

Caregiver Communication: Taking Care of You

MSCOE Caregiver Conference Call

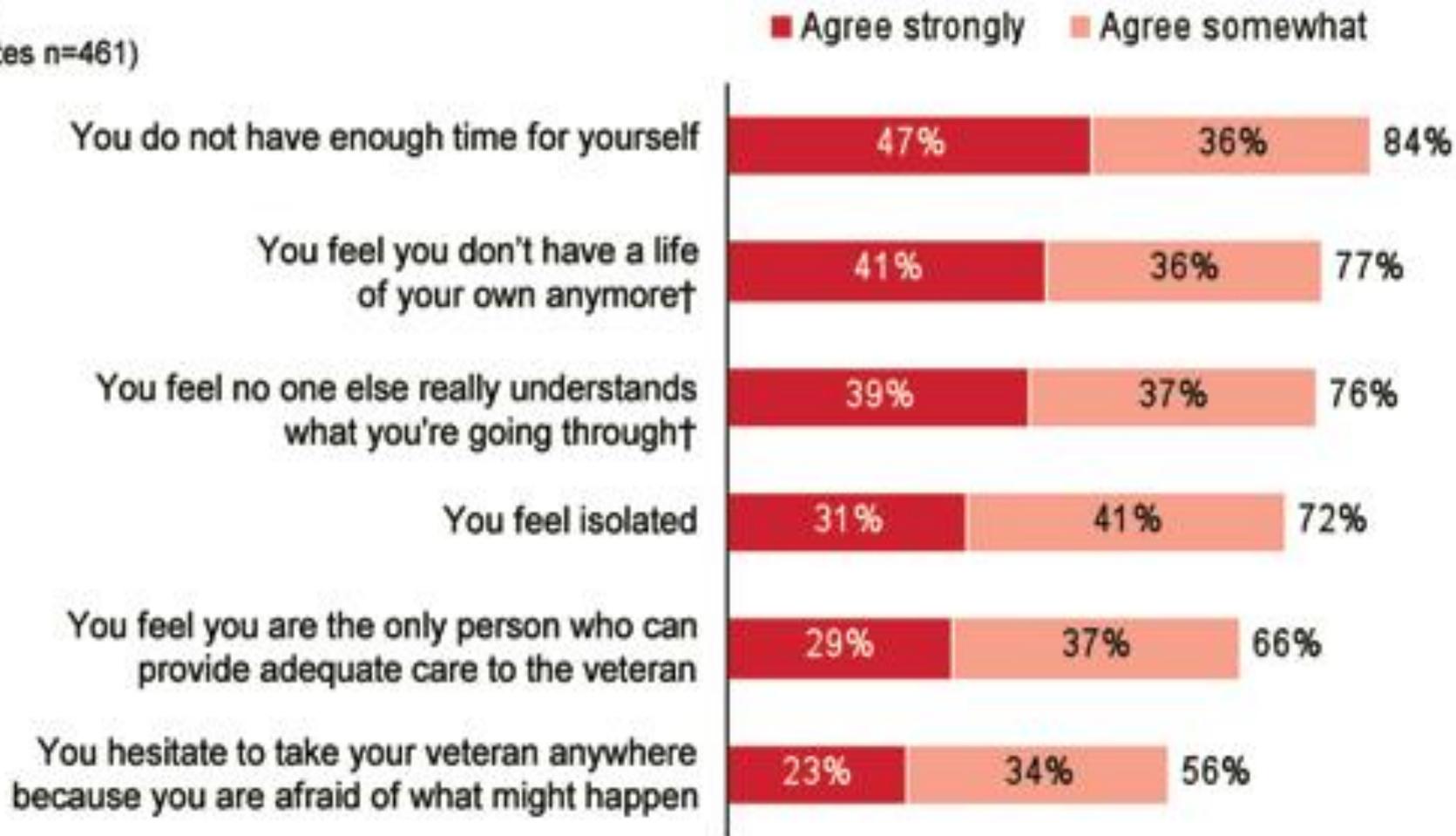
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Emotional Impact of Caregiving

All
(n=462)
(† indicates n=461)



(Caregivers of Veterans – Serving the Homefront Study, 2010)

Communicating to Take Care of You

- Limit Setting
 - It's hard to set limits with others!
 - Communicates to others you are taking care of yourself
 - Practice makes it easier
 - Only you know your limits
 - Limits can be flexible

If you don't set limits

- Feelings of resentment
- Burnout – Hard to provide help when needed
- Family concern for your health
- Health problems develop
- Stress
- Fatigue

Consequences of Setting Limits

- What would be the worst outcome?
 - How would I handle it?
- What are the consequences if I do nothing?
- What's the best that can happen?

Limit Setting

- Start small
- Start with easy people
- Start with easy situations

Communicating your Limits

- Be clear with your limits
 - Use “I” statements
 - “I am happy to help you after work tonight but I have to leave by 7:00.”
 - Formula:
 - “Up to this point I can do _____”
 - “Beyond this point I will do _____ or _____ happens.”

Offer choices within your Limits

- Replace what you can't do with what you can do
 - “I can't take you shopping today, but I can on Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning. Which would you rather do?”

Make No Excuses

Give **Factual Reasons** to aid understanding

- “I’d like to do that but for now I can only handle these three things.”
- “I appreciate your suggestions. Right now I can’t fit them into my day.” (a good response for unsolicited advice!)
- “I need some time to think about it. I’ll let you know tomorrow.” (gives you time if you feel like making excuses or a guilt trip or flattery undermine your resolve.)

Asking for Help

- You are not falling short when asking for help
- It is a caregivers responsibility to ask for help.
- “Please pass the salt” strategy:
 - We expect to ask for salt in order to receive it...we also need to ask for help we need in caregiving.

Please Pass the Salt...

- Consider person's special abilities and interests when asking them to help
 - Likes to cook...ask them to help cook dinner
- Don't ask the same person repeatedly
- Timing the request
- List of things to do...let them choose
- Be prepared for "no"
- Use "I" statements:
 - "I would like to go to church on Sunday, could you stay with Suzie from 11-1?"
- Use "I" statements to express appreciation:
 - "I want to thank you for staying with Suzie so I could go to church today. It meant a lot to me."

Action Plan

- Write one goal for expressing yourself
- What, with whom, when
- On a scale of 1 “not confident” to 10 “highly confident”, how confident are you that you will reach your goal?
- Try it out!
- How did it feel?

Caregiver Helpbook

- The Caregiver Helpbook: Powerful Tools for Caregivers (2006). Legacy Caregiver Services, Portland, OR.
- Great workbook for caregivers
- Chapter 4 on communication
- <http://allaboutdignity.com/powerful-tools-for-caregivers.php>