

Helping caregivers who don't identify as such: strategies for professionals and practitioners

Why might someone not identify themselves as a “caregiver”?



Some people may believe **they don't “do enough”** to qualify as a caregiver or that the type of support they provide doesn't align with the definition.



Some people feel that the support they provide is **simply a natural offshoot** of their responsibility as a loved one (spouse/partner, child, parent, etc.).



Some people reject the label of caregiver to **protect the dignity of the person they care for**, i.e., in refusing to define that person by their disability.



Not identifying as a caregiver can be a way of **downplaying the diagnosis** or worsening health of the person being cared for.



If someone sees no benefit to self-identifying as a caregiver, **they may simply choose not to do so.**



Certain caregiver populations are **less apt to identify with the role.**



Refusing to label oneself as a “caregiver” may be a way to **establish limits on the responsibilities** one is prepared to assume.



What good would it do for me to call myself a caregiver? It's **just a label.**
(Free translation)



– Élisabeth, who provides care to her spouse



For more information, see the infographic, **Helping caregivers self-identify: strategies for professionals and practitioners.**



As a professional or practitioner,
you can help people who provide care to others and guide them toward services, even if they do not identify as “caregivers”.

Below are various approaches you can use in your practice:



Use language that emphasizes the responsibilities of caring

and the caregiver's needs without necessarily using the word “caregiver”.



Keep in mind that the most important thing is to provide support,

regardless of whether or not the person in question sees themselves as a caregiver. Attempting to impose this label may prove upsetting to the person and thus harm the relationship of trust you have built.



Address the needs of the caregiver and care receiver together.

Not only does this let the care provider feel more involved: they may also be more inclined to seek support after understanding how their own needs, while different, are related to those of the person they support.