



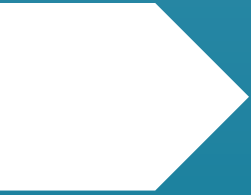
ASHA

**2026 ASHA National Survey of
Caregivers: Insights and
Experiences**

YouGov[®] | May 2026

Table of Contents

Objectives & Methodology	3 - 4
Key Findings	5 - 6
Section I: Introduction & Care Background	7 - 17
Subsection – Key Insights: Caregiver Impact	13 - 17
Section II: Resources & Support	18 - 23
Section III: Communication Challenges	24 - 40
Subsection – Key Insights: Interactions & Communication Outside of Home	39 - 40
General Appendix	41 - 42



**Objectives,
Methodology
& Key
Findings**



Objectives & Methodology



Research Objectives:

This survey aims to profile the experiences of, and challenges faced by, caregivers of people who ASHA members serve (adults with speech, language, hearing, and/or cognitive disorders or difficulties).

Research objectives include determining:

- The impact of caregiving responsibilities on personal life, work, and interpersonal relationships.
- Attitudes and perceptions towards caregiving roles and responsibilities.
- Challenges and stressors associated with caregiving, including communication difficulties.
- The effectiveness of support and resources available to caregivers.
- Strategies and interventions that could improve the daily lives of caregivers and care recipients.
- The emotional and financial impact of caregiving.

Methodology:

Method: 15-minute online survey

Fieldwork: March 19-28, 2026

Sample size: n=522 adults 18-84 who are caregivers of people who ASHA members serve

A census-clicks approach to sampling and weighting was used. This methodology is often used to ensure a representative sample of hard-to-reach groups and involves sampling and weighting to the closest known population; in this case, U.S. adults ages 18+.

Note: For the purposes of this survey, **caregivers of adults** are responsible, fully or partially, for assisting an adult (18+) family member, spouse, loved one, or friend with medical care/appointments, household tasks, or daily living needs, in a sole or shared capacity.

Communication difficulties were defined as situations that included any of the following:

- trouble hearing or understanding what the other person says
- difficulty speaking or expressing thoughts clearly to the other person
- memory or thinking problems that make it hard to follow or remember information

Key Findings

The Demands of Caregiving

Caregiving is a significant, long-term commitment, with the average caregiver providing care for 39 hours a week—the equivalent of a full-time job. The majority of caregivers are in sustained situations, with over half providing care for at least two years. More than 60% of care recipients require near-constant or constant support.

Caregiving can require significant changes to caregivers' lives. More than one-quarter of caregivers have changed their living situations to provide care—by moving in with the care recipient or by moving the care recipient into their own homes. Much more commonly, caregiving also leads to less time for their own personal needs and activities, additional stress, reduced income and less time for other family.

The impact on wellbeing is substantial: nearly three-quarters (73%) of caregivers report effects on their wellbeing, and 71% say they need additional support—highlighting a clear and unmet need. Family and friends are the most common sources of support, followed by health care providers.

Key Findings

Impact of Communication Difficulties on Caregiving

For caregivers of people with hearing, speech, language or cognitive issues, breakdowns in communication are frequent, occurring daily for more than half (52%). Communication difficulties complicate caregiving and daily life. More than 6 in 10 caregivers say daily life would be much easier if communication breakdowns could be reduced, and the same number say that such breakdowns make caregiving more difficult. Communication problems can also negatively affect the mental health of the caregiver, with nearly half saying that such problems can make them feel like they are not doing a good job, despite trying hard. The potential impact of communication difficulties on medical care is a concern for more than half of caregivers as well.

While communication difficulties multiply the struggles of caregiver, a near-universal (93%) attempt to resolve this is repeating, rephrasing, or simplifying what is said on a daily basis. However, this strategy is only truly effective for about a third. Struggles with communication result in negative emotional states for both caregivers and care recipients. Caregivers most commonly feel frustration (58%) and sadness (41%), while care recipients most commonly feel frustration (56%) and anxiety (46%).

There is an opportunity to help support caregivers by raising awareness of the availability of ASHA professionals who can help with these issues, as well as the outcomes. Just 4 in 10 caregivers have worked with a professional to help with communication or cognitive issues. While there is some awareness around this type of help, expectations of the degree of help are fairly low—indicating both an education gap and an opportunity to better communicate outcomes and value.

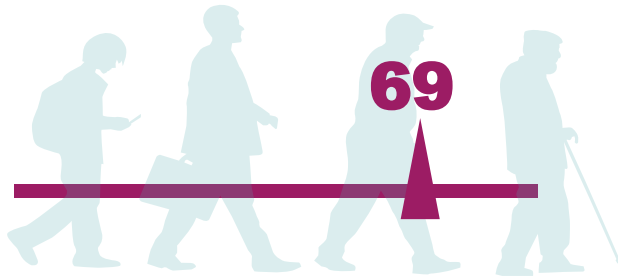


Section I: **Introduction & Care Background**

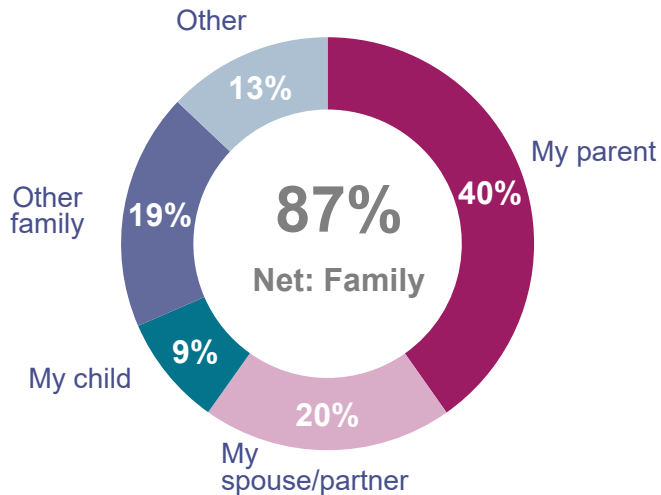


Care Recipient Snapshot – Total Sample

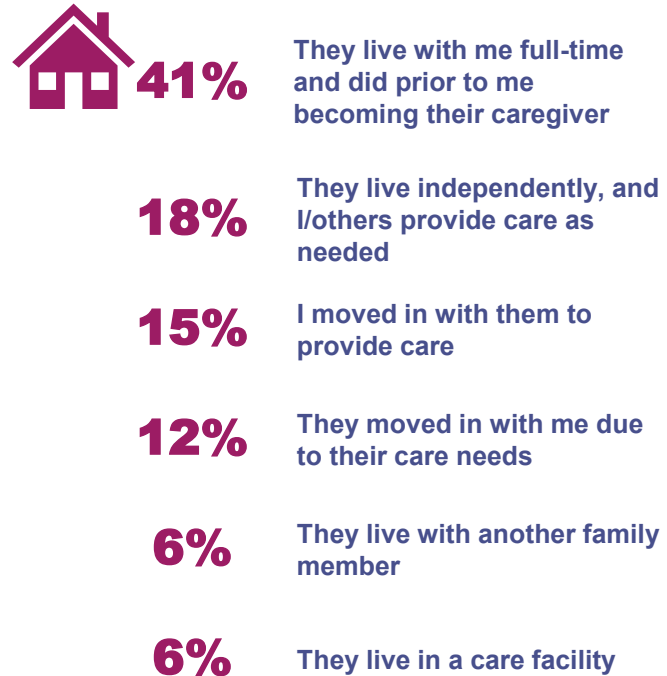
Avg. Age of Care Recipient



Relationship to Care Recipient



Living Situation of Care Recipient



Need for Caregiver



Care Recipient Snapshot – Total Sample

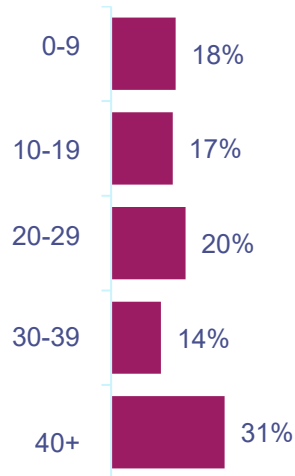


Caregiving Details

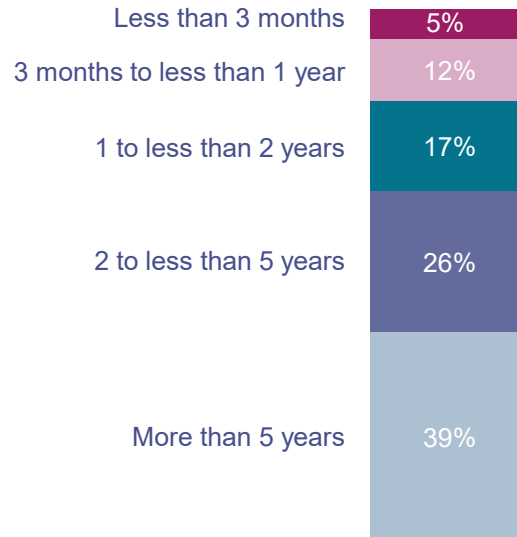
Hours Per Week Providing Care



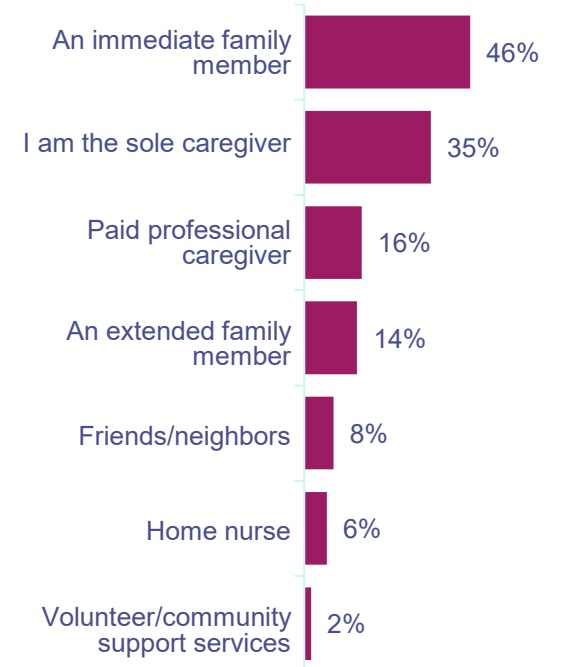
39 hours avg.



Length of Care Provision



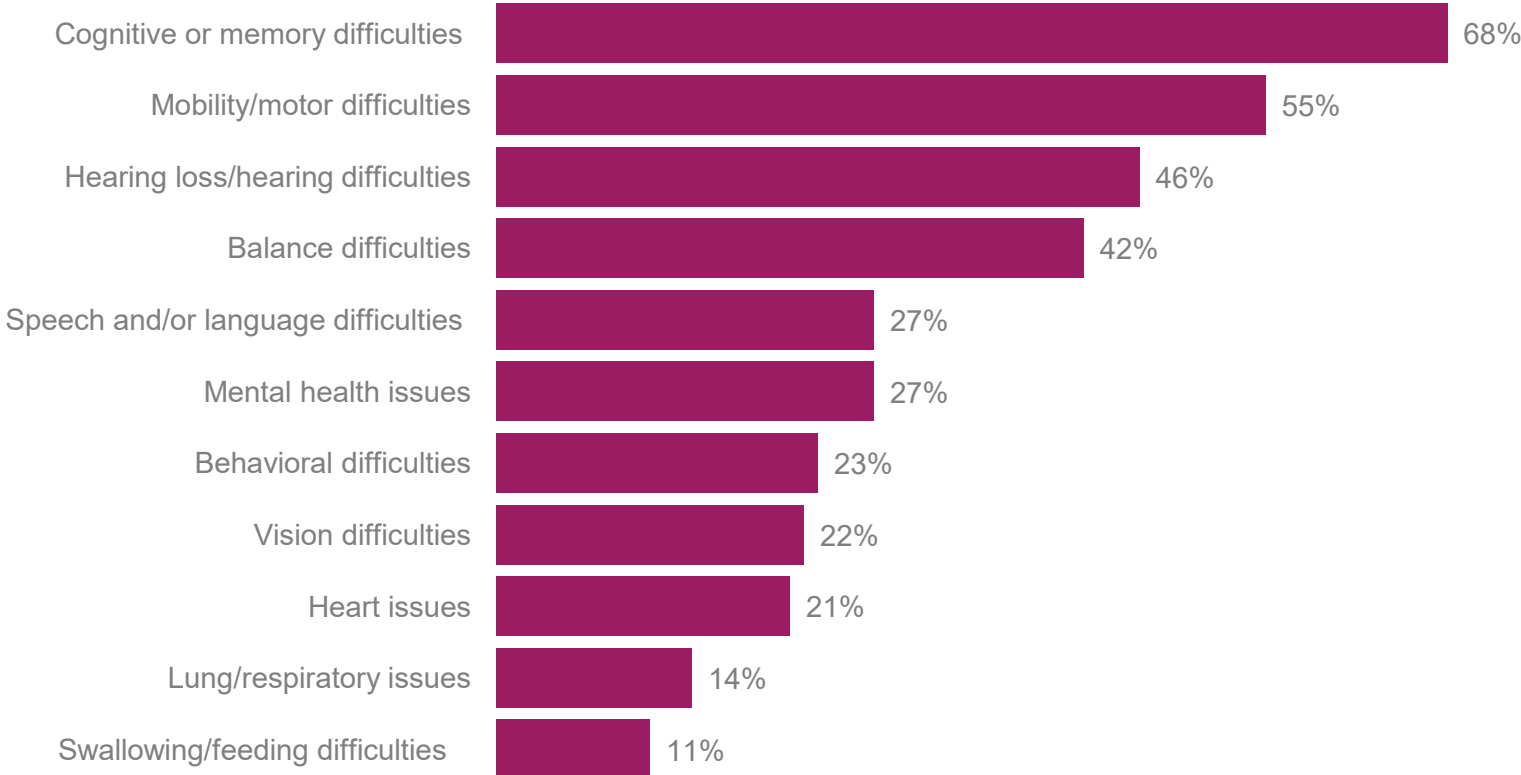
Other Caregiving Providers



Cognitive or memory difficulties are the top reasons for care.


Reasons for Care

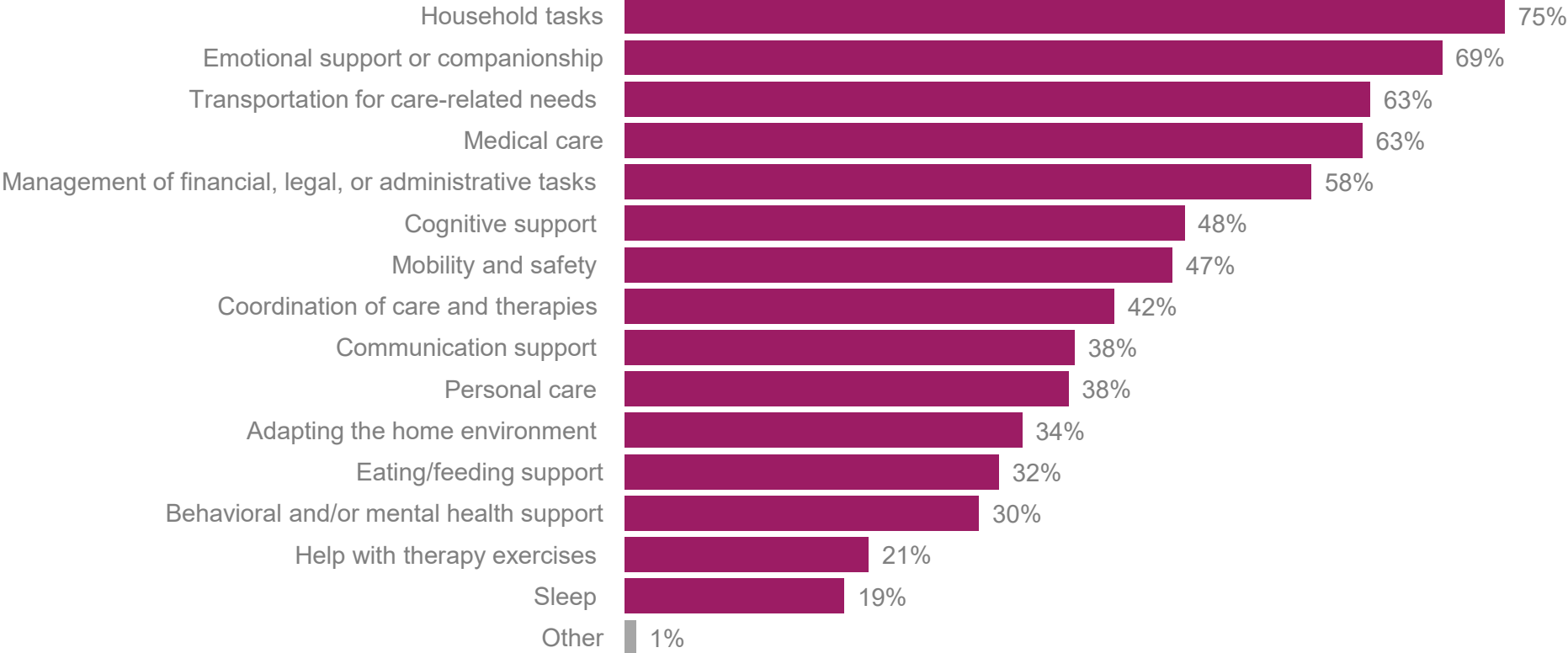
 Among Total



Common responsibilities for caregivers include assistance with household tasks, emotional support, transportation and medical care.


Aspects of Care

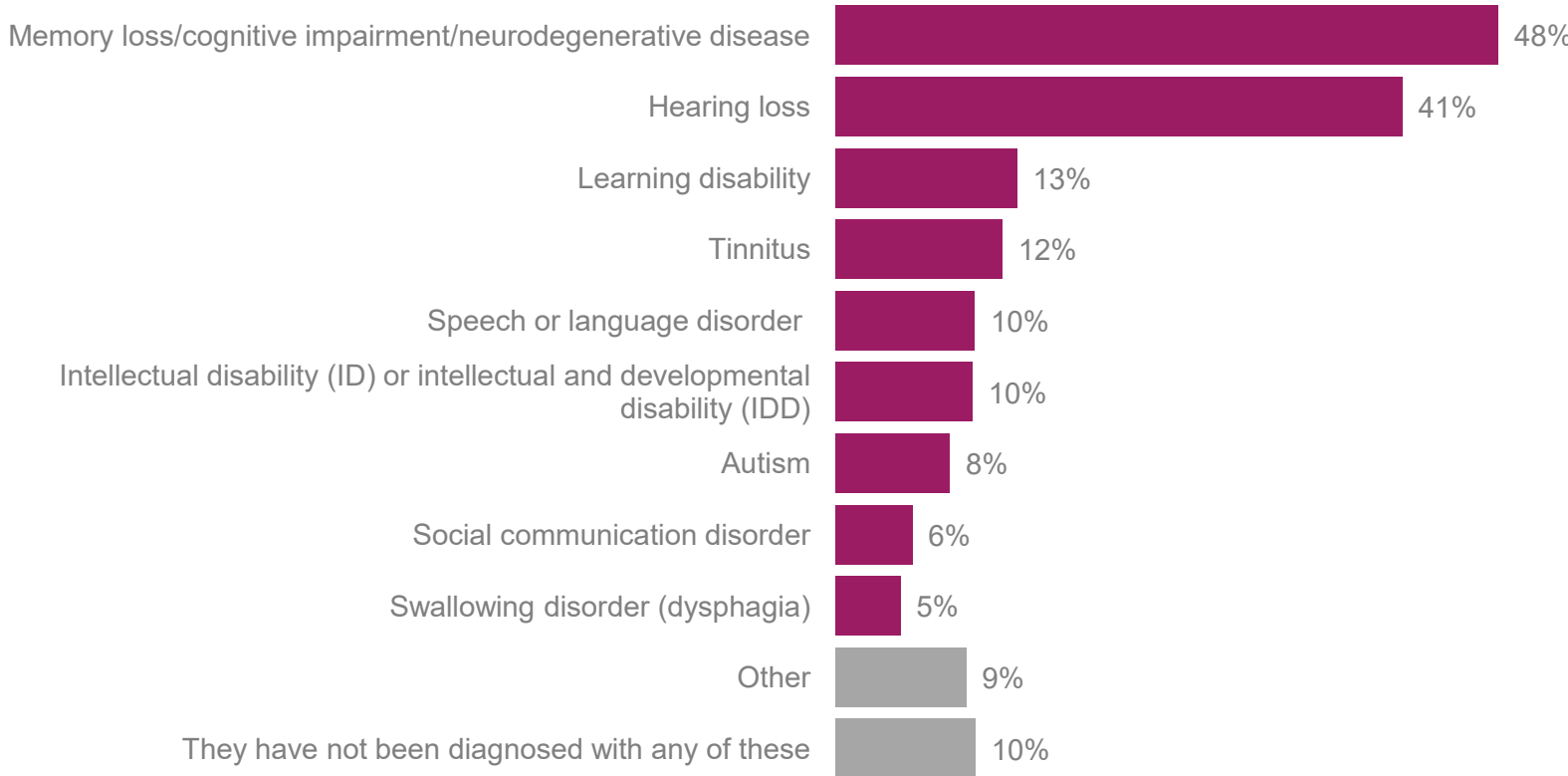
 Among Total



The most commonly diagnosed conditions for care recipients are cognitive issues and hearing loss.

Diagnosed Conditions of the Care Recipient

 Among Total





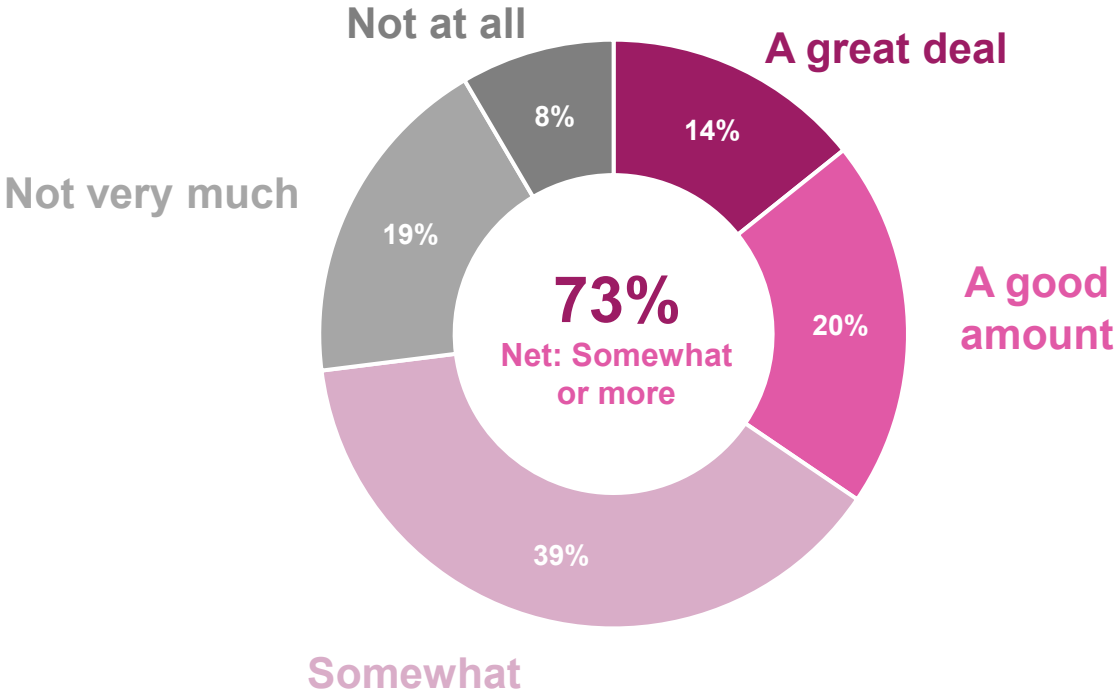
Key Insights:

Caregiver Impact

A little over a third report caregiving affects their wellbeing a great deal/a good amount. This rises to 73% when including those who say it has somewhat of an impact.

Caregiving Wellbeing Impact

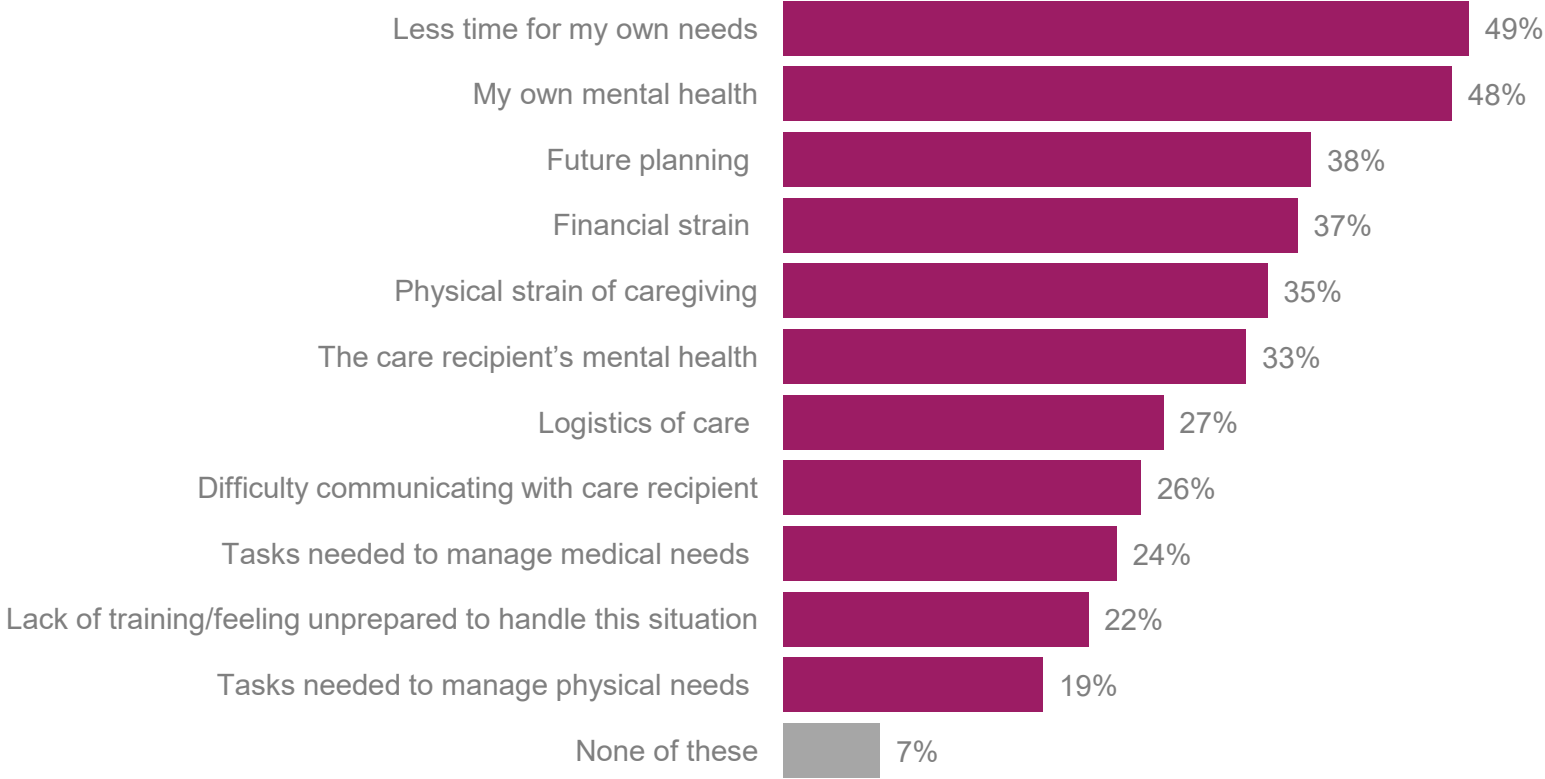
 Among Total



The most commonly reported challenges for caregivers relate to their own needs – nearly half cite less time for their own needs and their own mental health as key challenges.


Caregiving Challenges

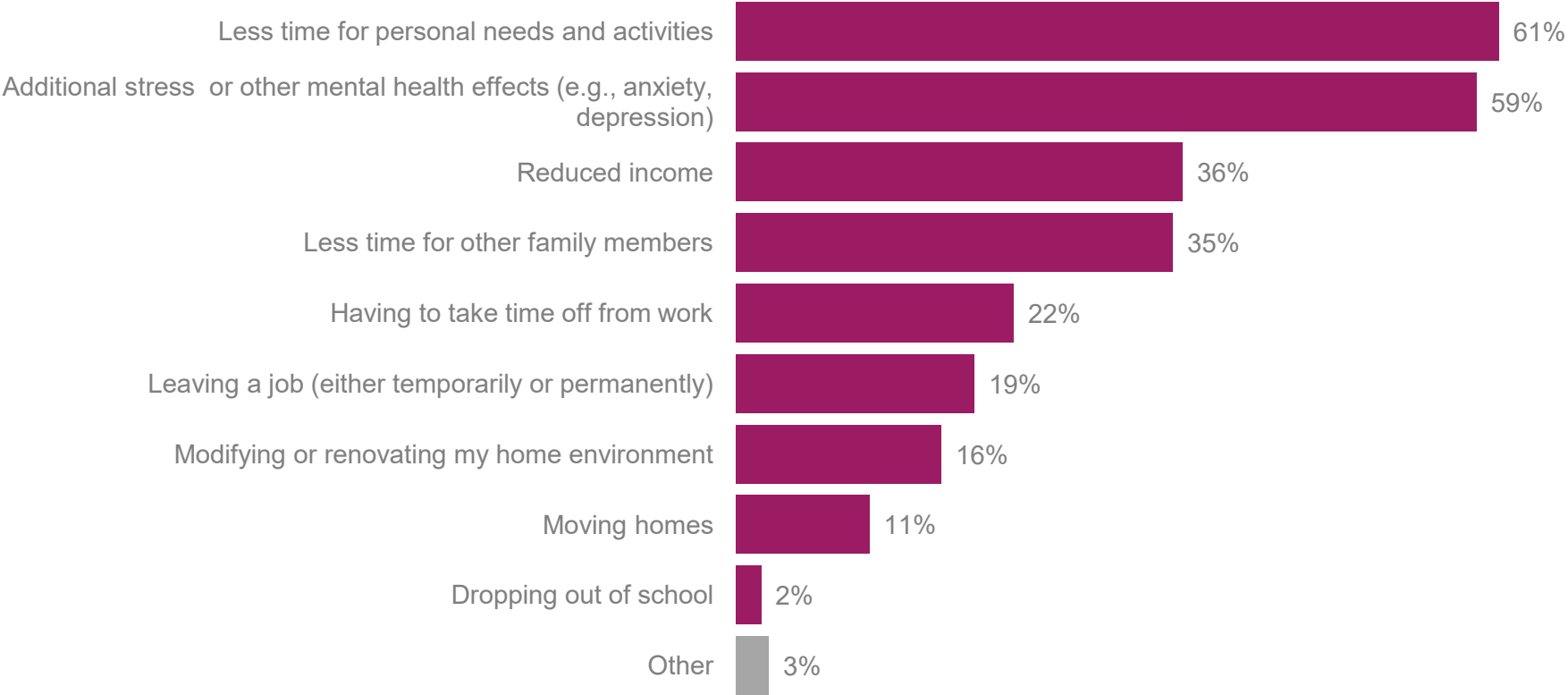
 Among Total



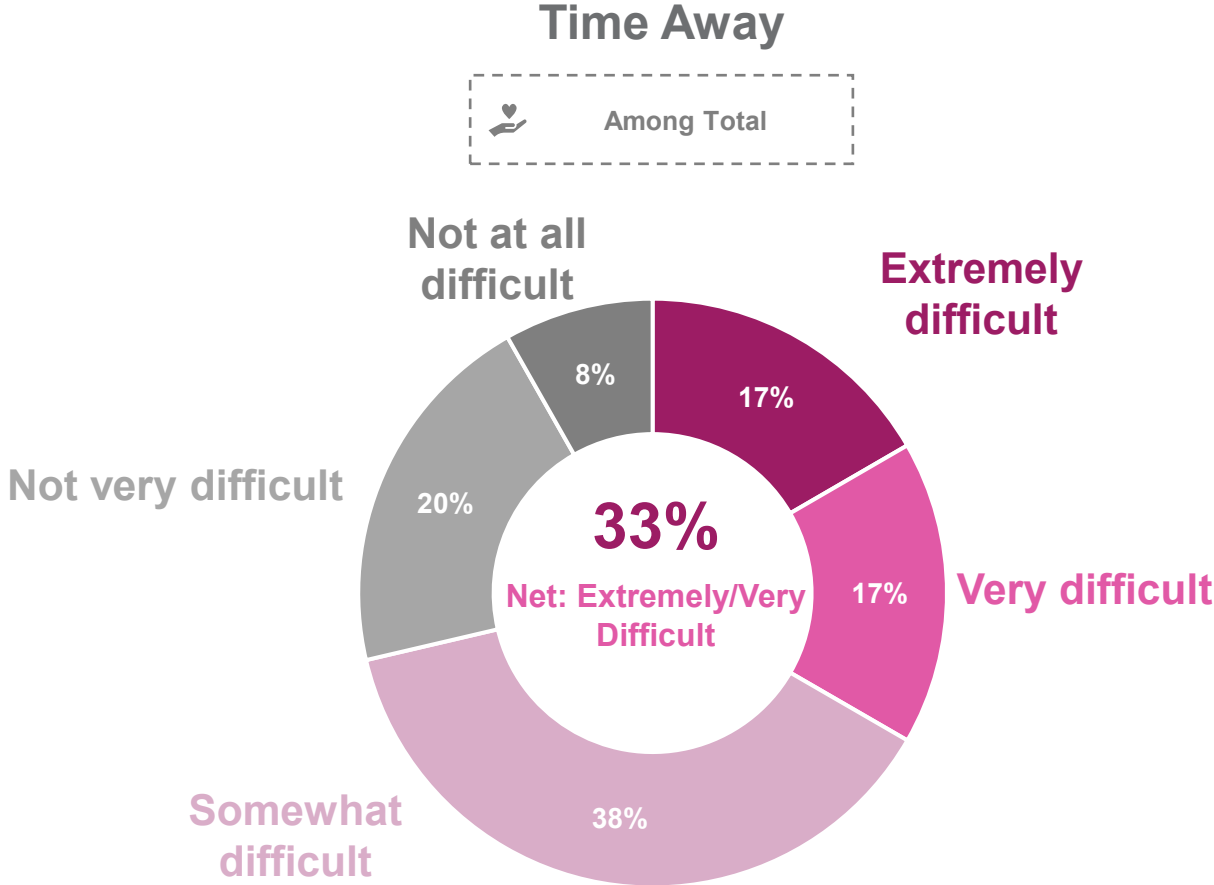
Reduced personal time and mental health strain are the primary tolls of caregiving, each reported by about 6 in 10.

Caregiver Changes to Life

 Among Total



One-third of caregivers have an extremely or very difficult time getting away to tend to their own needs. This jumps to nearly 3 in 4 when factoring in those who find it somewhat difficult.





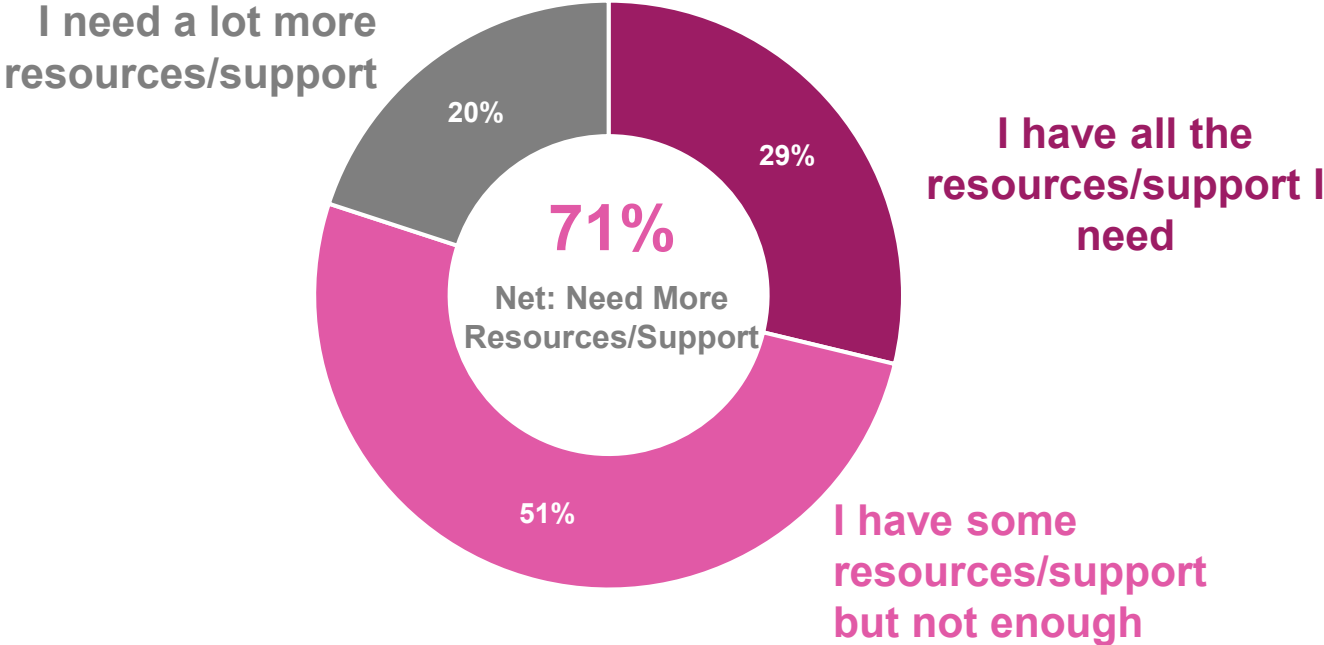
Section II: **Resources & Support**



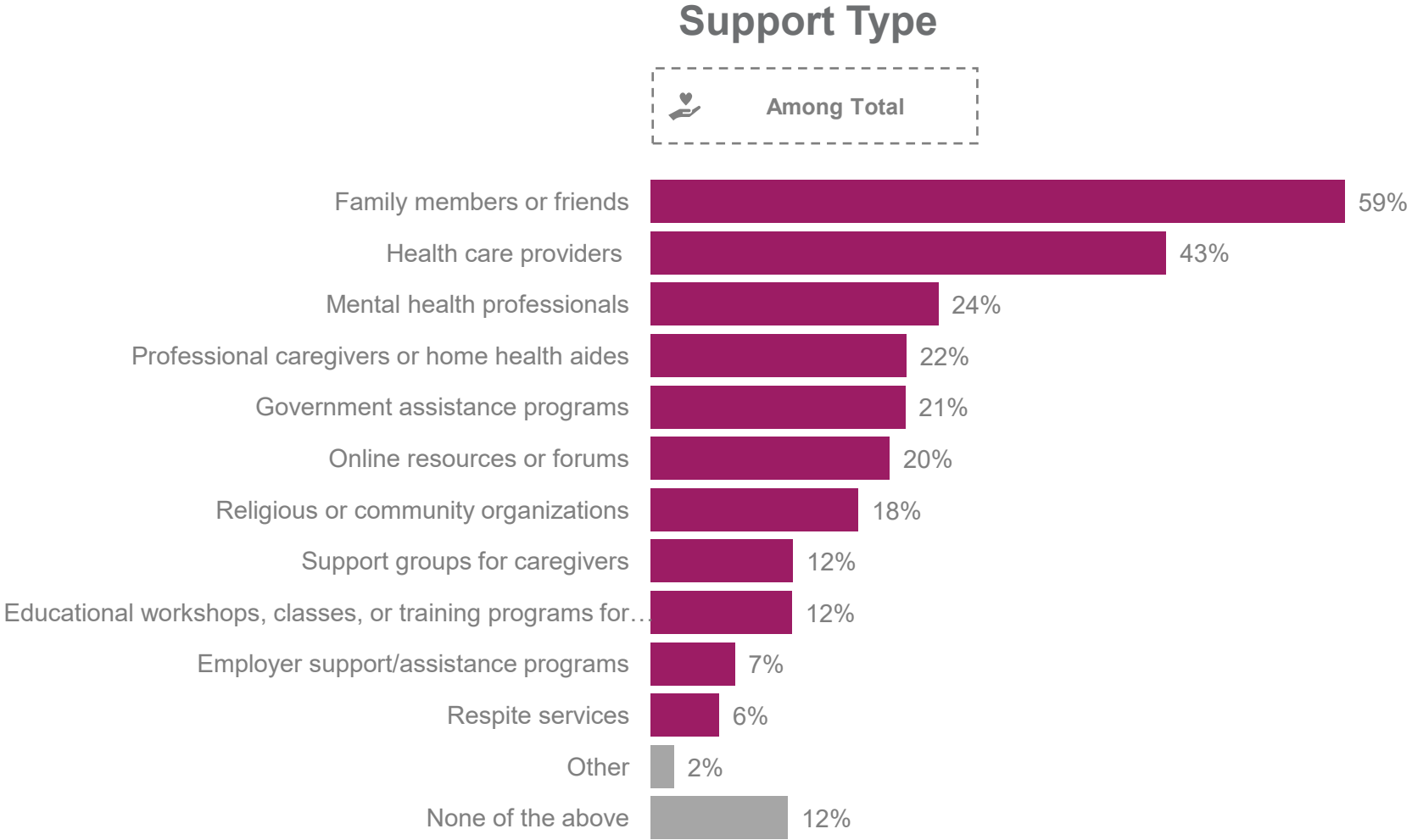
Most caregivers have some level of support; however, more than 7 in 10 explicitly state it doesn't meet their full needs.

Amount of Resources/Support

 Among Total

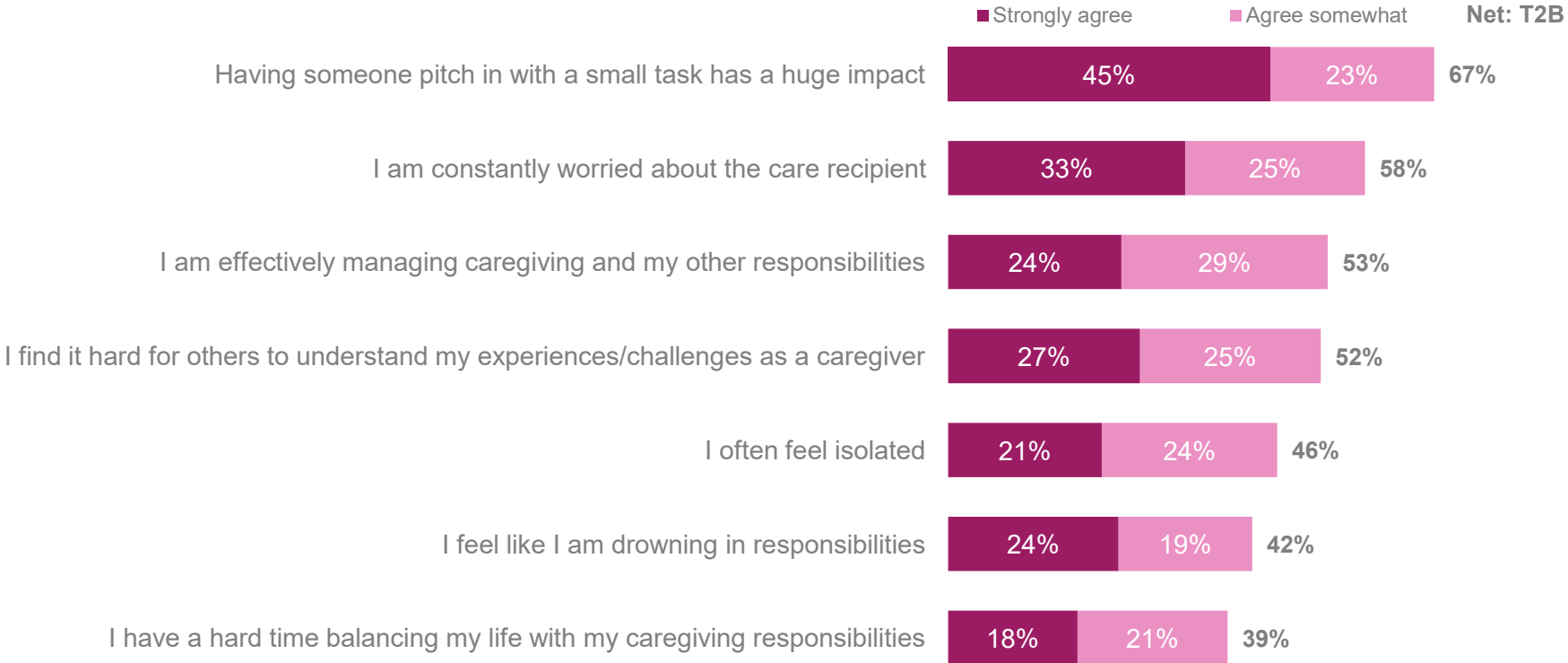


Family members or friends are the most valued source of support, followed by health care providers.




More than 3 in 5 caregivers would appreciate help on even a small task, and more than half say that they constantly worry about the person they're caring for.

Statements on Responsibilities



More than 6 in 10 worry about the care recipient if they can no longer provide care.

Statements on Long-Term Responsibilities

 Among Total

■ Strongly agree

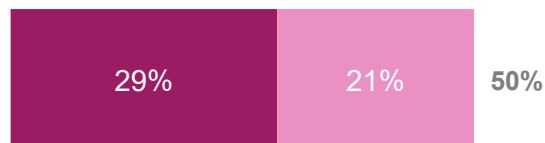
■ Agree somewhat

Net: T2B

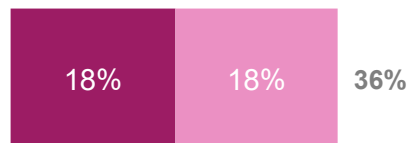
I worry about what will happen to the care recipient when I can no longer care for them



Thinking about finances and preserving the care recipient's assets is a major stressor for me*



There is a plan in place for long-term care if the care recipient needs it

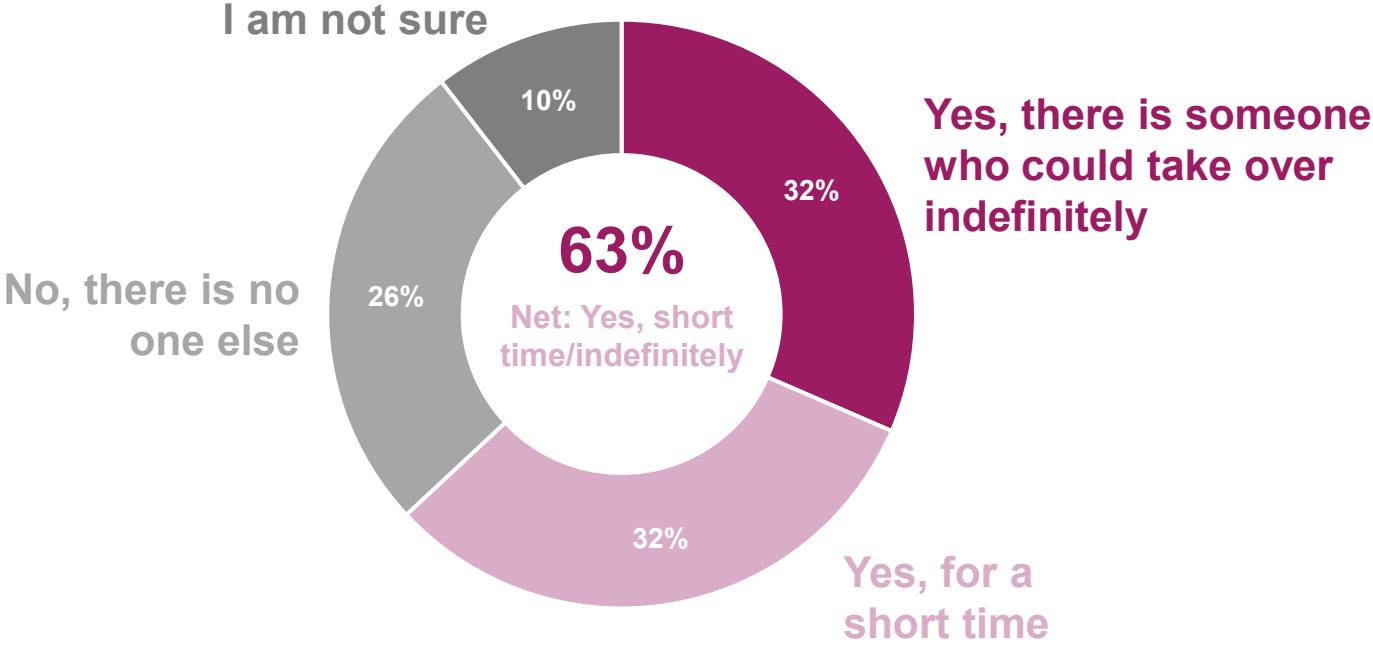


*Response truncated.

While three-fifths can source respite care for their care recipient, just one-third overall can secure it indefinitely. More than one-quarter say there is no one else who can provide care.

Respite Care

 Among Total





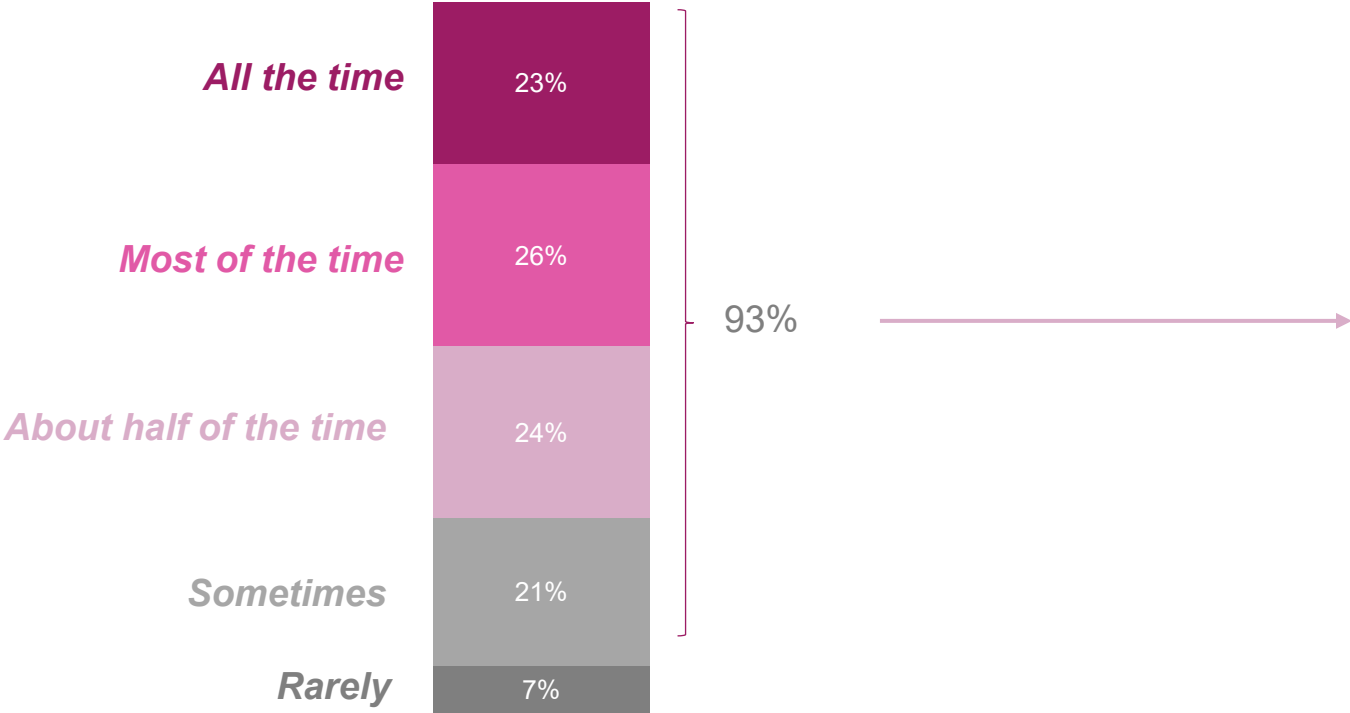
Section III: **Communication Challenges**



Nearly all caregivers repeat, rephrase or simplify what they say daily. Although a frequent occurrence, it is not an effective solution for the majority. Just over one-third indicate it is extremely or very effective, and nearly one-half cite it as only somewhat effective.

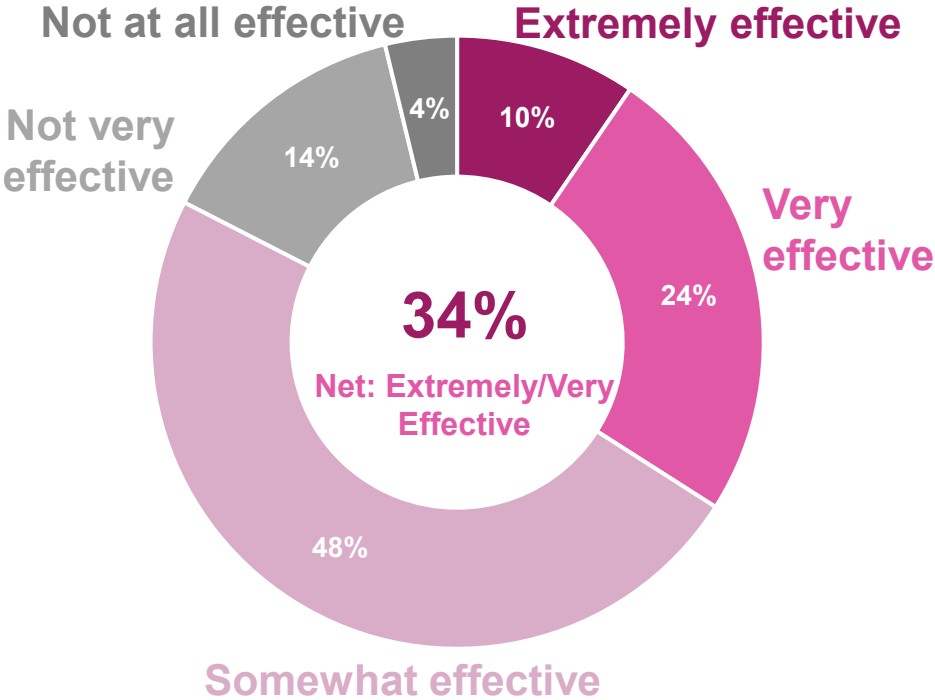
Frequency of Repeating

Among Total



Effectiveness of Repeating

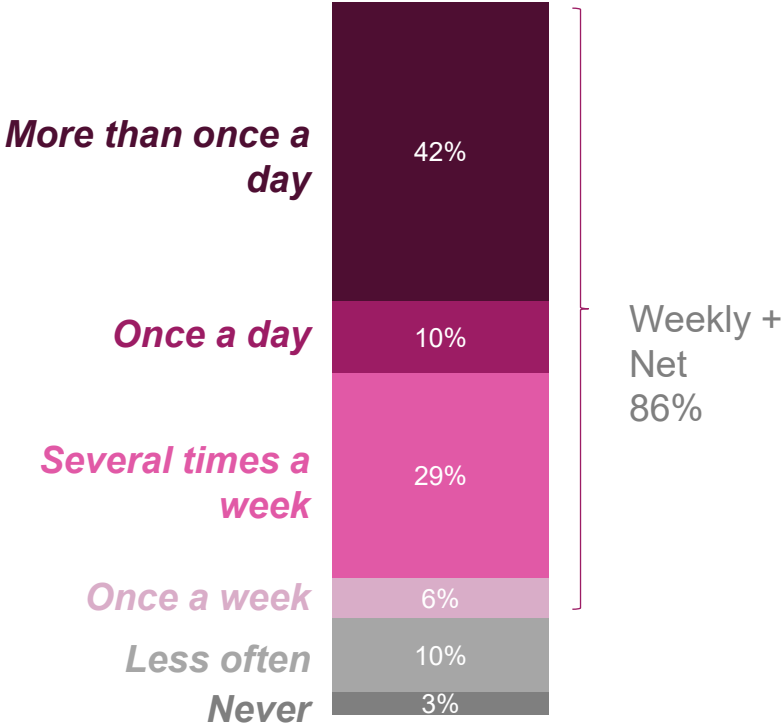
Among Repeat at Least Sometimes



Communication difficulties occur on a daily basis for more than half, and at least weekly for the vast majority of caregivers.


Frequency of Communication Difficulties

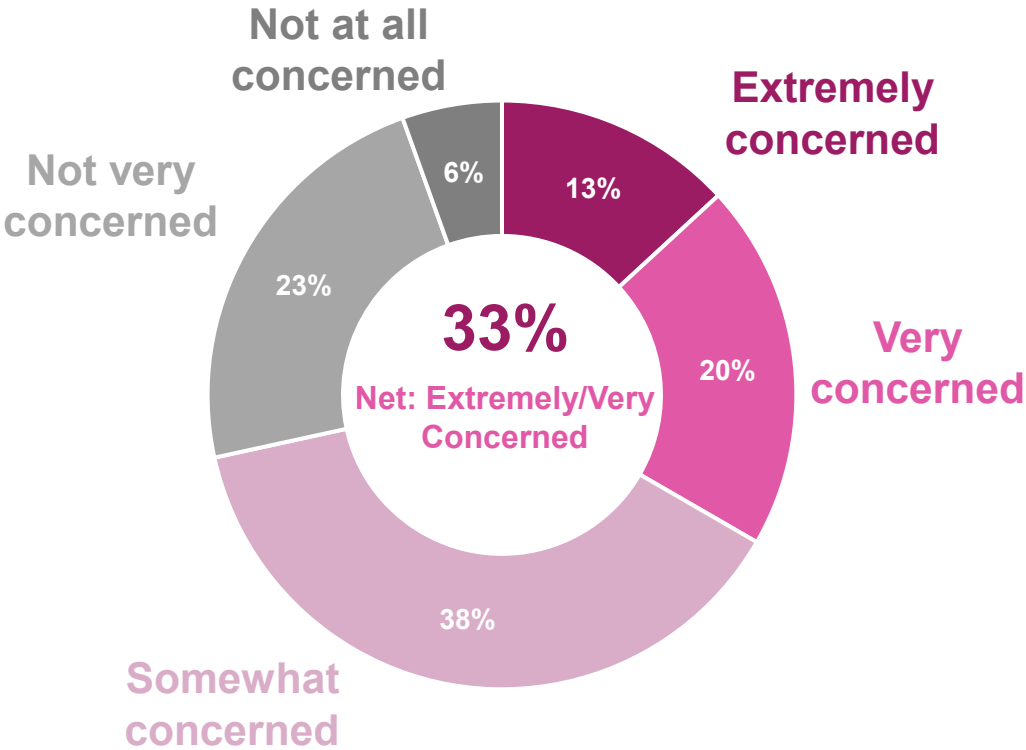
 Among Total




One-third of caregivers are extremely or very concerned that communication difficulties could impact the safety of the care recipient.

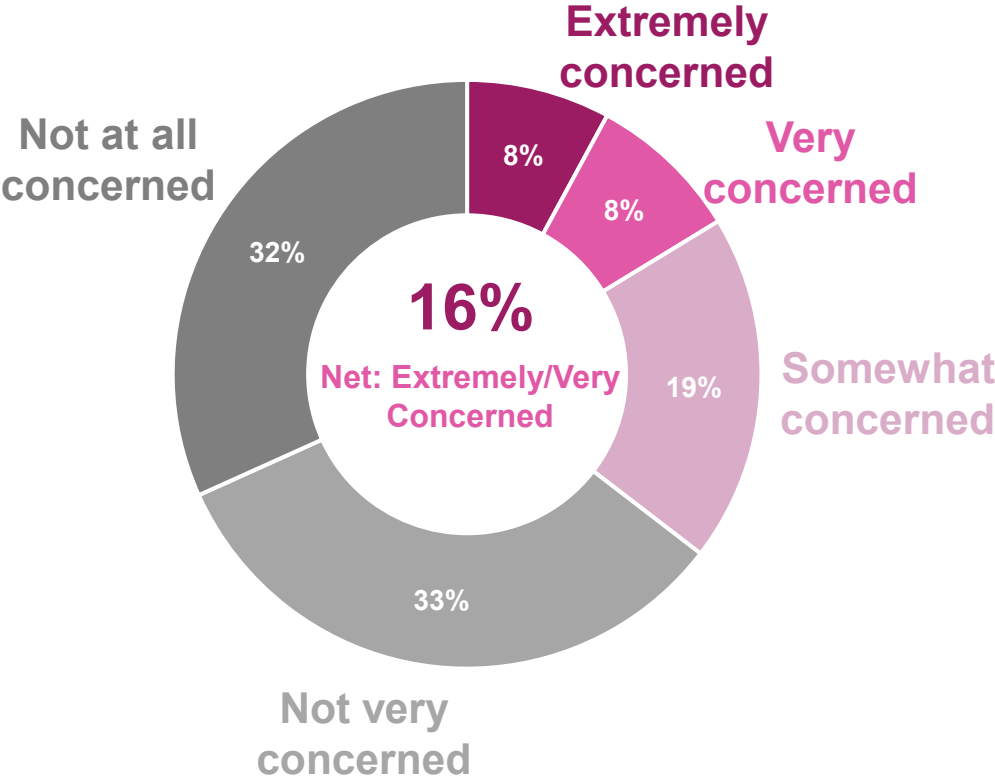
Care Recipient Safety

 Among Those Who Have Communication Problems




Caregiver Safety

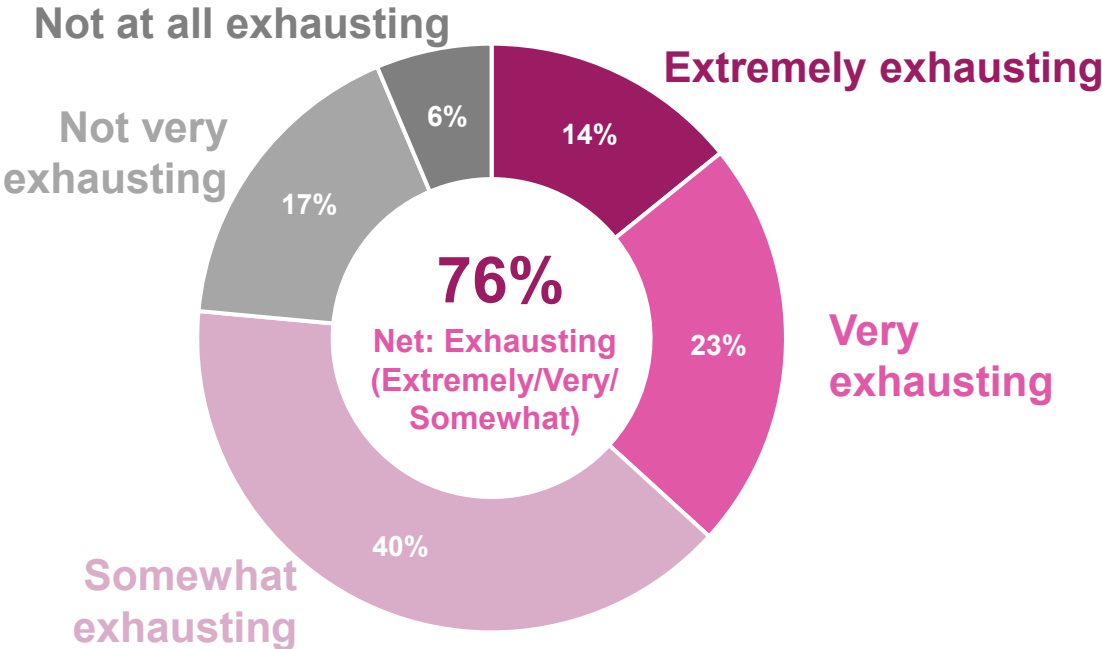
 Among Those Who Have Communication Problems



Nearly 8 in 10 say resolving communication difficulties is exhausting.

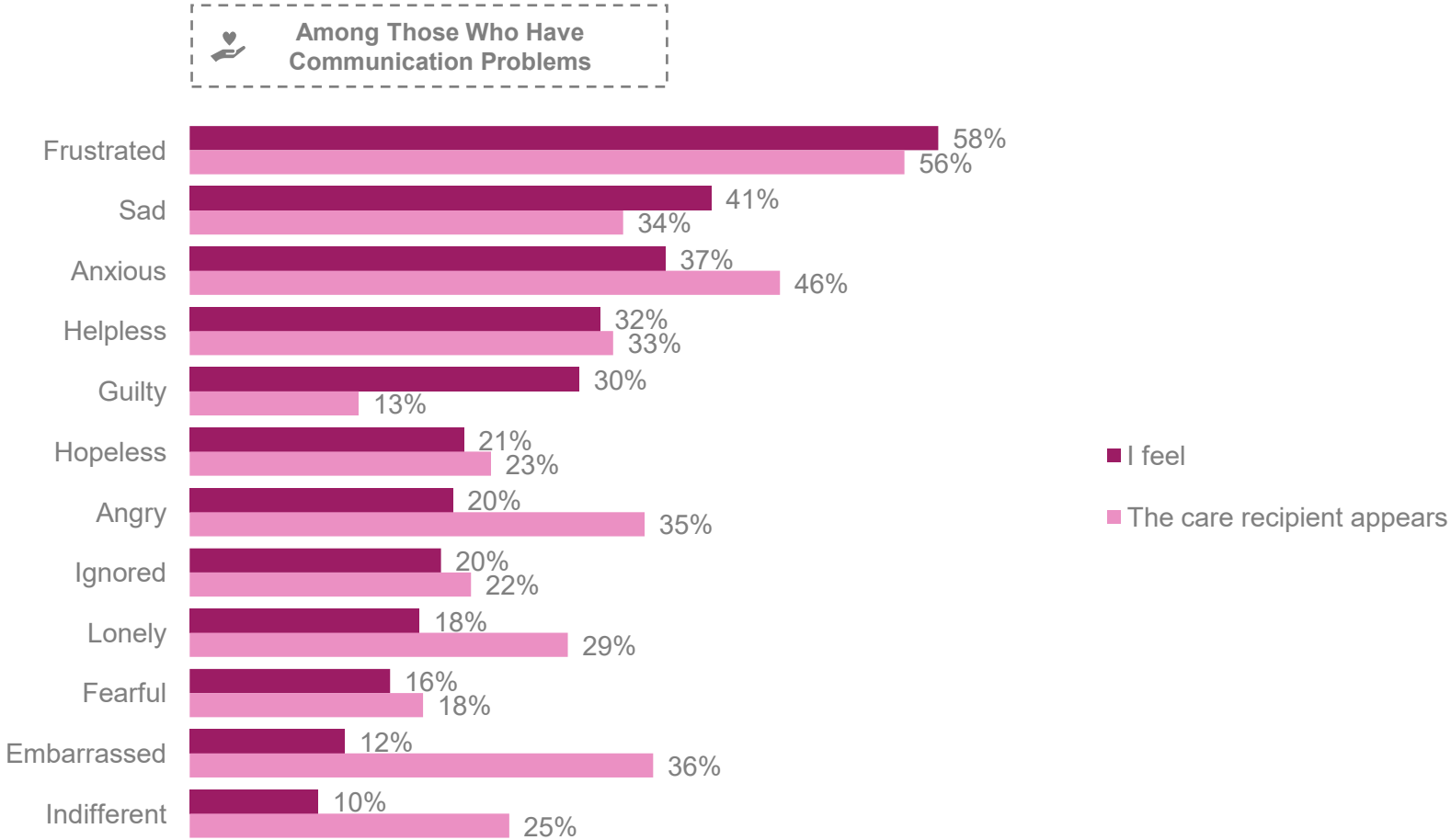
Exhaustion in Dealing With Communication

 Among Total



When communication breaks down, the top emotional reaction is frustration – a sentiment that is shared by both the caregiver and the care recipient.

Emotional Reaction to Communication Breakdowns

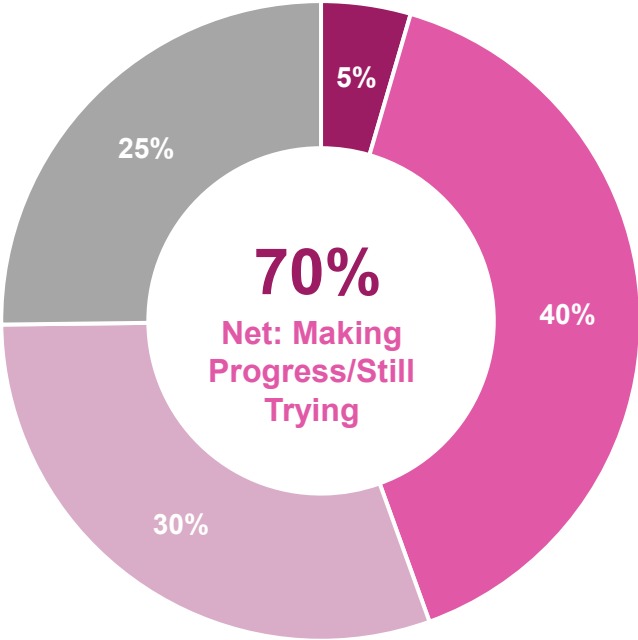


7 in 10 caregivers report effective communication is a work in progress.

Communication Situation

 Among Those Who Have Communication Problems

- One or both of us have completely given up on communicating with each other
- Communication is a struggle for us, but we still try
- We're making progress on communicating more effectively with each other
- We've figured out how to communicate effectively with each other



Caregivers who are communicating effectively or who are making progress towards doing so overwhelmingly use strategies, adaptations and tools to aid in communication.

Key Themes and Quotes:

Reasons why you're making progress on communicating more effectively/figured it out:



Use of Communication Strategies, Adaptations & Tools

66%

“Write everything down. Tablet for her to carry, chalk board for visiting nurse and person who comes to clean once a week.” – Caregiver to 93-year-old who is making progress on communicating more effectively

“I currently speak louder than usual and use hand gestures more often.” – Caregiver to 90-year-old who says they've figured out an effective way to communicate

“Have learned to make sure to speak more loudly and clearly. In a noisy environment, speak louder and closer. This is all due to severe hearing loss.” – Caregiver to 78-year-old who is making progress on communicating more effectively



Mutual Understanding/Shared Adjustment





6%

“I've known this person all my life and I have a connection with them and I understand them.” – Caregiver to 76-year-old who says they've figured out an effective way to communicate

Caregivers who struggle report repetition, perceived indifference, memory, hearing, speech or cognitive issues.

Key Themes and Quotes:

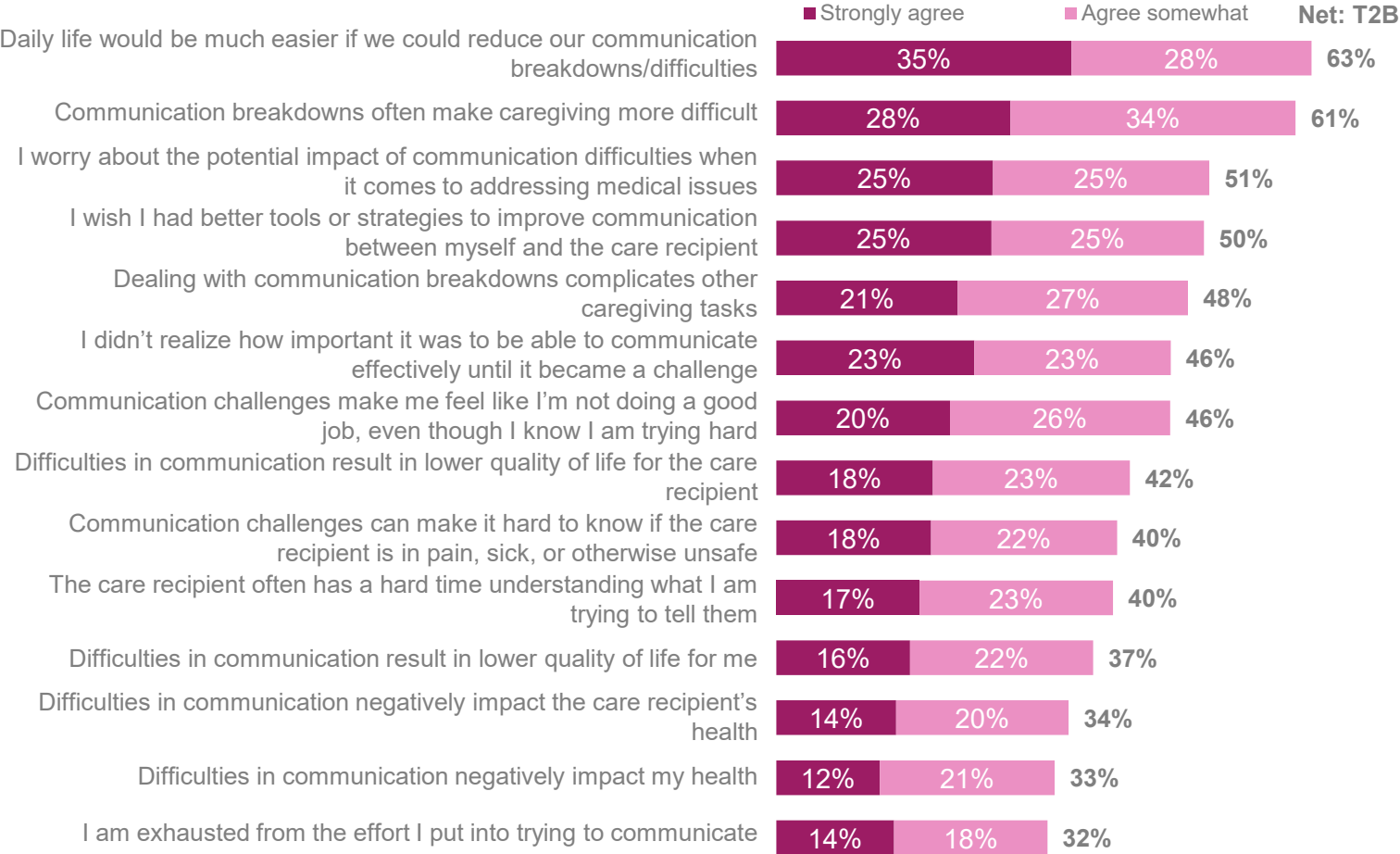
Reasons why one or both of you have given up on communication/it is still a struggle:

	Cognitive, Memory, or Processing Limitations 29%	<p>“Mom has a hard time understanding and following what is being said. And she can’t articulate well like she use to.”</p> <p>– Caregiver to 93-year-old-year-old who says communication is still a struggle</p>
	Hearing, Speech, or Expression Barriers 29%	<p>“Hearing difficulties make every day conversation stressful, we often speak in raised voices which add unnecessary stress and anxiety.”</p> <p>– Caregiver to 66-year-old-year-old who says communication is still a struggle</p>
	Ongoing Repetition & Misunderstandings 25%	<p>“I get so tired when I have to repeat what I say two or three times.”</p> <p>– Caregiver to 81-year-old-year-old who says communication is still a struggle</p>
	General Difficulty/ Frustration 22%	<p>“As soon as he ‘loses’ a word he becomes so frustrated, he sometimes cries. This breaks my heart. I do rephrase, redirect, and work to figure out what he’s trying to say. Sometimes we get it, and can move on. When we can’t, it upsets us both.”</p> <p>– Caregiver to 85-year-old who says communication is still a struggle</p>

Communication difficulties have wide-ranging effects on daily life and make caregiving more difficult.


Statements on Communication

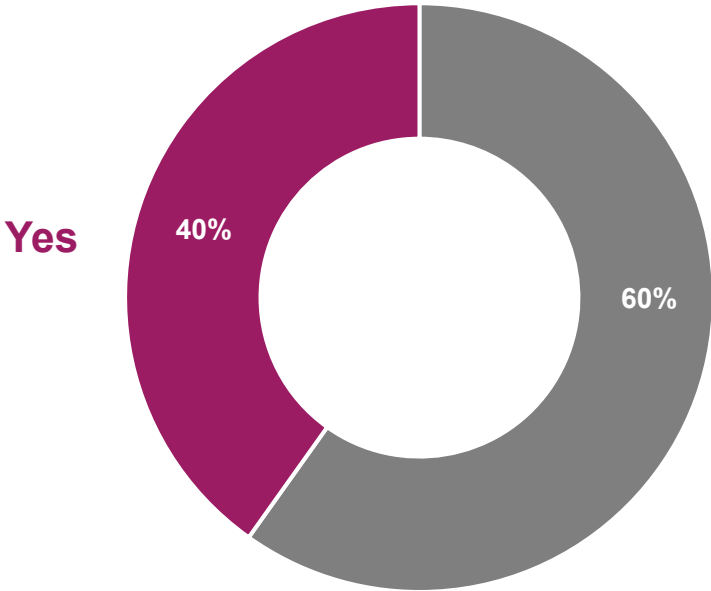
 Among Total



6 in 10 caregivers have not worked with a professional to help address communication or cognitive issues; 84% of those are either not aware or only know a little about such help.

Worked with Professional


 Among Total



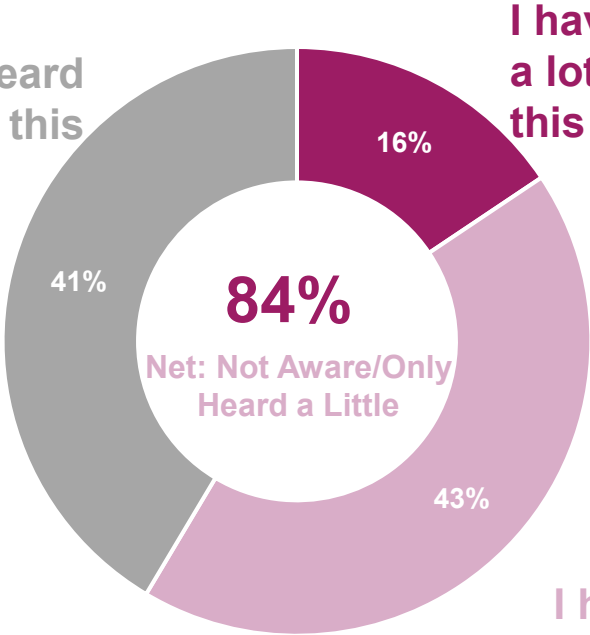
No



Aware of Professional

 Among Those Who Haven't Worked with Professional

I have not heard about this



I have heard a lot about this

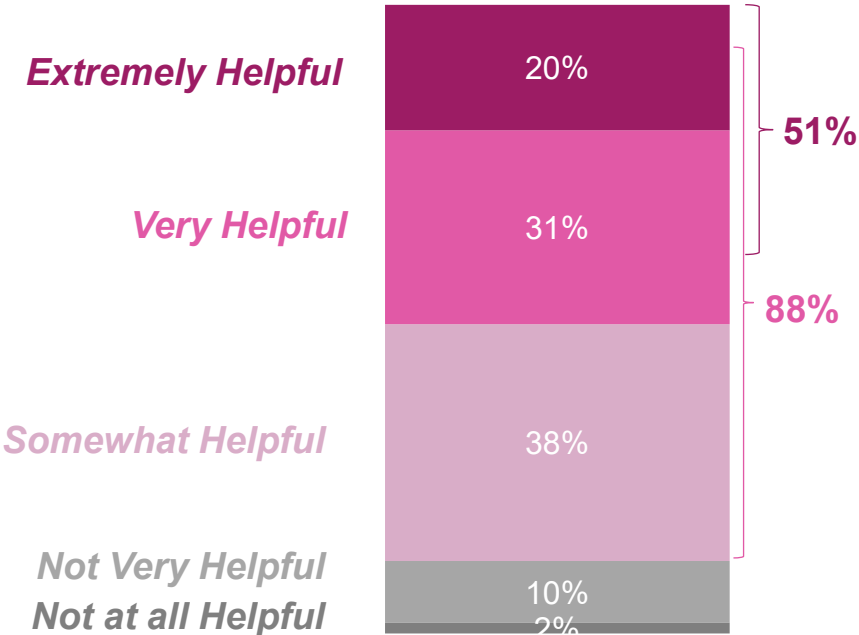
I have heard a little about this

84%
Net: Not Aware/Only Heard a Little

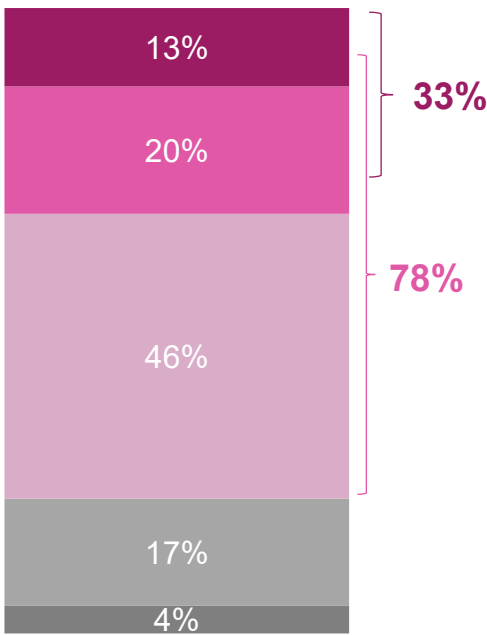
Most who have worked with a professional say they were at least somewhat helpful, while anticipated helpfulness is lower among those who have not worked with a professional.

Helpfulness of Professional
(Among Those Who Have Worked With a Professional)

Anticipated Helpfulness of Professional
(Among Those Who Have Not Worked With a Professional)



Worked With a Professional



Have Not Worked With a Professional

Communication-focused support and interaction strategies emerge as the most impactful area of professional assistance in practice.

Key Themes and Quotes:

Caregivers Who Received Professional Help; Impact on Day-to-Day Life



Communication Support & Interaction Strategies

38%

“I worked with both a speech therapist (very helpful) and a social worker. The speech therapist gave us some coping methods to deescalate his frustration, and ways to talk around a subject to close in on what he wants to say. – Caregiver to an 85-year-old

“Speech therapy was absolutely crucial to my dad's stroke recovery, as it enabled him to find a way to communicate that works for him, which helps him maintain a good quality of life.” – Caregiver to 79-year-old

“Gerontologist recommended simplification of statements and commands, as well as rephrasing as needed rather than repetition.” – Caregiver to 91-year-old



Medical, Therapeutic & Practical Care Support

21%

“The professional made us aware that my husband had a traumatic brain injury and there were certain things that could only be controlled through medication.”

– Caregiver to 70-year-old



Caregiver Support/Respite

15%

“The doctor gave me resources to get extra help, if needed.”

– Caregiver to 80-year-old



Cognitive, Memory & Dementia Support

12%

“Helped with strategies for his memory and words finding.”

– Caregiver to 60-year-old

Caregivers believe that communication-focused support and interaction strategies would be the most meaningful area of professional assistance.

Key Themes and Quotes:

Caregivers Who Have Not Received Professional Help; Perceived Impact on Day-to-Day Life

Communication Support & Interaction Strategies

32%

“Helping the two of us develop strategies that we can use consistently to improve our communication and understanding..” – Caregiver to 76-year-old

“Teaching better communication techniques like signs, tools or even routines.” – Caregiver to 26-year-old

Caregiver Support/Respite

20%

““Having someone help me figure out what types of help are available and how to access them.”

– Caregiver to 22-year-old

Medical, Therapeutic & Practical Care Support

11%

“A diagnosis so that [they] could understand why it’s so difficult.”

– Caregiver to 82-year-old

Emotional Support & Mental Health

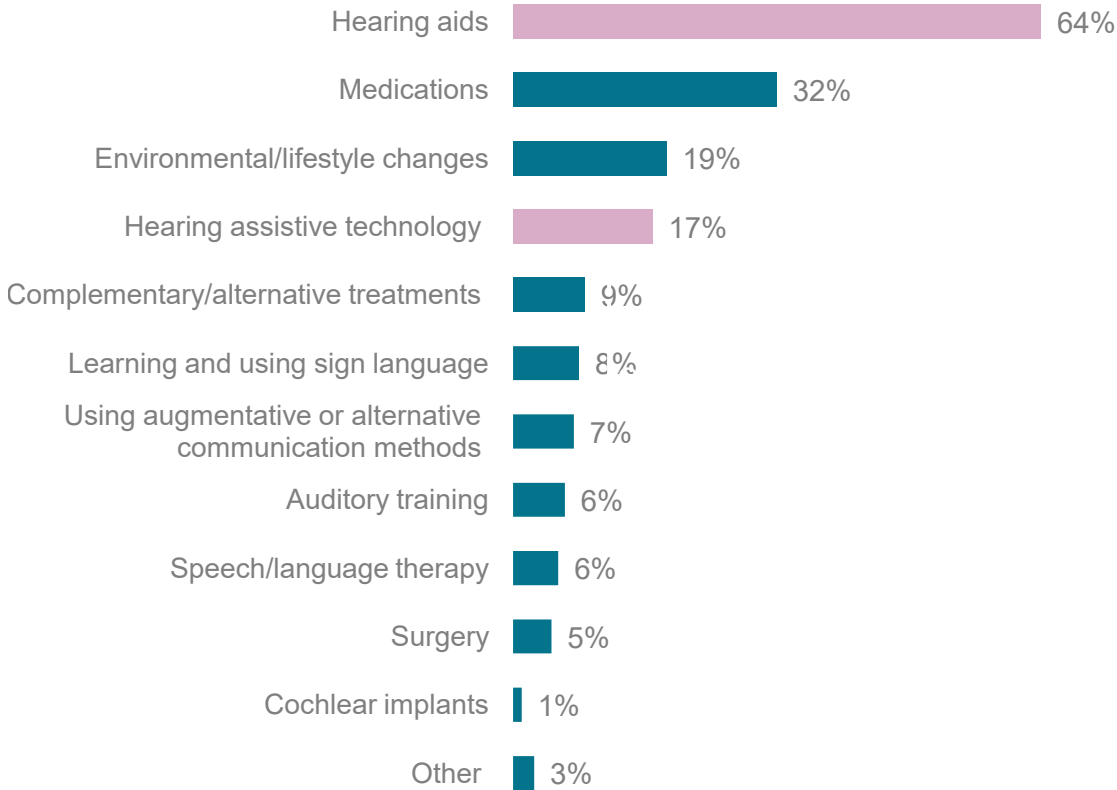
9%

“It would give me time for my own mental stability. The stress of caregiving has also caused my own medical issues to increase.” – Caregiver to 86-year-old

7 in 10 caregivers to those with hearing difficulties said the care recipient uses hearing aids or assistive listening devices, but usage barriers exist.

Hearing Assistance

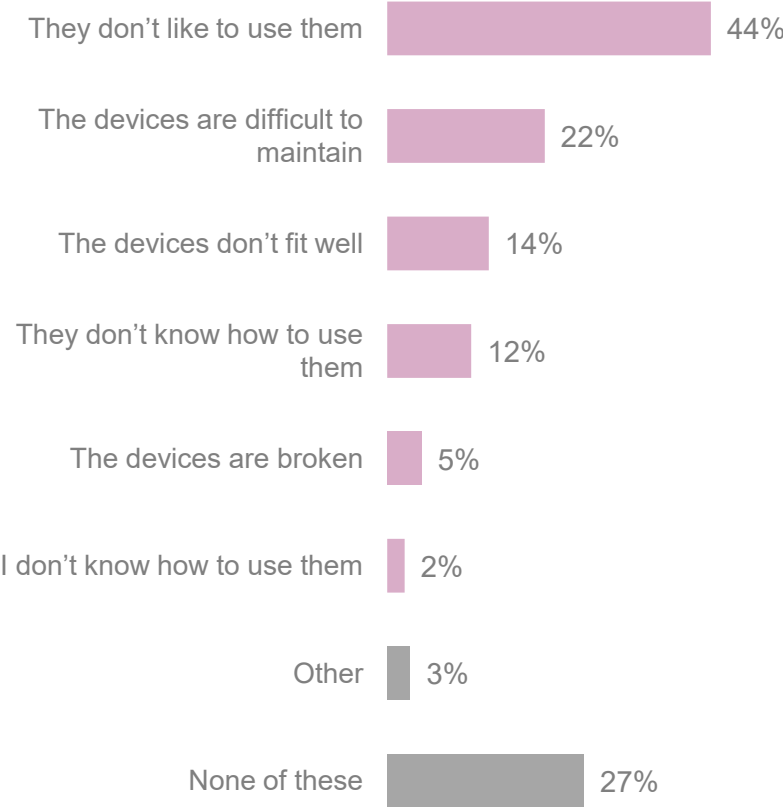
Among Caregivers to Those With Hearing Difficulties



70%
Net: Assistive devices/Hearing Aids

Device Usage Factors

Among Caregivers to Those With Hearing Difficulties Who Use Hearing Tech





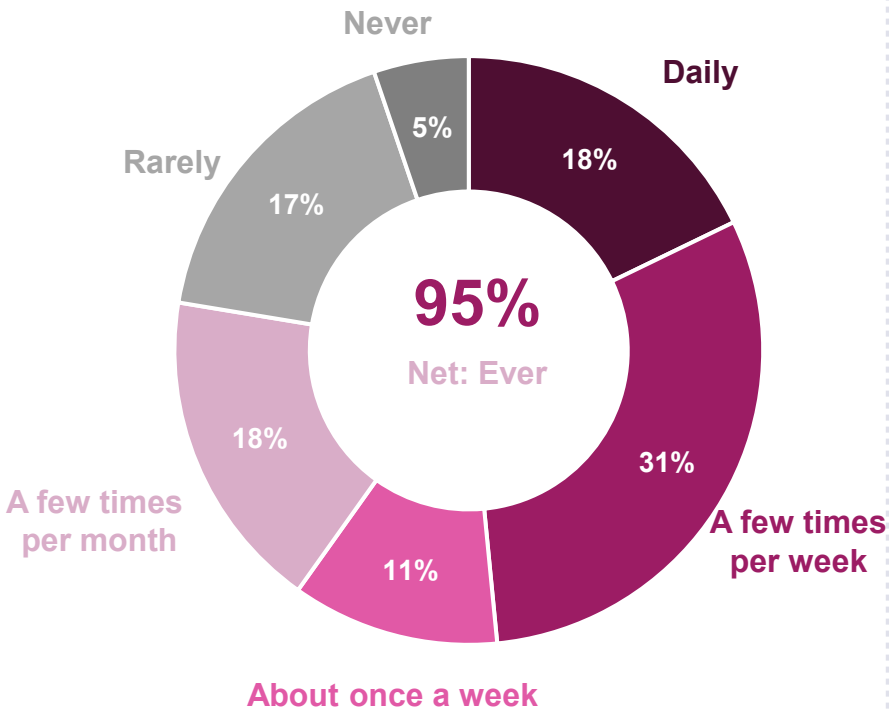
Key Insights:

**Interactions &
Communication
Outside of Home**

About 7 in 10 caregivers say communication breakdowns occur in public, when interacting with those unfamiliar with the care recipient. Patience and understanding from others is the top factor that would make these situations easier.

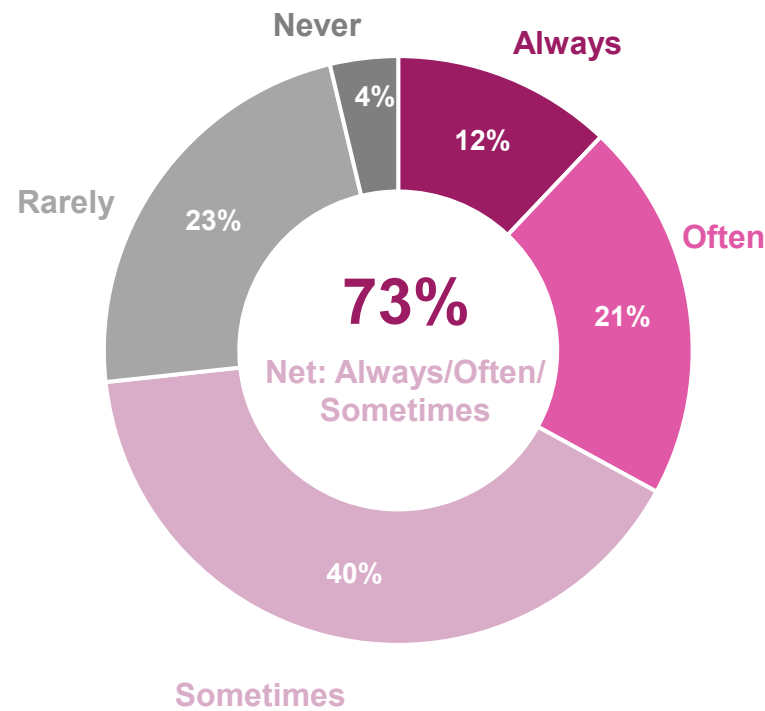
Frequency of OOH Responsibility

Among Total



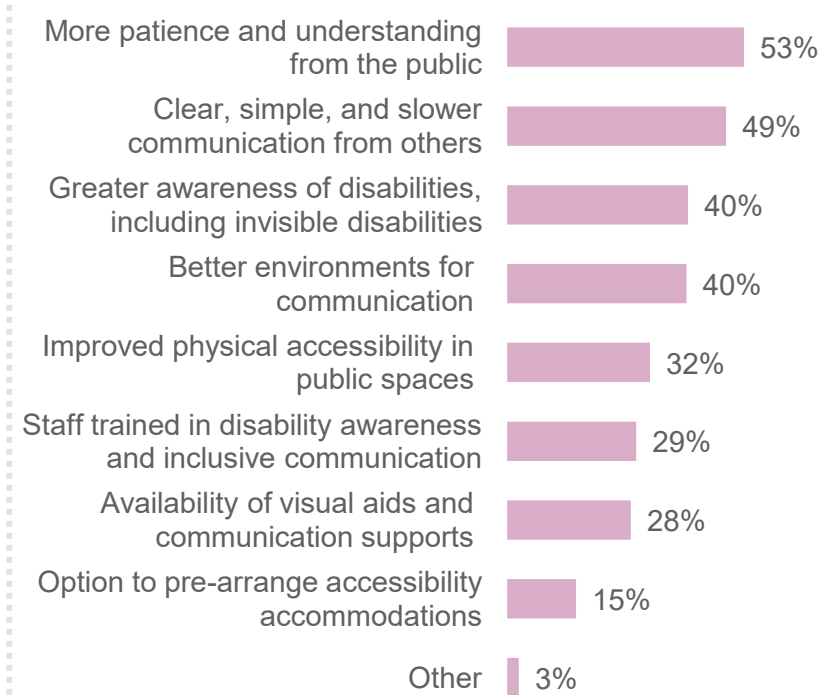
Frequency of OOH Communication Challenges

Among Caregivers With Care Recipients Who Interact With People Outside the Home



OOH Easier

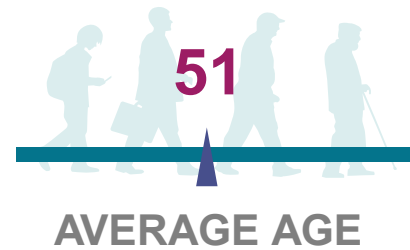
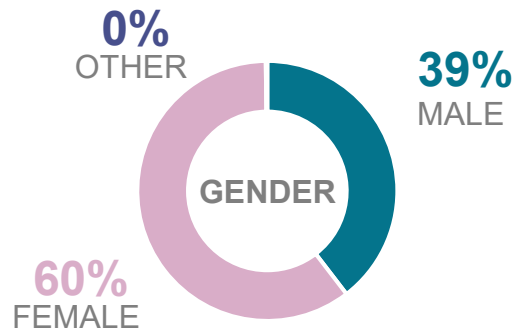
Among Caregivers With Care Recipients Who Interact With People Outside the Home





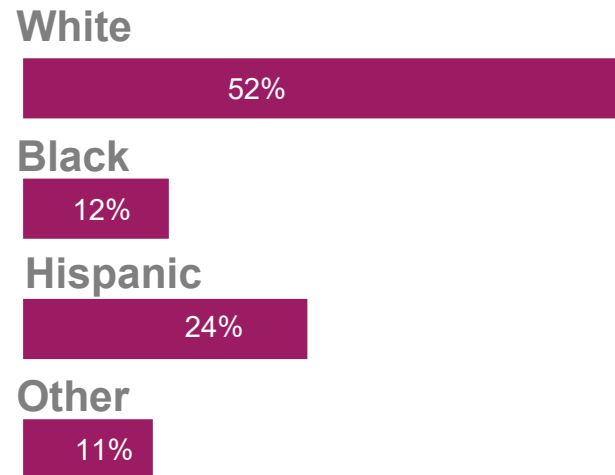
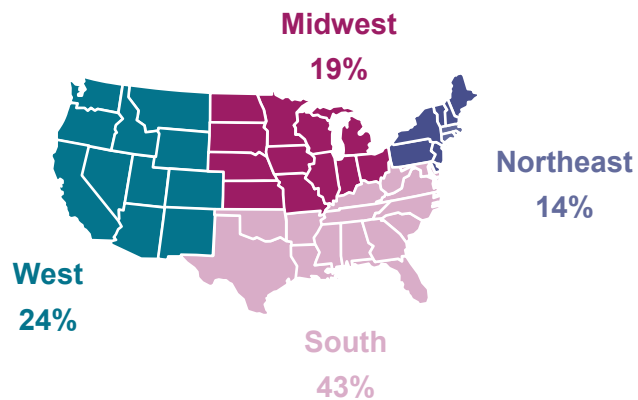
General Appendix

Demographic Profile – Total Sample



OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

Working (NET)	51%
Working full time	34%
Working part time	17%
Child(ren) to care for	19%
Volunteer work	12%
Other	10%



EDUCATION

High school or less	32%
Some college/Associate Degree	30%
Undergraduate Degree	21%
Postgraduate Degree	17%

Marital Status

Married	48%
Separated	2%
Divorced	13%
Widowed	4%
Never married	26%
Domestic / civil partnership	7%