**Improving Family Caregiver Satisfaction by Reducing Their Stress**

Frequently in healthcare, you are serving not only your patient or client, but their family caregivers too. Here are five tips for reducing their stress and improving their satisfaction so they complain less, and your patient benefits:

**Reassure them.** Caregivers crave reassurance that they are doing right by their loved ones. Don’t underestimate the power of validating what family caregivers are doing well. They don’t hear it enough.

**Redirect them.** While you want to reinforce what the caregiver is doing well, they still will often require redirection because their caregiving strategies are creating drama and burnout. For example, lots of caregivers like to complain about who in the family is *not* contributing. It’s okay to let them vent a little bit, but it’s important to quickly get them refocused on what they can control instead of what they can’t.

**Remind them.** Let family caregivers know that it’s far from selfish to put themselves first some of the time. The patient suffers when a family caregiver is exhausted, maxed out, and resentful.

**Refer them.** And keep referring them, even if you’ve suggested resources previously. Very seldom does a family caregiver seek additional help the first time they hear about a resource. Some good referrals include:

* Support groups
* Psychotherapy for themselves to deal with caregiver stress
* Talking to their family physician about their caregiver stress
* Non-profits that can help them such as:

[www.caregiver.org](http://www.caregiver.org)

[www.wearehfc.org](http://www.wearehfc.org)

[www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

[www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)

[www.lung.org](http://www.lung.org)

[www.thearc.org](http://www.thearc.org)

[www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)

[www.caringbridge.org](http://www.caringbridge.org)

**Remember it’s up to them.** It’s not your job to do everything for the family caregiver.You can give them advice, referrals, and suggestions, but ultimately, they are the only ones who can take the steps necessary to reduce their stress.

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