

BENCHMARKS OF CARE

Unique Challenges When Caring for a Loved One with Cognitive Issues

**CAREGIVER-READY
WORKPLACES**

BY CAREGIVER ACTION NETWORK

Meet Your Presenters



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Poll

What communication challenge is hardest right now?:

- Repeating information.
- Resistance to care.
- Confusion or memory loss.
- Emotional outbursts.
- Communicating with family/care teams.
- Something else?

Communication Changes Can Be One of the Hardest Parts of Caregiving

When a loved one experiences cognitive changes:

- Conversations may take longer.
- Instructions may need repeating.
- Emotions may seem unpredictable.
- Everyday routines become more difficult.

If communication feels harder than it used to, you are *not* alone.

Do these sound familiar?

"I just told them that."

"We had this conversation yesterday!"

"Why are they upset now?"

"I don't know what they need!"

"How do I explain this to the doctor?"

Discussion prompt: What emotion is hardest for working caregivers to name out loud?

A Workplace Issue We Don't Talk About Enough

Many family caregivers are balancing work responsibilities AND:

These **parts of caregiving** don't hit "pause" while we're on the clock.

01 Care coordination

Practical caregiving education, planning tools, and condition-specific supports at [CaregiverAction.org/toolbox](https://www.caregiveraction.org/toolbox).

02 Medical appointments

Free access to caregiving experts, hundreds of resources, and community support when caregivers need a trusted place to begin.

03 Medication management

Subscribe through CAN for the latest resources, headlines, and happenings affecting family caregivers.

04 Family communication

Share CAN resources through benefits pages, EAP reminders, caregiver ERGs, manager toolkits, and open enrollment communications.

Terms to Know

Caregivers, especially those at the beginning of their journey, may hear terms that they don't understand as their loved one is diagnosed and they are putting together a care plan. Let's break down some of these terms:

Cognitive Changes/Decline

Changes in memory, thinking, judgment, language, or attention.

Dementia

An umbrella term describing symptoms that affect daily functioning.

Alzheimer's Disease

The most common condition leading to cognitive decline.

Other Conditions

Lewy Body Dementia, Frontotemporal Dementia., Vascular Dementia

Language Changes and evolves: Terms used by professionals, used in the medical setting, or by others on the care team can change.

What Changes Communication?

These are not **character flaws**.
Remember: these are part of
your loved one's condition.

They are not **stubbornness** — your
loved one is struggling when it
comes to communication, just like
you.

They are not your loved one **being
difficult**.

A person experiencing cognitive decline may:

- Need additional time to process information.
- Have difficulty finding words.
- Repeat questions.
- Lose track of conversations.
- Misinterpret information.
- Become frustrated more easily.

A Conversation with:

Jessica Fredericksen

A dedicated conversation space for mental-health expertise, caregiver examples, and audience reflection.

Areas We'll Cover:

- 01** Understanding Communication Challenges
What changes can caregivers note early on?
- 02** Behavior as Communication
How can non-verbal behaviors be a sign?
- 03** Practical Strategies that Help
How might these communication challenges “carry over” to work, and what can caregivers do?
- 04** Goodwin Living Resources
Where can caregivers start if they are unsure what they need?

Professional Example: The 10 A.M. Call

A REALISTIC WORKDAY MOMENT

A caregiver receives a call about from their loved one, saying a relative that is with them is taking their money from them right before they are to walk into an important meeting.

WHAT MAY SURFACE

Anxiety over loved one's agitation; frustration at not being there with their loved one to calm them down.

The goal is not to leave caregiving at home. The goal is a practical reset and a clear next step.

WHAT SUPPORT SOUNDS LIKE

“Take a few minutes to call the family member with your loved one and see how your loved one is doing. Give them tips for calming the situation.”

Working Caregivers and Navigating Support

**“Help” is not a
four-letter
word.**

*Well, not in that sense,
anyways.*

Caregivers deserve and
need help at home and at
work!

AT WORK

- Talk with HR, a manager, EAP, or benefits navigator about what is available.
- Ask for practical options: flexible scheduling, leave guidance, remote-work exceptions, or workload triage.
- Share only what is needed to access support; privacy can still be protected.

AT HOME

- Make the support list concrete: transportation, meals, appointment coverage, paperwork, or respite.
- Assign one next task instead of trying to explain the whole caregiving situation at once.

HR Leaders Can Reduce Hidden Strain

Caregiver support works best when it is treated as a workforce system — not as an individual exception.

- 01** Normalize caregiving as a workplace reality
Use consistent language in benefits communications, manager conversations, and wellbeing programming.
- 02** Train managers to respond without overreaching
Protect privacy, avoid judgment, and connect employees to leave, flexibility, EAP, and benefits navigation.
- 03** Audit who can realistically use support
Review access for hourly, frontline, remote-ineligible, lower-wage, and shift-based employees.

When to Talk to *Your* Doctor

- When complex emotions are constant and not occasional “blips” of sadness or anger that pass.
- If emotions are interfering with your ability to work or function daily .
- When there's misuse of alcohol or drugs
- If you're experiencing:
 - Shortness of breath
 - Racing pulse/heartbeat
 - Change in appetite
 - Change in sleep (sleeping more or inability to sleep)

HR's role is to make the pathway to help visible, trusted, and usable before employees reach a crisis point.

HR Leaders Can Reduce Hidden Strain

Caregiver support works best when it is treated as a workforce system — not as an individual exception.

Use one resource as a starting point, then build the support plan around the person, the job, and the moment.

Presenter cue: ask attendees to choose one CAN resource they would use personally or share with an employee this week.

01 CAN Family Caregiver Toolbox

Practical caregiving education, planning tools, and condition-specific supports at [CaregiverAction.org/toolbox](https://www.caregiveraction.org/toolbox).

02 National Caregiver Help Desk

Free access to caregiving experts, hundreds of resources, and community support when caregivers need a trusted place to begin.

03 New resources and caregiver updates

Subscribe through CAN for the latest resources, headlines, and happenings affecting family caregivers.

04 For HR leaders

Share CAN resources through benefits pages, EAP reminders, caregiver ERGs, manager toolkits, and open enrollment communications.

A More Caregiver-Ready Workplace

Caregiving does not come with a manual, but it can come with support.

The most effective response is practical, visible, and trusted before a crisis forces someone to ask.

MHA reports 79% of caregiver screeners showed moderate to severe symptoms; NAMI notes 47% of caregivers reported increased anxiety, depression, or related concerns.

01 For working caregivers

Naming what is happening is a strength, not a failure. Asking earlier can prevent isolation and burnout.

02 For HR leaders

Benefits only help when employees know, trust, and can realistically use them across roles and schedules.

03 For the organization

A caregiver-ready culture protects privacy, equips managers, and treats caregiving as a workforce reality.



Caregiver Resources

Downloadable Resources for Patients and Caregivers



www.alz.org/professionals/health-systems-medical-professionals/for-patients-caregivers/downloadable-resources

Cognitive Exercises for Patients and Caregivers



StrongerMemory.org

Caregiver Action Network Family Caregiver Toolbox

CaregiverAction.org/toolbox

The screenshot shows the Caregiver Action Network website's Family Caregiver Toolbox. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'COMMUNITY', 'DONATE', and 'CAREGIVER HELP DESK', along with social media icons for Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter. The main header features the Caregiver Action Network logo and navigation links for 'CARING BY CONDITION', 'CAREGIVER RESOURCES', 'ABOUT CAN', and 'STAY CONNECTED'. The central heading is 'The Family Caregiver Toolbox'. Below this is a search section with the instruction: 'Use ONE OR ALL dropdowns to find the resources that best fit your needs. View the results below.' The search filters include 'IAMA(N)', 'CONDITION', and 'TOPIC', followed by a 'SEARCH' button. Two call-to-action buttons are present: 'Call Help Desk. (855) 227-3640' and 'More About Caregiver Advocates'. The main content area displays three featured resources: 'Honor Through Care: Bladder Cancer Support for Military Families' (May 21 - 3 p.m. ET), 'Supporting Your Loved One in a Clinical Trial', and 'Benchmarks of Care Training: Leadership that Cares: Helping Caregiving Staff Navigate Work Challenges' (July 30 - 2 PM ET). A language selector 'EN' is visible in the bottom left corner, and a chat icon is in the bottom right.



*Caregiving doesn't come with a manual.
But it does come with help.*

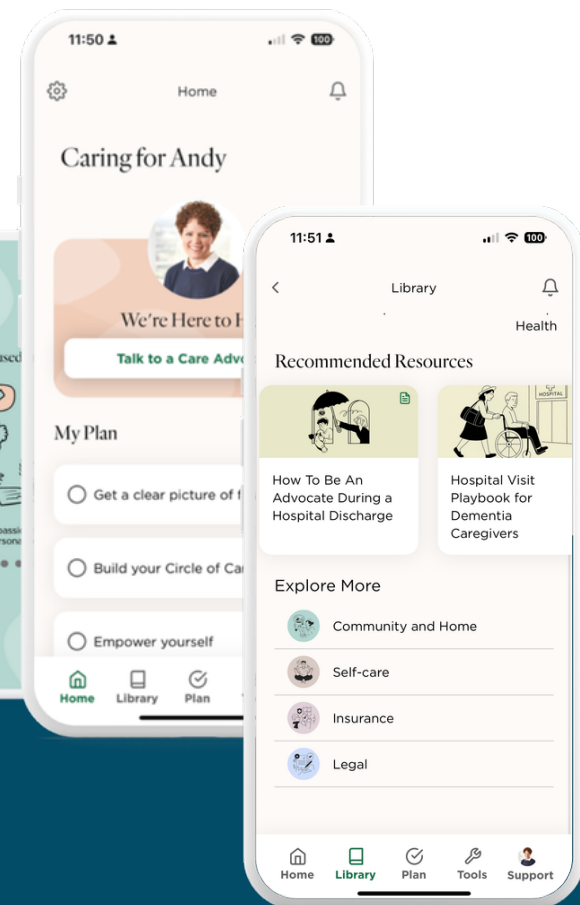
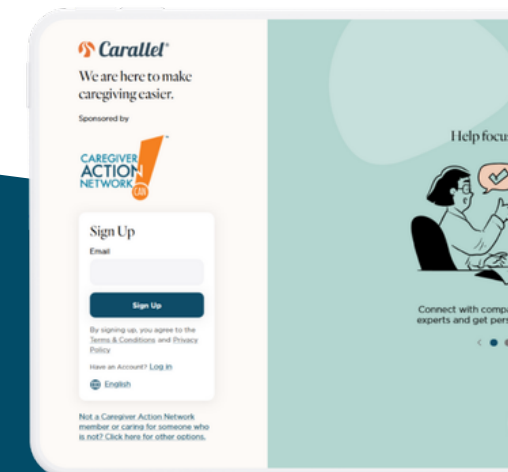
The National Caregiver Help Desk

Get advice from a caregiving expert, easy access to hundreds of resources, and a caregiving community...for free today!

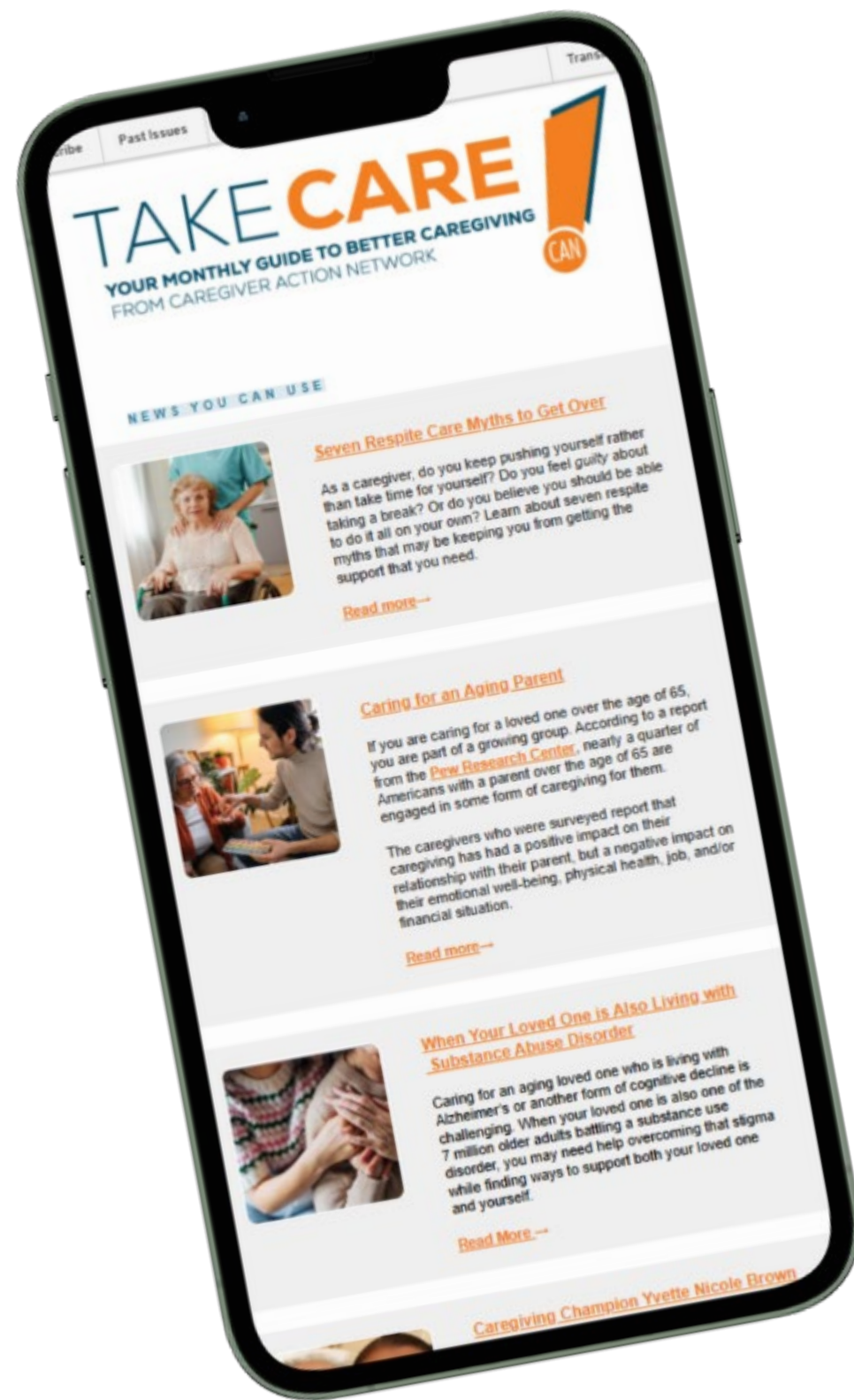


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CaregiverAction.org



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