



## Humor in Caregiving

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DO YOU HAVE A LIGHT-HEARTED  
CAREGIVING STORY TO SHARE?



Sharing such stories with other caregivers can offer some levity to the stresses of caregiving.

Share your story with Mary by emailing [mberk@lifespan-roch.org](mailto:mberk@lifespan-roch.org) and include Humor in Caregiving in your subject line. We'll share your story on our webpage.

You can read stories from other caregivers, too!

Questions? Comments? Let me know!

Email: [mberk@lifespan-roch.org](mailto:mberk@lifespan-roch.org)  
[Use fillable contact form](#)

Laughter may not truly be the best medicine, but there is no question that it helps. The Mayo Clinic reports that laughter has both short-term and long-term physiological effects on the body. It can activate your organs, relieve your stress response, and soothe tension. Over time it can improve your immune system, relieve pain, and improve your mood and sense of satisfaction.

Naomi Bagdonas, a lecturer at Stanford, spoke to the New York Times about levity. She said levity is "the ability to look for reasons to be delighted rather than disappointed in the world around you." (NYT, Nov. 2022) Sometimes it is just recognizing moments when you feel helpless and a little absurd.

When I was caring for my husband following a spinal cord injury, I was trying so hard to do everything "right." Helping him transfer from his wheelchair to the bed was especially challenging early on. One evening as I was helping him to bed, I forgot to lock the wheels on the wheelchair and as I lifted him, the chair slid backward. There was nothing I could do but hang onto him and let us both gradually slump onto the ground. I started to cry. I was so mad at myself for forgetting that important step of locking the chair. Then we both started to laugh. Why not? We looked ridiculous in a helpless heap on the floor. (Fortunately, I was able to reach a neighbor who helped him safely to bed).

**"Sometimes you will  
never know the value  
of a moment until it  
becomes a memory."  
-Dr. Seuss**

The point is that in that moment, laughter saved us both. He felt less vulnerable knowing the fall didn't injure him and I discovered we could manage this even if I wasn't perfect. We also had a silly moment to look back on and laugh again.

Caring for a loved one is serious business. It can be stressful, exhausting, and frustrating. But I suspect each of you reading this has had moments when humor saved your day. Part of managing any difficult job is to find moments of joy, moments of delight. Looking for moments of humor is not mean or disrespectful. It is not laughing at the person you love. It is simply making your lives lighter with laughter.