

Long-Distance Caregiving

Anyone, anywhere, can be a long-distance caregiver, no matter your gender, income, age, social status, or employment. If you are living an hour or more away from a person who needs your help, you're probably a long-distance caregiver. Anyone who is caring for an aging friend, relative, or parent from afar can be considered a long-distance caregiver.

Not so long ago, aging family members would move in with a nearby relative who would take care of them. Today, our mobile society means many elders don't always have someone nearby to care for them, so they continue to live at home or choose to move to an assisted living community.

The National Institute on Aging (NIA) estimates as many as 7 million people may be long-distance caregivers in the U.S. There are many things you can do to support and love your elderly loved one:

- Visit often and make the most of the visit
- Commit to regular phone calls/emails/Skype/face-time
- Use snail mail to stay in touch

- Send packages filled with favorite things or things they need
- Salon, restaurant, grocery store gift certificates

What can a caregiver really do from afar? Long-distance caregivers take on different roles. You may:

- Help with finances, money management, or bill paying
- Arrange for in-home care—hire professional caregivers or home health or nursing aides and help get needed durable medical equipment
- Locate care in an assisted living facility or nursing home (also known as a skilled nursing facility)
- Provide emotional support and occasional respite care for a primary caregiver, the person who takes on most of the everyday caregiving responsibilities
- Serve as an information coordinator—research health problems or medicines, help navigate through a maze of new needs, and clarify insurance benefits and claims
- Keep family and friends updated and informed
- Create a plan and get paperwork in order in case of an emergency

CLS Newsletter

FRIDAY, JUNE 21, 2019

- Evaluate the house and make sure it's safe for the older person's needs
- Over time, as your family member's needs change, so will your role as long-distance caregiver.

Where can I find local resources for an aging parent, relative or friend?

- Call the local senior center
- If you are living in Wyoming call 211 or visit their website <https://wy211.communityos.org/>
- Call the Wyoming Department of Health, Aging Division, Community Living Section 1-822-442-2766.