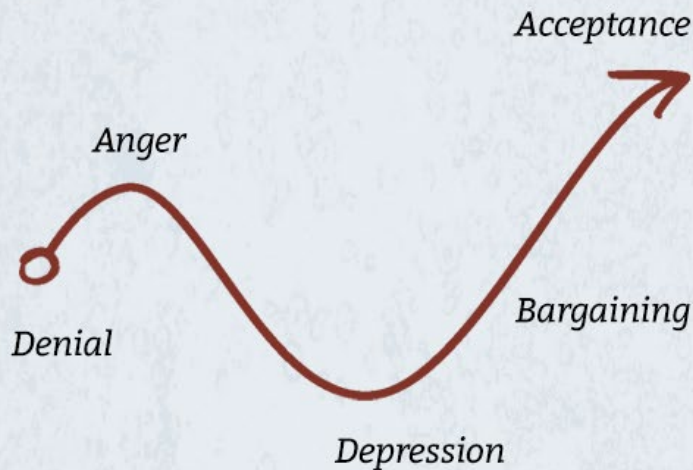
# Struggles of the Family Caregiver

LOSS = GRIEF

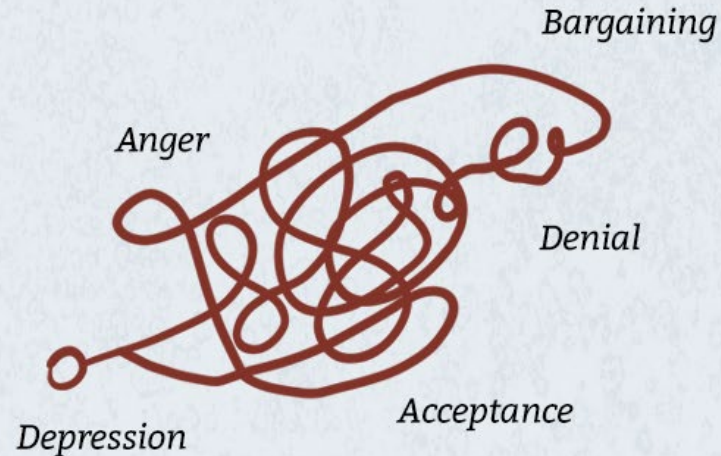
- ✓ Denial, Anger, Depression, Bargaining, Acceptance

## Stages of Grief

The experience you expected:



The experience you got:



# Caregiver Support MATTERS

- Studies suggest that caregiver support and training can improve health outcomes for both family caregivers and the care recipient
  - ✓ More time at home before placement is necessary
  - ✓ Reduced rate of hospitalizations
- REACH II study (2006) focused on caregivers of individuals with dementia and found that by increasing support/education, significant quality of life improvements were found as well as lower rates of clinical depression.



# Caring for the Caregiver



# Caring for the Caregiver

Embracing your role as the “Care Partner”



# Caring for the Caregiver

## Get educated

- Disease education
- Grief education
- Care Consultation
- Communication Support
- Care options
- Care planning
- Community resources



## Where to start:

AAA (Area Agency on Aging), Morton Healthcare, LIFE Senior Services SeniorLine/Caregiver Support, APDA, Alzheimer's Association (or similar agencies - MS, Parkinson's, etc.), OHIA (Oklahoma Healthy Aging Initiative), Tristesse Grief Center or Hospice Agencies, Purview Life (paid care planning services)



# Caring for the Caregiver

## Stay Connected - Building a Support System

- Informal Support – friends, family, church, social groups
- Formal support
  - Care and case management
  - Counseling and mental health support (yes MEDS if you need them!)
  - Peer-to-peer Support Groups
  - RESPITE – AAA or Hospice/Medicare benefit
  - Home health
  - Adult Day Health Services
  - Programs like PACE or Advantage (Medicaid/Medicare)
  - Long Term Care (if and when it's needed)





# Caring for the Caregiver

- Delegate
- Pare down decisions
- The active practice of letting go
  - Time management
  - Picking your battles
  - Recognize when things are out of your control
  - What is “worth worrying about”
  - Taking a breather...
- **Learn healthy boundaries** - address codependency issues (enlist professional help if needed!)
- **Know your limits/have a back-up plan**



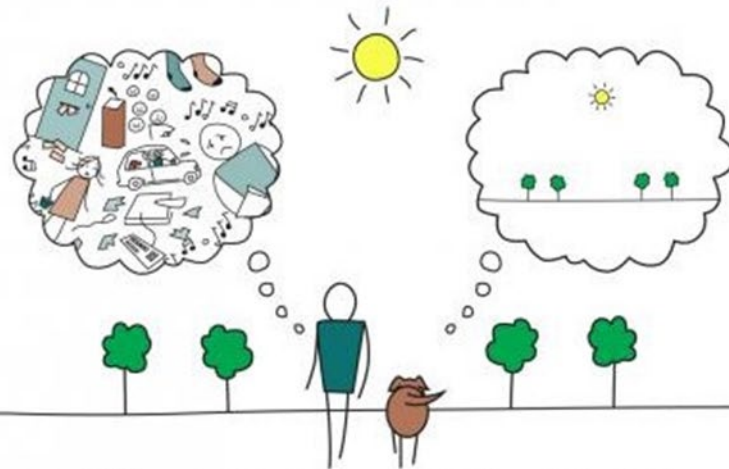
# Caring for the Caregiver

- **Self-Care for the Caregiver**  
(Emotional Gas Tank handout)



# Caring for the Caregiver

- Practice seeking joy, seeking gratitude, looking for the good moments... \*adjusting expectations\*
- Practice Mindfulness (the silver lining of being forced to take things “one day at a time”)



Mind Full, or Mindful?

# Caring for the Caregiver

Questions?

**THANK YOU!!**



## Contact Information



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