

# Here and Now for Your Loved One and Yourself

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The approach of the winter season is an excellent time to review how we are doing now, to think about how we were doing this time last year, and what we hope for in the future. These kinds of exercises can give us hope. We are concentrating today on “How am I feeling right now – physically?” If you are like most caregivers, you may not like the question about your own physical condition. “I am taking care of a very sick person and it’s not me,” you say. Yes, that’s true. No one would disagree with you. However, it can sometimes be hard to realize how much energy is required for caregiving; and caregivers are prone to disregard their own care (<https://crhcf.org/Blog/caring-for-the-caregiver-understanding-the-importance-of-caregiver-well-being/>). We just want to give you a few things to consider. We might even suggest that you deserve to consider these things. We know you will agree that you can be a better caregiver when you are feeling well, yourself. Maybe we could start from there.

## For Caregivers

Your loved one is your main concern right now, and it will not help them for you to become sick. For this reason, it matters that you take care of yourself (<https://crossroadsu.org/university-journal/caregiver-wellness-its-up-to-you/>). The following are ideas about what will help you stay well enough to keep going:

### Eat Three Meals a Day

It may be hard to eat if your loved one can’t enjoy a meal; but remind yourself of why you need to eat to stay strong now (<https://crossroadsu.org/university-journal/caregiver-wellness-its-up-to-you/>).

### Get Adequate Rest

Some chores might not get done. Or there might be someone who would help you if you let them know how. Could someone else go to the grocery store or sweep up? Things probably can't be done perfectly now, so let others help. If someone could sit with your loved one for an hour while you take a nap or read, that could be refreshing. Maybe a family member could spend the night so you could sleep.

## Get Outside for a Few Minutes During the Day

Twenty minutes in the fresh air will do wonders for your mood. Even better if someone goes with you. You will return to your loved one in a good frame of mind.

## Talk Honestly about How You Are Feeling

Good or bad, it helps to let some other person know what you are thinking and feeling. Choose wisely. It needs to be someone who is not critical of you. Support is what you need now (<https://crhcf.org/Blog/The-Directors-Desk/the-meaning-of-love-keeping-it-simple/>).

## Find Some Type of Recreation

If you have a hobby, try to get to it at least twice a week. Do a craft project that you like. Work out. Bowl. Golf. Do something different if you can.

## There May Be Times When Continuing in the Same Way Is Not Possible

Perhaps you have tried everything you can to get some rest and renew your energy (<https://crossroadsu.org/caring-for-the-caregiver/emotional/preventing-caregiver-burnout/>), and you are still worn out. You may actually be feeling ill. It may be time to think of other kinds of care.

If you have hospice care, ask your loved one's hospice nurse about respite care. If you don't have hospice service, it may be time to consider this source of care for your loved one (<https://crossroadsu.org/caring-for-the-paperwork/physical/how-do-i-initiate-a-hospice-talk/>). Ask your doctor for suggestions. This need for a change happens sometimes during a person's terminal illness; and it may require just a few days' break for the caregiver, or it may require

doing care in a different way. Maintaining your loved one at home may depend on how many family members you can rely upon for actual hands-on care. Your main concern is your loved one, and you may need help taking care of him or her now. Tell your family if this is true.

## How to Ask for Hospice Services

Admission to hospice care starts with a doctor's order. Ask your loved one's doctor to recommend a hospice service (<https://crossroadsu.org/university-journal/what-every-doctor-should-know-about-hospice/>). Then ask if the doctor will contact the hospice for you to apply for hospice care. After the hospice receives the doctor's order, they will contact you and your loved one to explain what they do and how they do it. They will ask questions about the things you and your loved one want and need. If you and your loved one decide you want hospice service, you will be asked to sign forms to request the hospice benefit; then a registered nurse will examine your loved one and obtain a history of the illness. If everything is as you want it, your loved one will be admitted to hospice care. It is good to know that your loved one may discharge himself/herself from hospice care anytime they wish.

There are many choices you could make, with some of them being more acceptable to you than others, no doubt. It is good to know as many possibilities as there are, and your loved one's doctor is a good source of information about what your community has to offer.

You are giving your loved one the gift of love and care (<https://crhcf.org/Blog/The-Directors-Desk/the-meaning-of-love-keeping-it-simple/>) during this time. Our wish for you is that you find a source of strength when you are tired, a ray of light when things seem dark, and someone to hold your hand when you feel alone.

Be kind to yourself.