

How to Overcome Caregiver Isolation, One Step at a Time

Companion Workbook

A practical, step-by-step guide to mapping your support network, rebuilding connection, and taking care of yourself while you take care of someone else.

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How to use this workbook

Work through each section in order, or jump to the part most relevant to you right now. Every section has space to write. There are no right or wrong answers. This workbook is yours. Use it at your own pace.

SECTION 1

How Are You Really Doing?

Before we build a plan, let's get honest about where you are right now. This is not a test. It is a starting point.

Answer these three questions as honestly as you can:

- 1 . When did you last spend time with someone who had nothing to do with caregiving?

- 2 . When did you last do something that was just for you, even something small?

- 3 . On a scale of 1 to 10, how isolated do you feel right now? (1 = not at all, 10 = completely alone)

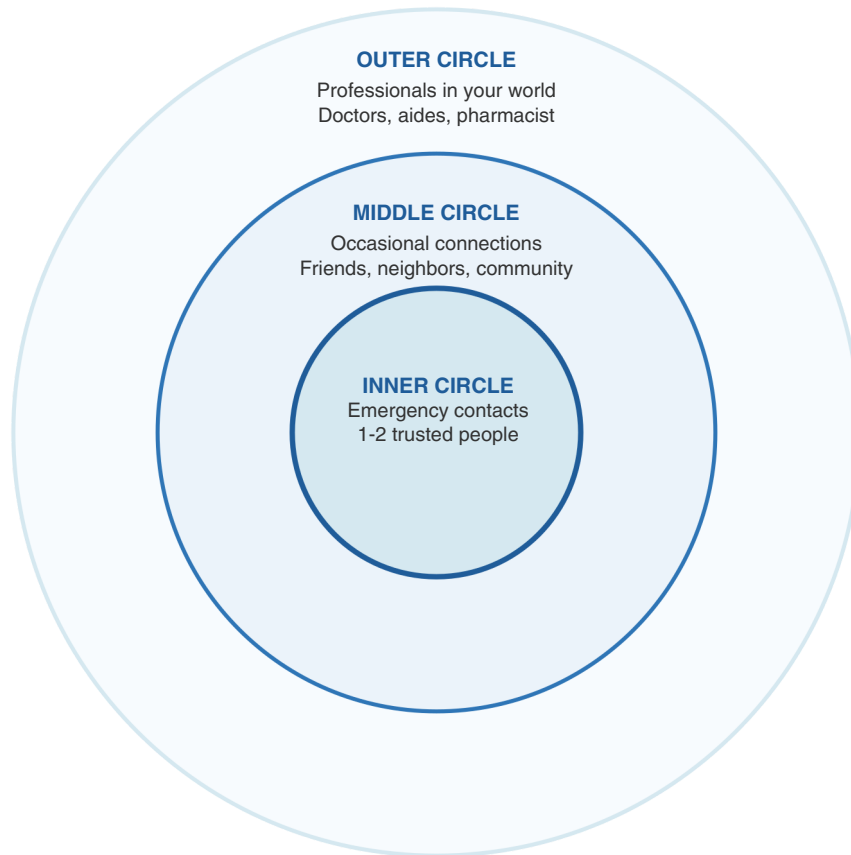
What is the one thing that has felt hardest about the isolation?

Remember: Feeling isolated is not a character flaw. It is a predictable outcome of one of the most demanding roles a human being can take on. You are not doing anything wrong.

SECTION 2

Your Three-Circle Network Map

Most caregivers are surprised to find their network is not as empty as it feels. Use the diagram and lines below to map what already exists.

**OUTER CIRCLE**

MIDDLE CIRCLE

INNER CIRCLE

Once you have filled in names above, circle ONE person from your inner circle and ONE from your middle circle. Those are your first two contacts. Reach out to your inner circle person this week.

SECTION 3

Strengthening What You Already Have

You do not always need new friends. You often just need more consistent contact with people already in your life.

The person I will reach out to first:

How I will reach out (text / call / card / visit):

When I will do it (day and time):

My 4-Week Connection Commitment

Choose one person and commit to one contact per week for four weeks. It can be a text, a two-minute call, or a card. Consistency matters more than length.

Week	Person	How I reached out	Done?
Week 1			■
Week 2			■
Week 3			■
Week 4			■

SECTION 4

Your Neighbor Partnership and Daily Check-In System

Two of the simplest and highest-value connections a caregiver can put in place.

THE NEIGHBOR PARTNERSHIP

The neighbor I will approach:

When I will knock on their door:

Use this script: "Hi, I wanted to introduce myself properly. I am caring for my [family member] at home and I have been thinking it would be good for both of us to have a neighbor connection. Would you want to exchange numbers?"

Their name and number once exchanged:

MY DAILY CHECK-IN SYSTEM

Circle the method you will use:

☐ Text Method Send "Good morning, I'm okay" each morning.

☐ Group Text 2-3 people check in with each other daily.

☐ Phone Call A quick 5-min call at the same time each day.

The person(s) I will set this up with:

The time of day it will happen:

Set a recurring phone reminder right now. Label it: "Check in with [name]."

SECTION 5

Asking for Help: Making It Concrete

Most people want to help but do not know how. Giving them something specific makes it easy to say yes.

The one thing someone could help me with this week:

The person who could realistically do it:

Use this script: "I have been hesitant to ask, but I could really use some help with [specific task]. Would you be able to help this week?"

When I will send this message:

MY HELP LIST

Fill this in now. Keep copies on your refrigerator, in your wallet, and in your phone.

MEDICAL CONTACTS

Doctor:

Pharmacy:

After-hours nurse line:

Emergency contact 1:

Emergency contact 2:

HOME CONTACTS

Plumber:

Electrician:

Handyman:

Neighbor with spare key:

PERSONAL BACKUP

Person who can cover care:

Person for emotional support:

Person for practical errands:

SECTION 6

Finding Your One Regular Activity

The goal is not to make friends immediately. The goal is to become a familiar face. Familiar faces become connections over time.

Activities I am willing to try (check all that apply):

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Senior center program | ☐ Volunteer opportunity |
| ☐ Library event or class | ☐ Community center class |
| ☐ Faith community gathering | ☐ Online caregiver meetup |
| ☐ Water aerobics or exercise class | ☐ Other: _____ |
| ☐ Walking group | |

The specific event I will attend first:

Date it is happening:

Care coverage arranged:

FINDING A CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

A caregiver support group fills a gap that nothing else quite fills. Commit to attending once. You can decide after that first meeting.

[caregiver.org](https://www.caregiver.org) Family Caregiver Alliance — searchable database of local and online groups

eldercare.acl.gov Eldercare Locator — or call 1-800-677-1116

Your loved one's doctor Ask directly at the next appointment

Local Area Agency on Aging Search your city or zip code + "area agency on aging"

The group I will contact:

When I will attend for the first time:

SECTION 7

Your 9-Step Action Plan

Every step from the article in one place. Work through these at your own pace. Start with Step 1 and move forward one step at a time.

1

Do the three-circle exercise.

- Grab paper and map your inner, middle, and outer circles.
- Identify your first two contacts.

2

Reach out to one person from your inner circle this week.

- Text, call, or voice memo, keep it short.
- Set a recurring weekly reminder to keep going.

3

Knock on one neighbor's door.

- Propose a check-in partnership.
- Exchange phone numbers.

***Script:** "I am caring for someone at home and thought it would be good to have a neighbor connection. Would you want to exchange numbers?"*

4

Set up your daily check-in system today.

- Choose text, group text, or phonecall.
- Set a recurring alarm on your phone.

5

Ask one person for one specific thing this week.

- Make it concrete, a task, not a vague request.
- Give them an easy way to say yes.

***Script:** "I could really use help with [specific task]. Would you be able to help this week?"*

6

Find one regular activity and put it in your calendar.

- Search locally or online.
- Treat it like a medical appointment. Arrange care coverage.

7

Search for a caregiver support group.

- Use [caregiver.org](https://www.caregiver.org) or your local Area Agency on Aging.
- Commit to attending once.

8

Build your help list.

- Medical, home, and personal contacts.
- Post on refrigerator, carry in wallet, save in phone.

9

Check in with yourself every week.

- Did I connect with someone? Did I sleep and eat reasonably? Did I take even 30 minutes for myself?
- If no to all three, revisit this plan.

SECTION 8

Your Weekly Self-Check

Use this page every Sunday. It takes less than five minutes and keeps you honest with yourself.

Copy this page or use it as a template in a journal. If you answer No to all three core questions, that is your signal to revisit your action plan.

	Did I connect with someone?	Did I sleep & eat okay?	Did I take time for me?	One thing I will do next week
Week 1	■ Yes ■ No	■ Yes ■ No	■ Yes ■ No	
Week 2	■ Yes ■ No	■ Yes ■ No	■ Yes ■ No	
Week 3	■ Yes ■ No	■ Yes ■ No	■ Yes ■ No	
Week 4	■ Yes ■ No	■ Yes ■ No	■ Yes ■ No	

Reflections and notes:

You deserve the same care you give.

Building a support network is not about adding more to an already full plate. It is about creating the conditions that allow you to keep going, with more grace, more resilience, and more of yourself intact. That is good for you. And it is good for the person counting on you.

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