



WII Caregiver Support: Message for the Commanding Officer

“Care to the caregiver” means helping caregivers battle burnout that often results from the mental, physical, emotional, and financial demands associated with caregiving. The emergency procedures briefing airlines provide is a powerful illustration that describes the tug-of-war caregivers experience as it relates to their care and caring for their WII service member:

Sitting in a plane stuck in the stuffy air you hear the flight attendant’s voice crack across the intercom as he begins the emergency briefing. He states that in the event of a loss in cabin pressure you are to place the oxygen mask on yourself first, and only then try to help others.

The attendant’s instructions warn against the caregiver’s instinct to disregard their own health and well-being in favor of their WII service member’s. Rightfully, this simple warning points to a powerful truth - if we can help caregivers care for themselves, then we help serve and meet the needs of both the caregiver and care recipient. We can help ensure the caregiver is able to provide lasting care by battling burnout through mitigating methods such as learning to ask for help, take a break to read or go out to eat, and make sure they don’t skip meals.

What can leadership do?

- Promote the [Caregiver Guide to Battling Burnout](#)
- Encourage caregivers to seek help before they experience symptoms of burnout
- Help make caregivers aware that asking for help is a sign of strength

For more information on how to help visit the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center’s [Caregiver Support](#) Webpage.