For Caregivers

*** The 36-Hour Day: A Family Guide to Caring for People with Alzheimer Disease, Other Dementias, and Memory Loss in Later Life by Nancy L. Mace, M.A., and Peter V. Rabins, M.D., M.P.H. (NHCPL has 2006 ed.; there is a 2012 ed. available) For over thirty years, this book has been the trusted bible for families affected by dementia disorders. Now completely revised and updated, this guide features the latest information on the causes of dementia, managing the early stages of dementia, the prevention of dementia, and finding appropriate living arrangements for the person who has dementia when home care is no longer an option. [NHCPL]

Always on Call: When Illness Turns Families into Caregivers ed. by Carol Levine (2004) This book presents an intimate look at the world of family caregiving. The compelling narratives by caregivers capture the intensity of the caregiving experience with additional chapters by noted health care professionals, many of whom speak of their own experiences.

And Thou Shalt Honor: The Caregiver’s Companion ed. by Beth Witrogen McLeod (2005) Created as a companion to the PBS film And Thou Shall Honor this book provides page after page of useful advice drawn from the expertise of the nation’s top caregiving researchers and advocate.


Attending the Dying: A Handbook of Practical Guidelines by Megory Anderson (2005) This little volume will be useful to people of any or no faith tradition and will be useful for chaplains, social workers, hospital-care workers, and friend and family of the dying. [NHCPL]

*** A Bittersweet Season: Caring for our Aging Parents and Ourselves by Jane Gross (2011) The author is a reporter for the New York Times as well as manager of the blog The New Old Age. While deftly weaving in the specifics of her personal story, the author addresses practicalities such as what questions to ask when looking for a nursing home, how to unravel the mysteries of Medicare and Medicaid, and how to weigh quality against quantity of life when considering medical interventions. Extensive resources section. [NHCPL]


The Boomer Burden: Dealing with Your Parents Lifetime Accumulation of Stuff by Julie Hall (2008) The author is a professional certified personal property appraiser who specializes in estate liquidation. Chapters include “Planning for the Inevitable,” and “Where’s the Will” to “But What is it Really Worth?” and “Scammers, Schemers, and Other Scoundrels.” [NHCPL]

Caregiving and Loss: Family Needs, Professional Responses (2001) Produced by the Hospice Foundation of America as a companion of their eight part National Bereavement Teleconference. Excellent resource list for further reading. [NHCPL]

Caregivers Challenge: Living, Loving, Letting Go by MaryAnn Schacht, M.S.W (2005) A practical “survival guide,” this book offers information and support for the caregiver as they navigate the end of life stages with a loved one. [NHCPL]

*** The Caregivers Survival Handbook: How to Care for Your Aging Parent Without Losing Yourself by Alexis Abramson (2004) For the exhausted caregiver juggling career, family and the needs of one or both parent, this book is filled with suggestions, resources, and encouragement. The chapter “Will I Ever Get My Life Back?” is particularly reassuring. [NHCPL]
Caring for Our Parents: Inspiring Stories of Families Seeking New Solutions to America's Most Urgent Health Care Crisis by Howard Gleckman (2009) This book tells the sometimes painful, sometimes uplifting, and always compelling stories of the families who struggle every day with the care needs of their loved ones. [NHCPL]

Caring for Yourself While Caring for Your Aging Parents: How to Help, How to Survive by Claire Berman (2005) This book includes practical suggestions aimed at validating and supporting the caregiver’s emotional coping mechanisms. [NHCPL]

Companions for the Passage: Stories of the Intimate Privilege of Accompanying the Dying by Marjorie Ryerson and Thomas Moore (2005) Interviewees are religious, some not; some encouraged their loved ones to accept death, others to fight it to the end. There are stories of heroic nurses and of indifferent hospital bureaucracies, of deaths that came too soon, and those that came at the end of a long, rich life.


Dying at Home: A Family Guide for Caregivers by Andrea Sankar (1999) A practical how-to for those caring for the terminally ill at home, this is also a deeply moving and painfully honest look at the experience of tending to a dying loved one. [NHCPL]

Elder Rage: Or Take My Father...Please? by Jacqueline Marcell (2001) This is a true story written with compassion and humor of one daughter’s roller-coaster ride taking care of her frail mother and bewildered and sometimes belligerent father. Caregivers will find much to identify with and advice and resources for their own situation. [NHCPL]

*** Eldercare 911: the Caregiver's Complete Handbook for Making Decisions by Susan Beerman (2008) From knowing when your parents need help to how to hire a homecare worker this work pretty much addresses all the issues a caregiver may face. Practical, down to earth, and eminently helpful. [NHCPL]

How to Care for Your Aging Parents by Virginia Morris (2004) This is an encyclopedia of care giving. It covers all the emotional, legal, financial, medical, and logistical issues in caring for the elderly. There are sections on expanded housing options, alternative therapies, balancing career and caregiving, and dealing with difficult parents. [NHCPL]


I Am My Mother’s Daughter: Making Peace with Mom – Before It’s Too Late by Iris Krasnow (2006) The author reminds us in both joyful and wrenching true stories that you can’t divorce your mother and you can’t kiss and make up at her funeral. [NHCPL]

Love, Honor, and Value: A Family Caregiver Speaks Out about the Choices and Challenges of Caregiving by Suzanne Geffen Mintz (2002) From her own experience as a family caregiver, the author writes about the emotional impact of chronic illness on the whole family. She also offers down-to-earth advice about learning to live, love, and even grow through meeting the challenges. [NHCPL]

My Mother, Your Mother: Embracing “Slow Medicine”: The compassionate approach to Caring for Your Aging Loved Ones by Dennis McCullough, M.D. (2008) The author has been a family physician and geriatrician for thirty
years. Here he advocates for careful anticipatory “attending” to an elder’s changing needs rather than waiting for a crises that forces medical intervention. [NHCPL]

*** Passages for Caregiving: Turning Chaos into Confidence by Gail Sheehy (2010) Best-selling author, Sheehy, addresses every possible situation in an engaging, timely, and easy-to-follow manner. Includes lots of resources and practical tips. [NHCPL]

“Practical Caregivers Guide to...” by Sara M. Barton (2012) There are four books in this series: Basic Care, Cancer Care, Home Hospice Care, and Caregiver Support. Though they are self-published e-books, the author speaks from personal experience and a great deal of empathy and common sense about the responsibilities of a caregiver floundering in a complex and confusing medical system. At $0.99 cents each, they will be a real morale booster if you have an e-reader.

Sacred Passage: How to Provide Fearless, Compassionate Care for the Dying by Margaret Coberly, Ph.D., R.N. (2002) Written from a Buddhist perspective. In the West, death is viewed as a tragic and horrible event. Coberly shows us how this view generates fear and denial, which harm the dying by adding unnecessary loneliness, confusion, and mental anguish to the dying process.

*** Should Mom Be Left Alone? Should Dad Be Driving? Your Question and Answer Companion for Caregiving by Dr. Linda Rhodes (2005) Straightforward advice and sensible strategies on topics from health care to money matters to lifestyle changes. [NHCPL]


Voice of Caregiving, The Healing Companion: Stories for Courage, Comfort, and Strength (2009) Filled with the true stories of caregivers from all walks of life, these firsthand accounts have the power to enlighten and inspire. Caregivers speak candidly about their experiences, sharing insights and lending courage to others. [NHCPL]

When the Time Comes: Families with Aging Parents Share their Struggles and Solutions by Paula Span (2009) Span writes about families' emotional challenges, their practical discoveries, and the good news that some of them find a situation that has worked for them and their loved ones. Many find joy in the duty of caring for an older loved one. [NHCPL]

*** Books I personally think are exceptional either in content or readability or both. Worth buying.

This bibliography was prepared by Rebecca Taylor, Funeral Consumers Alliance – Coastal Carolina. Notation of “NHCPL” means the New Hanover County Public Library.

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Questions or for more copies contact:

Rebecca Taylor, President
Funeral Consumers Alliance Coastal Carolina
P.O. Box 4262
Wilmington, NC 28406
Email: BecTreks@aol.com