

Fact Sheet

The “Typical” Feeling Alone Caregiver

National Alliance for Caregiving
AARP

WHO, CARING FOR WHO

The typical caregiver who feels alone is 49.6 years old, more often a woman, and less often married/partnered (than those who do not feel alone). The caregiver who feels alone cares for a 68-year-old relative; about half the time their own parent. The recipient typically has multiple conditions, most often a long-term physical condition and more often, an emotional/mental health condition or behavioral problem.

DOING WHAT, WITH WHAT OTHER HELP

A hallmark of caregivers who feel alone is they are usually the sole unpaid caregiver and few report having paid help. They have been caring for 5.9 years and their recipient more often lives with them in their household. They spend an average of 33 hours a week providing care, helping with 1.9 ADLs and 4.9 IADLs, meaning most are in a high intensity care situation. They more often report difficulty helping with those ADLs.

WORK AND FINANCE

Most caregivers who feel alone are employed, working 37.1 hours a week. More often than caregivers that do not feel alone, they experience job impacts as a result of caregiving, such as taking time off work, cutting back work hours, receiving a warning for attendance, or losing job benefits. They more often report caregiving is highly financially straining and most have experienced at least one financial impact, such as stopping saving, taking on more debt, or leaving bills unpaid or paying them late.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Caregivers that feel alone report greater impacts on their wellness, reporting higher levels of emotional stress and physical strain. They describe their health as worse than those who do not feel alone, report more difficulty taking care of their own health, and feel their health has declined as a result of caregiving. Caregivers who feel alone expect their role to continue for the next 5 years and often feel they had no choice in taking on this responsibility.

SERVICES & SUPPORTS

Perhaps recognizing the financial and wellness impacts caregiving has had, caregivers that feel alone more often want help managing their own emotional and physical stress and their own personal finances. Caregivers who feel alone find it more difficult to coordinate care between their recipient’s providers



National Alliance for Caregiving

1730 Rhode Island Ave., Suite 812,
Washington, D.C., 20036



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Washington DC 20049

and to get affordable services in their care recipient's community. They often reach out for help: searching online for support services, aides, facilities, or other assistance for their care recipient and more often using technology to help them with tasks like tracking their recipient's finances and personal health records. They would appreciate any kind of financial support policies (income tax credits, payment for some hours of care, or partially paid leave from work) and are especially likely to desire respite services.

- 1 National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC) and AARP, *Caregiving in the U.S. 2020* (Washington, DC: NAC and Washington, DC: AARP, May 2020).
- 2 ADLs include those tasks that provide assistance with basic personal tasks such as bathing, dressing, using the toilet, transferring to or from a bed or chair, caring for incontinence, and eating. IADLs are supports for everyday tasks, including housework, managing money, taking medication, shopping for groceries or clothes, using communication devices (like telephones), and caring for pets, among others. For more information, see <https://longtermcare.gov/the-basics/>.

About the National Alliance for Caregiving

Established in 1996, the National Alliance for Caregiving is a non-profit coalition of national organizations focusing on advancing family caregiving through research, innovation, and advocacy. The Alliance conducts research, does policy analysis, develops national best-practice programs, and works to increase public awareness of family caregiving issues. Recognizing that family caregivers provide important societal and financial contributions toward maintaining the well-being of those they care for, the Alliance supports a network of 80+ state and local caregiving coalitions and serves as Secretariat for the International Alliance of Carer Organizations. Learn more at www.caregiving.org.

About AARP

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of nearly 38 million, that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse. We advocate for individuals in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name as well as help our members obtain discounts on a wide range of products, travel, and services. A trusted source for lifestyle tips, news and educational information, AARP produces AARP The Magazine, the world's largest circulation magazine; AARP Bulletin; www.aarp.org; AARP TV & Radio; AARP Books; and AARP en Español, a Spanish-language website addressing the interests and needs of Hispanics. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates. The AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. AARP has staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Learn more at www.aarp.org.

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