

# Chapter 9

## Role of a Caregiver: Emotional Tolls of Caregiving

**Diana McCullough**

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7471-0043>

*Greater Vision Counseling and Consulting, PLLC, USA*

### **ABSTRACT**

*The role of a caregiver is a noble and often selfless one, encompassing a wide range of professionals, from counselors and social workers to healthcare providers. Caregivers are at the forefront of offering support, compassion, and assistance to individuals navigating grief and loss. However, it is imperative for counselor educators to recognize that caregiving, while rewarding, also imposes a substantial emotional toll on those who provide this essential support. This chapter aims to explore the profound emotional toll that grief can take on caregivers, shedding light on the emotional turbulence, the self-care challenges they encounter, and the significance of seeking support and supervision. Although not a course taught in higher education or as case studies in the classrooms, students should be able to navigate complex situations that are not so cut-and-dry.*

### **EMOTIONAL TOLLS OF CAREGIVING**

The role of a caregiver is a noble and often selfless one, encompassing a wide range of family members and professionals, from counselors and social workers to healthcare providers. According to Figley and Roop (2009) “compassionate caregiving requires the act of attending” (p.4). It is by embodying the principles of attending; caregivers create a nurturing and supportive environment that enhances the overall well-being of those they serve. Caregiver burden was originally coined in 1986 by Zarit et al., which was defined as “the extent to which caregivers perceived their

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-1375-6.ch009

## ***Role of a Caregiver***

emotional or physical health, social life, and financial status as suffering as a result of caring for their relative” (Stevens et al. 2024, p. 2). Caregiver burden was also identified as one’s financial strain, responsibility conflict, and lack of social activities, as well the strain of an individual who cares for the chronically ill, disabled, or elderly (Liu et al. 2020).

Caregivers will be defined as care given by a family member rather than a professional (Schulz & Sherwood, 2018). Caregivers are at the forefront of offering support, compassion, and assistance to individuals navigating; while rewarding also imposes a substantial emotional toll on those who provide this essential support. As the population ages, there is a growing need for the aging population to be supported and care is a basic human need. It is often family members that are the primary source of care for the aging population, as opposed to professional services, which would end up costing the family hundreds of dollars (Arno et al., 1999; Schulz & Sherwood, 2018). Due to the American family dynamic changing over the years, approximately 62% of married couples raising children have more than one job, if we were incorporate chronic healthcare needs of children into the mix, caregivers must attempt to balance personal and work demands, which in turn those caregivers experience greater levels of burden (Stevens et al. 2024).

This chapter will aim to explore the profound emotional toll that grief can take on caregivers, shedding light on the emotional turbulence, the self-care challenges they encounter, and the significance of seeking support and supervision as a professional entering the field. There has been an abundance of literature reviews that has shown that caregiving takes an emotional, physical, mental, and financial burden on the family; often seen has hidden burdens (Blair & Perry, 2017; Keefe, 2011; Sinha, 2013). The burden and stress associated with caregiving are known to negatively affect the physical, emotional, social, and financial health of caregivers (Lilly et al., 2012). The caregiving burden is significantly influenced by a range of factors, including the care recipient's dependency on daily activities, prolonged caregiving hours, caregivers' lower educational levels, strained relationships between the caregiver and the elderly, cohabitation with the care recipient, social isolation, financial stress, and the lack of alternatives to caregiving (Marinho et al. 2022).

In the United States, the projected number of individuals aged 65 and older are expected to reach 83.7 million by 2050 (Ortman, 2014; Thorson et al., 2019). With this rise in the aging population, comes consequences and economic changes surrounding home life and healthcare (Hayutin et al. 2010; Thorson et al., 2019). With the increase of the aging population, healthcare demands have shifted from within a hospital to community and family, with family members being the key to long-term delivery for loved ones (Liu et al. 2020). Family caregiving often goes unnoticed among public policy discussions (Gibson & Houser, 2007). Caregivers are classified as either formal or informal, formal caregiver have been through formal

11 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: [www.igi-global.com/chapter/role-of-a-caregiver/351322](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/role-of-a-caregiver/351322)

## Related Content

---

### Expect What You Inspect: A Worked Example of Dashboards That Support Continuous Quality Improvement in Medical Education

Daniel Alexander Novak, Ronan Hallowell and Donna Elliott (2020). *Handbook of Research on the Efficacy of Training Programs and Systems in Medical Education* (pp. 427-448).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/expect-what-you-inspect/246642](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/expect-what-you-inspect/246642)

### A Longitudinal Study of Facilitating Medical Students' Stepwise Transformation to Distance Learners

Fanny Pettersson and Anders D. Olofsson (2015). *Transformative Curriculum Design in Health Sciences Education* (pp. 235-274).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/a-longitudinal-study-of-facilitating-medical-students-stepwise-transformation-to-distance-learners/129434](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/a-longitudinal-study-of-facilitating-medical-students-stepwise-transformation-to-distance-learners/129434)

### Knowledge in Action: Fostering Health Education through Technology

Theresa J. Barrett (2016). *Handbook of Research on Advancing Health Education through Technology* (pp. 39-62).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/knowledge-in-action/137956](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/knowledge-in-action/137956)

### The Gift of Grief

Marnie S. Reed (2015). *Innovative Collaborative Practice and Reflection in Patient Education* (pp. 114-128).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-gift-of-grief/123626](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-gift-of-grief/123626)

### Waiting for Health Care Services

Stefan Janzek-Hawlat and Hilda Telliolu (2017). *Healthcare Ethics and Training: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications* (pp. 1247-1267).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/waiting-for-health-care-services/180638](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/waiting-for-health-care-services/180638)