TIPS FOR BUILDING YOUR TEAM:

• On one list write down what your loved one needs. On a second list write down what you need as a caregiver. Then build a team that supports both of you.

• Be specific when asking family, friends and neighbors for help, so they will know the best way to lend a hand.

• Trust that those you ask for help will respond, and accept help gracefully from those who offer.

Places to start for more information:

• The Alzheimer’s Association Helpline is available 24 hours a day, every day. Call 1.800.272.3900 or visit www.alz.org/mn.nd. Its staff is trained and knowledgeable about all aspects of Alzheimer’s disease or related dementias.

• The Minnesota Senior LinkAge Line® has information specialists who work to understand your needs and goals and connect you to local services that support them. Call 1-800-333-2433 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday or visit the website at www.minnesotahelp.info.

If you are caring for someone with Alzheimer’s disease, you don’t have to go it alone. In fact, asking for help when you need it is one of the most important things you can do – both for you and your loved one.

“I cared for my husband for many years, through Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s and more. I didn’t volunteer to become a caregiver, that’s just the way life turned out. Looking back, I could not have done it alone, and I am grateful for the many hands that helped make my work lighter.”

Susan A., Caregiver
BUILDING YOUR SUPPORT TEAM

EDUCATORS AND EXPERTS

Alzheimer’s caregiving is a skill you can learn! Experts in the field can help you build the knowledge you need. Explore what works best for you (books, videos, live instruction, support groups) and give yourself permission to learn as you go. High-quality education is available on many topics important to caregivers, such as:

- The stages and progression of Alzheimer’s disease
- Communication strategies and relating to your loved one
- Understanding changes in mood and behavior
- Caring for yourself while caring for others

SERVICES PROVIDERS

Many services are available in your community to support both you and your loved one. If you need information about specific services, see the back page for places you can start. Give yourself the gift of accepting help – from family, friends, a neighbor or a service provider in your community. Key categories include:

- Transportation
- Meals, chores, handyman services
- Caregiver coaching and education
- Legal and financial services
- Adult day services or other respite care
- In-home care
- Housing with services, assisted living or nursing home care

GUIDES OR NAVIGATORS

Many caregivers benefit greatly from the help of a professional who is trained to assess needs and plan for services and supports. These individuals will answer your questions, help you sort through options, set priorities, and give you confidence in your choices. Here are examples of professionals who can listen, educate, support and advise:

- Geriatric social workers available through your healthcare provider
- Private geriatric care managers or non-profits
- Faith community nurses
- County staff who provide long-term care consultation services

PEERS AND LISTENERS

A peer is another caregiver, someone who knows firsthand the fears, frustrations, challenges and unique joys of caregiving. Whether in-person or online, in a group or one-to-one, peer relationships are truly invaluable. To find a peer, contact the Alzheimer’s Association at the number on the back page.

A listener is someone you can vent to or simply talk to, without expecting them to fix anything. Find someone you trust to play this role. Explain up front that you don’t need them to do anything or make suggestions, you just need them to listen.