



Helping our Siblings - Helping Ourselves

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Caregiver since teenager



As a sibling I faced

- Stress
- Questions about the future
- Stigma
- Afraid to ask help
- Questions about the disease
- How to settle my life / my limits

“I felt so fragile, I didn’t know what to do”

“ I didn’t know if hospitalization was something that would help or not”

Attempt to have an independent life –
without breaking apart from the
family.

I travel a lot, but still feel that I have to be near, to be a
carer not only for my sister, but my mother too.



“Never worry alone” Edward Hallowell

It feels safer to be with people who have experienced what you have experienced

There are many things you can share with another person who had for example to face stigma, a person who had to get familiar with hospitalization of a loved one on crisis.

“Athens Siblings”

Association KINAPSY – 2006- 2016, Founding member.

An association of people who had a family member, a sibling with mental health problems.



Stories from Coffee Meetings

“I felt that someone could hear me”

“I can share very easily my fears with another sibling”



Greek Carers Network “EPIONI”

- Contribute to the recognition of informal carers in Greece
- Support carers in Greece by organizing educational seminars



The Situation of carers in Europe

The Personal is Political

Across Europe, unpaid family carers and friends are the largest providers of health and social care support

As demographic change increases demand, the 'balance of care' increasingly shifts to informal care

Women are disproportionately affected and are more likely to give up employment to care



The “economic” value of informal care

Estimates on the economic value of unpaid informal care in EU Member States range from 50 to 90 percent of the overall costs of “formal” long-term care provision

Estimated value of contribution made by carers in the UK: 140 billion € per year

Estimated value of contribution made by carers in Ireland:
5,3 billion € per year (27% of Dept. of social protection’s budget)

Source: [www.carersuk.org/media/k2/attachments/Valuing_carers_2011
Carers_UK.pdf](http://www.carersuk.org/media/k2/attachments/Valuing_carers_2011_Carers_UK.pdf)

Carers are indispensable for our welfare systems!

Carers are an indispensable component of our health and social care systems:

→ Without informal carers, formal care provision would simply be unsustainable, and many care needs (in all age groups) neglected!

And even more so in the future, due to the growing care needs following population ageing and the increasing prevalence of frailty and chronic disease.

What do carers want?



Financial support: income based on a minimum wage

Employment: flexible working, paid and/or unpaid leave

Pension credits for care time

Regular breaks from caring

Training

That's why it is necessary to...

- **Develop support services for carers** and to **enable carers to remain in paid employment...**
- **Ensure that** EU and national **policies take account of carers** (e.g. by promoting their social inclusion)
- **Raising awareness** on the significant contribution made by carers to our welfare systems and the economy, and the need to safeguard this contribution



What can (primary) care professionals do now to support carers ?

- Acknowledge carers, what they do, and the problems they have.
- Treat carers as you would other team members and listen to their opinion.
- Ask after the health and welfare of the carer as well as the patient.
- Provide information about being a carer and support available.
- Be an advocate for carers !



*There are 4 kinds of people in the world:
Those who have been carers,
Those who currently are carers,
Those who will be carers ,and
Those who will need carers.*

Rosalyn Carter, Former First Lady of the United States

Thank you for your attention!

