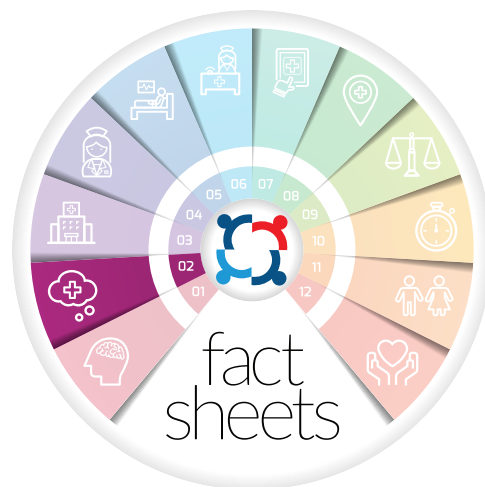




02: Economic Impact of Mental Health Caregiving

Introduction

Approximately half of family caregivers in a national study of mental health caregivers¹⁰ reported that their care recipient relied on family and friends for financial support. Intricately linked to financial support were plans for the future. According to caregivers in the study, 64% reported that their adult child was financially dependent on friends and family. When it came to future plans, only 32% had financial arrangements for future care of their child.¹¹

The economic impact of caring for a care recipient with mental illness can be devastating: the time invested in helping someone attend doctors' appointments, helping with medications, and missing

work. All of these issues require financial investment. **Figure 25** (see below) from the report *On Pins & Needles* provides an interesting backdrop to this discussion.

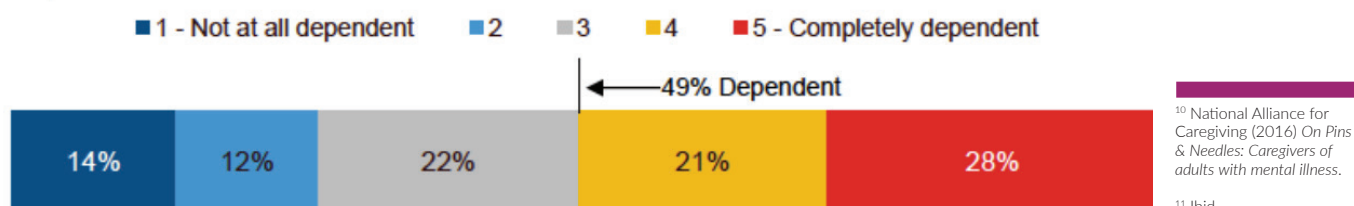
Background: The Economic Impact of Mental Illness on Caregivers

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), mental illnesses are the leading causes of disability worldwide, accounting for 37% of healthy years lost from non-communicable diseases. The new report estimates the global cost of mental illness at nearly \$2.5 trillion (T) (two-thirds in indirect costs) in 2010, with a projected increase to over \$6T by 2030. What does \$2.5T or \$6T mean? The entire global health spending in 2009 was \$5.1T. The annual

Figure 25: Care Recipient's Financial Dependence

Q43: How financially dependent is/was your [relation] on his/her family or friends?

(n=1,601)



¹⁰ National Alliance for Caregiving (2016) *On Pins & Needles: Caregivers of adults with mental illness*.

¹¹ Ibid.



02: Economic Impact of Mental Health Caregiving

GDP for low-income countries is less than \$1T. The entire overseas development aid during the past 20 years is less than \$2T.

Finding Needed Services

As a caregiver looking for services, there are mental health advocacy organizations such as the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and Mental Health America (MHA) that can help the caregiver with the first steps. The stigma that mental illness carries crosses many boundaries including socio-economic status, racial and ethnic lines, and gender. Access to services can make the difference between a trajectory that is less challenging and one that is not. Caregivers report that they rely on healthcare providers and/or Internet searches to find services and programs. When it comes to the economic impacts of caregiving, the barriers can be challenging: addressing these barriers requires specific knowledge. Not understanding these economic impacts can be a roadblock to services and guidance.

Investigate the Following Potential Resources in Your Community

There are various tools online to access services through national organizations. In addition, programs in the public sector can also serve as access points to support mental illness care. Explore these available information and referral systems that can provide phone numbers and other information on the services available. The following include examples of services and assistance that may be of interest:

- **WISER (Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement) Financial Steps for Caregivers** *Financial Steps for Caregivers: What You Need to Know About Money and Retirement* is designed to help you identify financial decisions you may face as a caregiver. The decision to become a caregiver can affect both your short- and long-term financial security, including your own retirement. www.wiserwomen.org
- **National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP)** was established in 2000 to provide support to caregivers, and it has since expanded to include a variety of caregiving situations, including mental health. Through the NFCSP, money is distributed to states and territories in the form of grants to provide support to caregivers. www.acl.gov/programs/support-caregivers/national-family-caregiver-support-program
- **Aging and Disability Resource Centers** are considered "single points of entry," "no wrong doors," or "access points" to resources related to long-term services and supports (LTSS). Through person-centered-counseling (PCC), individuals are assisted through the process, and are able to learn about the resources available to them. www.n4a.org/adrcs
- **The National Association of Area Agencies on Aging** provides a wealth of information for caregivers, related to housing, home and community-based services, transportation, elder law, and much more. www.n4a.org/agingservices
- **Eldercare Locator** provides assistance to families seeking programs and services in their local communities. www.eldercare.gov/Eldercare.NET/Public/Index.aspx



02: Economic Impact of Mental Health Caregiving

Helpful Websites

AARP–Caregiving www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving

Caregiver Action Network www.caregiveraction.org

Family Caregiver Alliance www.caregiver.org

MentalHealth.Gov www.mentalhealth.gov

National Alliance for Caregiving www.caregiving.org

National Alliance on Mental Illness www.nami.org/Find-Support/NAMI-Programs

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
www.mentalhealth.gov/talk/community-conversation/services/index.html