**Caregiving**

***An Imagine Life HMV***

By Steven Mandel MD

**INTRODUCTION:** Currently, there are 65.7 million Americans who are considered caregivers. A family caregiver can be an adult family member, a parent, adult child, spouse, friend or other relative. Caregiver responsibilities include arranging all appointments, transportation, household duties such as cooking, cleaning, laundry, finance management, and more. The patient and their caregiver may at times be overwhelmed, confused, angry, hopeless. emotionally drained and worried about numerous issues including finances and changes in lifestyle. There are also often significant changes to the roles within the family in the caregiving relationship.

About 15% of the caregivers do so long-distance, which involves special challenges. Many will require either the patient or caregiver upending their life and moving so they will be closer to each other. There are also work and other obligations that must be dealt with and the need for a way to handle emergencies that might arise.

Many of us have become caregivers, whether in person, long distance, or somewhere in between. Some of us are involved in all of the minutiae of the person we care for and some of us are only Involved in big-picture, occasional care or decisions. In this session, we are going to discuss what it means to be a caregiver and some of the things involved in it.

Before we get started, I’m going to do a quick review of the Rules that apply toall HMV

sessions.

**BRIEF RULES:**

1. Our goal is to have an open discussion where everyone’s opinion is respected, not criticized. Conversation is encouraged, confrontation is not.
2. The conversation can be of a rather personal nature, so please respect everyone’s privacy by agreeing that all comments made in this space stay in this space - what’s said here, stays here.
3. Please discuss only your *own* opinion from your *own* experiences.
4. Please allow others time to speak as well and don’t interrupt.
5. My role as facilitator is to keep the conversation on track, as well as to do my best to ensure everyone has an opportunity to speak. In that role, it may be needed to gently interrupt, or redirect someone. Please try to be understanding.

**ADDITIONAL RULES FOR VIRTUAL HMVS:**

1. Enable your video so that the other participants can see you.
2. Be sure to login under your actual full name. Guys aren’t going to want to express themselves candidly with ‘Sara’s iPad.’ If necessary “Rename” yourself. If you need help, the host can do it for you.
3. Ensure that no one else is in the room with you during the session.
4. Try to be in a quiet environment or keep yourself muted until It is your tum to talk.

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION (these can be used in any order):**

* Are you a caregiver?
  + Tell us about your experience.
  + What is your understanding of the condition that the family member is experiencing?
  + Did it just happen or was there a plan in place?
* Are you the primary caregiver?
  + Was that intentional or did il just happen?
  + Who is in the extended support system?
* How has this impacted your relationship with other family members?
  + Is there such a thing as a “fair share?”
  + Does everyone do their “fair share?”
  + How do you deal with those that maybe don’t?
* Have you used other resources needed to reach out to at your disposal?
  + Why or why not?
* How do you manage your work/caregiving responsibilities?
* What are your sources of strength from your Jewish community?
  + Is it clergy?
  + Community?
  + Something else?
* How do you manage your own self care?
  + Do you everfeel guilty about it?
  + How do you address that?
* How do you prepare for a crisis with your family member?
  + Are there other things you could do?
* What impact has this had on your life and other family members?
* What do you wish had been done differently?
  + Is there anything you can do about it now?