

THE DEVOTION AND FRUSTRATIONS OF MALE CAREGIVERS



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AARP Meditations for Caregivers

OVERVIEW

- A Male Caregiver Support Group
- Stepping up: statistics about growing numbers of male caregivers
- How male caregivers differ from female caregivers
- Coping strategies



- <http://videos.aarp.org/detail/videos/family-caregiving/video/5409639797001/male-caregiving:-caregivers-in-philadelphia---aarp?autoStart=true&page=5>



STATISTICS

- According to AARP:
- Percentage of caregivers who are male has risen from 34-40% in past 8 years
- Average age is 48 but varies: 46 for son caring for a parent; 62 for a husband caring for a spouse
- Half felt they had no choice
- Husbands spend more hours caregiving with less supports than sons



- Half of all male caregivers performed medical/nursing care; 75 percent among husbands
- Two-thirds of male caregivers work; 55 percent of female caregivers also work; are more likely to give up working



MALE CAREGIVERS ARE DIFFERENT

- AARP:
- Many men taking on hands-on tasks but may be more uncomfortable with doing them than women
- Men may be less likely to express their frustrations when stressed; especially true for caregiving husbands



DAN



- 72 y.o. retired teacher
- Married 45 years; two adult sons
- Wife has had Alzheimer's disease (now moderate) for 4 years
- Feels trapped by caregiving; not life he had planned for himself—and them—at this age



HYUN

- 32 y.o Korean-American
- Oldest of 3 sons
- Father had metastatic colon cancer for 10 yrs
- Hyun left business to go to medical school to seek ways of helping father
- Advocated for father with doctors
- Father finally died just as Hyun was finishing medical residency



BARRY

- 59 y.o. psychologist caring for his mother with dementia for 7 years
- Had distant relationship prior to caregiving; enforced time together exacerbated old tensions between them
- Sought silver linings



COPING STRATEGIES

- Asking for and accepting support
- Feeling man enough to express concerns and frustrations (to other family members, friends, professionals, boss)
- Managing stress through physical exercise, attending to one's own health, respite
- Finding greater meanings and rewards in decision to be a caregiver

