



Hands That Help Caregivers Guide

*Practical tips for caregivers while they
support a loved one with a mental
health condition.*





When a loved one is facing a mental health condition, they often rely on their family and friends for encouragement, understanding, and assistance. Your support can be a cornerstone of their recovery, providing stability and hope during challenging times. However, being a caregiver can also be emotionally taxing. While you focus on helping your loved one, it's equally important to prioritize your own mental and physical well-being.

Supporting a loved one with a mental health condition is a journey that requires compassion, understanding, and patience—for both them and you. By educating yourself, practicing empathy, and balancing their needs with your own self-care, you can provide the foundation of love and stability they need while preserving your own well-being.

Remember, help is always available for both your loved one and you. Together, you can navigate the path toward healing and hope.

This guide offers practical advice for supporting your loved one while maintaining the self-care strategies you need to sustain your strength and resilience.

Need help? Hands That Help Wellness Center is dedicated to transforming lives by addressing mental health, social services, and primary care needs - all in one place. With our collaborative, wrap around approach we ensure you or your loved ones receive the care and support needed to thrive.

Visit: <https://HANDTHATHELPWC.com>



Part 1: Supporting Your Loved One

1. Educate Yourself About Mental Health

Knowledge is empowering and enables you to provide informed, empathetic support.

- Learn about their specific condition, treatment options, and common challenges.
- Explore credible resources, such as the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) or MentalHealth.gov.
- Avoid reinforcing stereotypes or misconceptions about mental health.

2. Practice Active Listening

Listening is one of the most powerful ways to show you care.

- Listen without interrupting or judging. Let them express their thoughts and feelings freely.
- Validate their emotions. Even if you don't fully understand, acknowledge their feelings with empathy.
- Ask open-ended questions. This encourages them to share more about their experience if they're comfortable.

3. Respect Their Boundaries

- Support them without imposing your own solutions.
- Give them space. Let them decide how much they want to share or involve you.
- Ask before helping. Offer help but respect their decision if they decline.
- Avoid pressure. Encourage professional support gently, without making them feel forced.



4. Be Patient and Encouraging

Recovery takes time and progress may come in small steps.

- Celebrate their efforts, no matter how small.
- Be patient during setbacks; remind them that healing isn't linear.
- Reinforce their strengths and remind them they're not alone.

5. Offer Practical Help

Sometimes, concrete actions can provide significant relief.

- Help with daily tasks, such as errands, cooking, or cleaning.
- Offer to accompany them to therapy or doctor appointments if they're comfortable.
- Help them find resources or services, such as support groups or financial aid.

6. Know the Signs of a Crisis

Be prepared to act if the situation escalates.

- Signs of crisis may include suicidal thoughts, self-harm, or extreme withdrawal.
- In a crisis, call the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988 or local emergency services.
- Create an emergency plan together, including trusted contacts and professionals.



Part 2: Caring for Yourself as a Caregiver

1. Acknowledge Your Role and Its Challenges

Supporting a loved one with a mental health condition can be rewarding, but it's also emotionally demanding. Recognize the importance of taking care of yourself to avoid burnout.

2. Set Boundaries

Healthy boundaries ensure you can provide support without overwhelming yourself.

- Define your limits. It's okay to say no to things you can't handle.
- Share responsibilities. If possible, involve other family members or friends.
- Separate their struggles from your own. Empathize, but don't internalize their emotions.

3. Seek Support for Yourself

You don't have to do this alone.

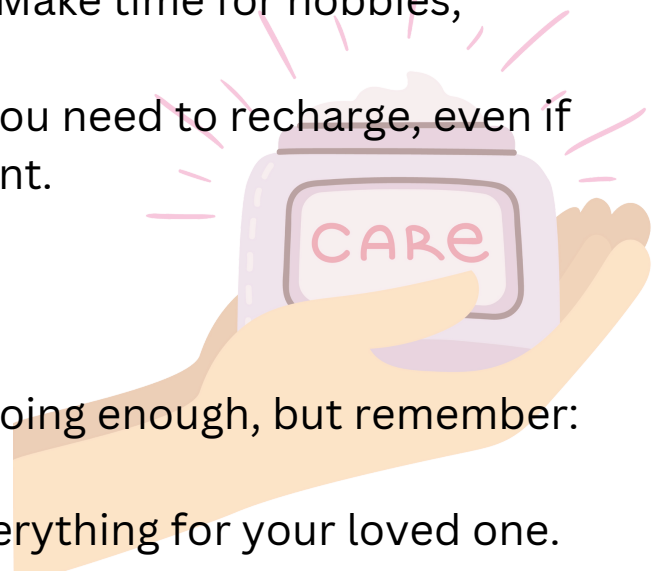
- Join a caregiver support group to connect with others who understand your challenges.
- Seek therapy or counseling to process your emotions and develop coping strategies.
- Share your feelings with trusted friends or family members.



4. Practice Self-Care

Taking care of your own well-being is essential.

- Prioritize your health. Eat well, exercise, and get enough sleep.
- Engage in activities you enjoy. Make time for hobbies, relaxation, or socializing.
- Take breaks. Step away when you need to recharge, even if it's just a walk or a quiet moment.



5. Avoid Guilt

It's natural to feel like you're not doing enough, but remember: your best effort is enough.

- Accept that you can't solve everything for your loved one.
- Focus on what you can control—your presence, empathy, and support.

6. Educate Others Around You

Encourage friends and family to learn about mental health to build a stronger network of support for your loved one—and for you.



Caregiver Self-Care Planner and Goal Setter Worksheet

The Power of Journaling

As a part of *Hands That Help Caregiver Guide*, we believe Journaling is a powerful tool for self-awareness, stress management, and personal growth. By taking time to reflect on your thoughts, feelings, and actions, you can gain clarity, process emotions, and track progress in your self-care journey.



For caregivers, understanding your emotional patterns can help you prevent burnout. Journaling can reveal recurring stressors or emotions that need attention. Identifying triggers allows you to develop proactive strategies for self-care and boundary setting. Reflecting on your caregiving experiences can deepen your understanding of your role and its impact.

Journaling can be invaluable for caregivers and anyone looking to improve their mental and emotional well-being.



- Start small. Choose manageable goals to build consistency.
- Schedule self-care. Treat it like an important appointment.
- Celebrate progress. Acknowledge even small wins—self-care is a journey.
- Ask for help. Share caregiving responsibilities when you can.

Self-Care Planning

Section 1: Reflection on Your Current Self-Care (Use your Journal)

- How am I feeling emotionally, physically, and mentally today?
Examples: Tired, Overwhelmed, Hopeful
- What are three things I've done recently to care for myself?
Examples: Took a walk, Talked with a friend, Read a book.
- What are my biggest challenges in practicing self-care?
(Examples: Finding time, Feeling guilty, Not knowing what I need.

Section 2: Setting Self-Care Goals

Use this section to identify small, actionable goals for your self-care. Use this worksheet of post in your journal

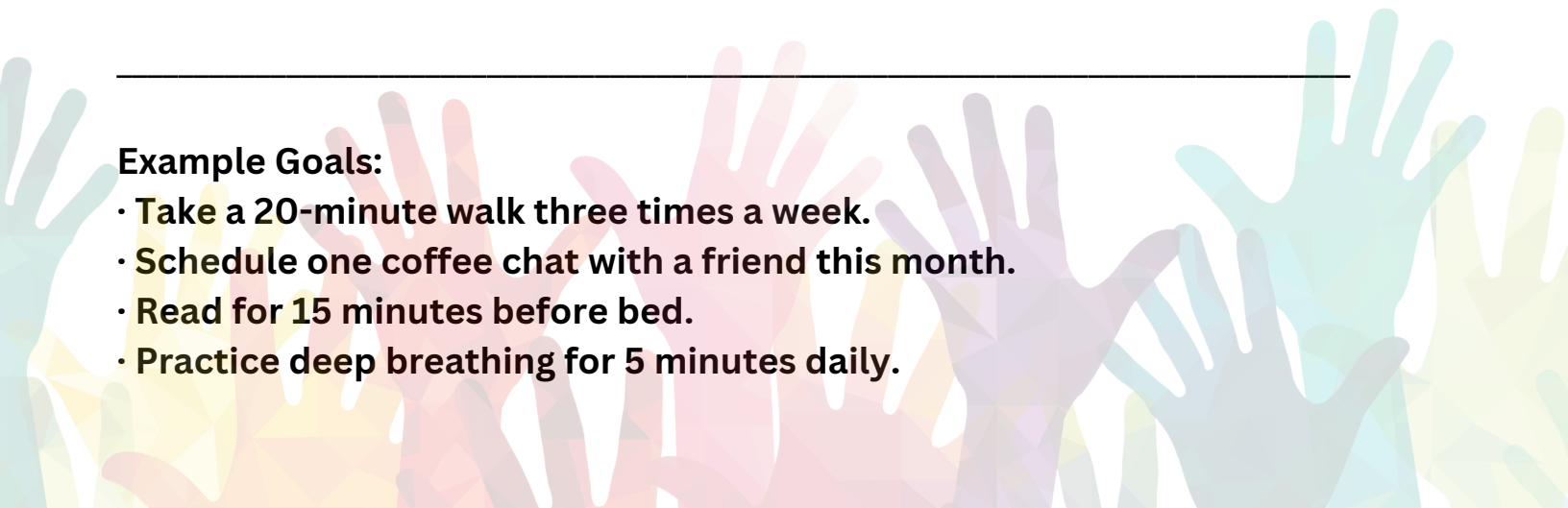
Physical Self-Care Goals:

Emotional Self-Care Goals:

Social Self-Care Goals:

Relaxation or "Me Time" Goals:

Example Goals:

- **Take a 20-minute walk three times a week.**
 - **Schedule one coffee chat with a friend this month.**
 - **Read for 15 minutes before bed.**
 - **Practice deep breathing for 5 minutes daily.**
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Section 3: Check-In and Gratitude

On the next page is a printable weekly planner. At the end of each week, reflect on your self-care progress.

- **Did I achieve my self-care goals this week? Why or why not?**
- **What made me feel good or relaxed this week?**
- **What am I grateful for this week?**

(Examples: "Support from a friend," "Time spent in nature")

Self Care Planning Chart

If recording your planning in your journal remember to address the four pillars of self care: Physical, Emotional, Social, Relaxation.

DAY	PHYSICAL	EMOTIONAL	SOCIAL	RELAXATION
MONDAY				
TUESDAY				
WEDNESDAY				
THURSDAY				
FRIDAY				
SATURDAY				
SUNDAY				