

Caregiver's Checklist For Helpers

~One friend is to be assigned the group communicator so the caregiver and family members are not flooded with drop-ins, calls, emails, or texts.

~Identify which family member will be the one to connect with for arranging meal deliveries and communication. The connecting family member is usually the spouse or partner of the patient but not always.

~Start a CaringBridge.org website (or other similar sites like it—www.lotsahelpinghands.com) with the family's permission (if one hasn't been created), where communication and information regarding the patient, the caregiver, and the family can be found.

~If the patient has had a heart attack, suffers from a disease, or any other medical condition that requires a special diet, send guidelines to meal preparers (with approval of the family contact) so they provide healthy, appropriate meals.

~Make a hospital basket for the caregiver's family (if frequent hospital visits are still occurring) packed with nutritious mini meals, snacks, water and something good to read.

~Visitors please be positive. Be brief. Be upbeat and then...be gone!
Understand that visitations are wonderful but can be draining at early stages, so adhere to the guidelines that have been set.

~If you are available to lend a hand, let the designated friend communicator know what you can do, and also when and how to reach you.

~Don't drink and dial (or text) and share your feelings. The family is almost certainly very sober and your call might seem both intrusive and insincere.

~Don't show up with a bottle of wine (or other libation) the first, second, third, fourth, or fifth night the family is together and expect to stay unless you are invited to do so. I know this sounds harsh but many caregiver's expressed that this experience is common.

~Know that your prayers make all the difference in the world and that the family, patient, and the caregiver will all feel them.

~Old-fashioned cards or handwritten notes sent in the mail or hand-delivered in a meal or fruit basket are appreciated more than you know because they can be opened and read when the timing is right and remain as a treasured keepsake.

~Leave ONE, and only one, personal message of love for the family with a family member or the friend communicator. I recognize this may be

hard, but they will know you are there for them and they will ask for help if they need it.

~Trust that the family members of the patient talk to each other about messages received. Your messages of love and support will be a huge source of comfort and inspiration for them.

~Please don't expect a prompt reply to your note, gift or message. Give them a hearty pass here. Know that time and space equals healing.

Caregiver's & family members personal notes for Helpers

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