

Above & Beyond...

WINTER 2025 EDITION

Your source for news and information to take our collective care to the next level

Caring For Yourself First and Self-Care Techniques

Caregiving is challenging work and can tax you physically and emotionally. It is important to acknowledge that you are human, and that caregiving will affect you. Clarifying and expressing your feelings will help you provide optimal care to your residents as well as to yourself. Good self-care is critical to offset any negative feelings associated with caregiver stress.

Everyone has occasional days when their motivation and energy levels are low. To ignore your physical and emotional needs repeatedly during stressful times can lead to burnout.

For continued well-being, consider practicing the following self-care options:

- **Take time** for yourself to rest and renew.
- **Develop support systems**, keep in touch with friends.
- **Ask others for help.**
- **Talk to others** who have similar caregiving responsibilities and learn from them.
- **Maintain routines.** Eat the right food and get enough sleep.
- **Learn time management** skills and use them.
- **Find healthy ways** to express feelings as they arise – don't let them build-up.
- **Exercise regularly** to help reduce tension.
- **Listen to your body** as best you can and give it what it needs.

Consider the ways you are most impacted, as this will give you a sense of what you need to address. Develop a toolkit of coping skills that work for you. You will be more effective as a caregiver if you take the time you need for yourself. When you feel empty or depleted it's important to take time to refill, refuel and recharge.



Happy Social Work Month

In this edition of Above & Beyond, we're focusing on social workers—providing resources and information to help you thrive.

As a senior living social worker, you play a vital role in supporting residents and their families through serious illness, end-of-life transitions and grief. Hospice & Community Care is here as a resource, offering emotional support, counseling and guidance in advance care planning and decision-making.

Our social workers are your partners in navigating the complexities of care, ensuring that every resident and family receives compassionate support. By working together, we can provide holistic, individualized care that makes a difference.

Thank you for all you do!



HOSPICE
& COMMUNITY CARE

A program of Choices Healthcare



Tips for Having Difficult Conversations with Families

Discussing hospice care with families can be one of the most challenging conversations a social worker faces. Families may struggle with emotions like fear, guilt or denial, making it essential to approach the discussion with empathy, clarity and support. By using compassionate communication strategies, social workers can help families understand their loved one's needs, explore options and make informed decisions with confidence. Here are some key tips to navigate these difficult conversations with care and professionalism.

- **Prepare in Advance** – Gather all relevant medical and care information so you can provide clear and accurate details. Anticipate possible questions and concerns.
- **Create a Supportive Environment** – Choose a private, quiet space for the conversation to allow for open and honest dialogue without distractions.
- **Lead with Empathy** – Acknowledge the family's emotions and validate their feelings. Use compassionate language and reassure them that their loved one's comfort and dignity are the top priorities.
- **Use Clear, Honest Communication** – Be direct but gentle when explaining the resident's condition and prognosis. Avoid medical jargon and use language that is easy to understand.
- **Give Families Time to Process** – Allow space for silence and reflection. Families may need time to absorb the information and respond with questions or concerns.
- **Encourage Questions and Active Listening** – Invite families to express their thoughts and fears and listen attentively without interrupting. Repeat key points and clarify any misunderstandings.
- **Provide Resources and Support** – Offer printed materials, recommend hospice team consultations and connect families with counseling or support groups if needed.
- **Respect Cultural and Personal Beliefs** – Understand that every family has unique values and perspectives on end-of-life care. Be sensitive to their beliefs and preferences.
- **Stay Patient and Follow Up** – Some families may not be ready to make a decision immediately. Check in with them regularly and offer ongoing support as they navigate this transition.

Hospice & Community Care's social workers are here to guide families every step of the way, providing the compassion and resources needed to make the best decisions for their loved ones.

Take a 5-minute Self-Care Break

- **Rehydrate (1 minute)**: Slowly drink an 8–16 ounce glass of water. Between sips, scan your body and notice areas of stress.
- **Breathe (1 minute)**: Sit up straight. Do slow, deep abdominal breathing (6-10 breaths).
- **Self Massage (1 minute)**: Gently massage your neck, shoulders, arms, and hands to relieve tight muscles.
- **Stretch (1 minute)**: Do slow, gentle neck stretches and shoulder/neck rolls.
- **Mindful Thinking (1 minute)**: Your thoughts impact your bodies. Finish your break with some positive thinking.



24/7 SUPPORT

Hospice & Community Care is available 24 hours a day to assist you with any questions or concerns related to a resident under hospice care. Whether you need guidance on care protocols or support with any aspect of the hospice process, we're here to help.

Call us at (877) 506-0149

HOSPICE
& COMMUNITY CARE

A program of Choices Healthcare