

Respite

What is respite?

Respite is relief or "time-out" for a person giving care to another. The goal of respite is to provide time away for the caregiver and to provide a social experience for the person receiving care. Respite generally involves someone coming into the home to relieve the caregiver for a few hours. Respite can also mean that someone besides the usual caregiver takes the person being cared for out of the home for an activity. The person receiving care can also go to an adult day care program or nursing home for a short time as a form of respite.



What are the different types of respite?

The following are definitions of different types of respite:

In-home respite: A paid or volunteer person comes to the home for a set number of hours per week, usually 2 to 8 hours, to allow the regular caregiver some free time. Paid respite workers can usually be hired through home care or private duty agencies on an hourly basis. They have training as aides or homemakers. The number of hours per week available through organizations providing volunteer respite is limited by the number of volunteers available. Volunteers may have limited training. Donations can be made to the organizations providing the volunteers.



Family respite: Other family members, usually those not living in the home, spend designated time with the person needing care so that the caregiver can have some free time.



Adult day care programs: These are group programs that offer physical and social activities and other care to meet the needs of people with physical or mental limitations. The number of hours that a person may attend is usually flexible, allowing the caregiver to schedule the respite around his or her needs. Some adult day care programs offer

weekend or overnight care as a form of respite. The programs may be located in free-standing buildings or may be associated with a long-term care facility or hospital. Some programs may provide transportation.

Institutional respite: This consists of short-term admission to a nursing home or assisted living facility for the purpose of allowing the caregiver to get away. Usually the time period is from 1 to 3 weeks.

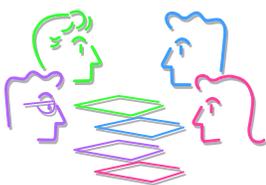


Why do caregivers need respite?

Caregiving is often a 24-hour-a-day job that can be emotionally and physically exhausting. The person receiving care needs you to be as patient and helpful as possible. When caregivers are tired from everyday demands, they may not provide good care. Abuse may even occur. There have been cases where caregivers, many of them spouses, died before the persons they were taking care of because they did not take care of themselves. When this happens, the person needing care often is moved to a nursing home.

No one (except perhaps you) expects you to provide all the care. Others can learn to do what needs to be done. The person receiving care frequently benefits from being around someone different.

How do I arrange for respite?



The first thing to do is to recognize that you need time away if you are to effectively provide care to another. Have a meeting of people in the family who are responsible for or interested in the welfare of the person needing care. Discuss the care that is needed and what your needs are as the primary caregiver.

Discuss available financial resources for respite. Discuss what each person is willing to do so that care is given and your needs for time off are met. Decide what type of respite is best in your situation. If having this family meeting will be emotionally difficult, arrange to have a nonfamily member run the meeting. A social worker or nurse from the local hospital may be a good person to do this.



Once the family has decided on the type of respite to be used, call the appropriate agency to arrange for the respite. Contact your local hospital, senior center, or Area Agency on Aging to find out about respite services in your community. To locate your Area Agency on Aging (which may be called something slightly different your area), call the Eldercare Locator from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday, at 1-800-677-1116.

Discuss respite and the particular arrangements with the person receiving care before the first respite visit. Do not change your plans just because the person you are caring for complains or tells you that no one can give care like you. You must take care of yourself if you are to take good care of someone else.



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