SUPPORTING A LOVED ONE LIVING WITH CHRONIC PAIN

Tips for Caregivers & Care Partners

Being there isn't about fixing — it means listening, learning, and validating.

WORDS THAT COMFORT

When your loved one is in pain, validation matters more than advice. Try saying:

- "I'm here for you. How can I support you right now?"
- "I see you're going through a lot. If you want to talk or need anything, I'm here."
- "I may not fully understand your pain, but I care deeply and want to support you."
- "This must be incredibly challenging. I'm available — whether it's running errands or just sitting together."
- "I can't take away the pain, but I can help carry the burden. What would help you today?"
- "Your well-being matters to me. I'm here to listen, not judge."
- "I want to learn how I can be a better support. What helps you most during tough times?"
- "You're not alone — even when it feels like it."
- "I believe you."

AVOID UNHELPFUL ASSUMPTIONS

Even well-meaning advice can come across as dismissive. Be mindful of:

❌ Saying "Just take time off work" — not everyone has that option.

❌ Suggesting "Just lose weight" or "Exercise more" — chronic conditions are complex.

❌ Assuming self-care alone will improve chronic pain — it's rarely that simple.

❌ Suggesting "Just see another doctor" — past harm, cost, or access barriers can make that difficult.

BE PRESENT, NOT PRESCRIPTIVE

Instead of attempting to solve your loved one's pain or challenges, aim to:

- **Validate** their experience.
- **Ask** what they need.
- **Listen** without judgment.
- **Respect** their choices.
- **Learn** what types of support help them the most — not just what works for others.

YOU DESERVE SUPPORT, TOO

Caring for someone with chronic pain can be emotionally and physically demanding.

U.S. Pain Foundation offers free online peer support groups for caregivers and care partners — a safe space to share experiences, connect with others, and feel understood.

Learn more and sign up: painconnection.org/caregiver-support-group

Every act of empathy matters.
Chronic pain is invisible, but
your compassion is not.