

Taking Care When You Are A Caregiver: Tips For Accessing Mental Health Care



WHY SEEK CARE

The daily impact of rare caregiving extends to each aspect of life. The emotional roller coaster that comes along with rare disease makes it even more important to keep your mental health and emotional wellbeing in shape. Think of mental health care as a gym that will give you exercise techniques you need to get through it all. Asking for help can feel vulnerable and bring up many feelings. Seeking therapy is positive. Therapists listen and help you make connections. They may offer guidance or recommendations when you feel lost. There is no single, correct approach in finding care. As a rare caregiver, you probably know all too well that connecting with the right provider may take some time. Prioritize YOU just like you do for the one you care for, and with patience & perseverance, these tips will help you find your provider.

WHEN TO SEEK CARE

- Anytime! Maintenance is essential to your mental health
- You feel like you can't do normal daily activities you previously were able to accomplish
- Thinking about or coping with an issue is taking more than one hour of your day
- You have a major life event
- You've developed habits to cope with your emotional health that are impacting you physically in a negative way

WHO TO CHOOSE

- If you have a mental health condition that may benefit from medication, consult a mental health doctor, such as a psychiatrist or mental health nurse practitioner who has experience treating your condition (MD, DO, PMHNP, APN)
- If you're seeking help with emotions, behaviors, and patterns, consult with a therapist, counselor, or psychologist. Like medical doctors, these professionals have specialties, so find one who knows about your specific issue (credentials include LCSW, LPC, LMFT, PhD)

Remember You Cannot Care for Others if You're Not Healthy Yourself

This toolkit was co-developed by Patient Health Alliance in collaboration with Give an Hour, a national nonprofit whose trauma-informed mental health frameworks informed the structure and tools included.

For more information visit GiveAnHour.org/ContactUs

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