Tech That Cares: Assistive Technology for Family Caregivers

Tools to Support Independence, Safety and Well Being

Assistive Technology Defined

Any tool, device, or system that supports independence and improves quality of life for individuals and makes caregiving more manageable.

Why AT Matters for Caregivers

- Enhances **safety** (for both caregiver and care recipient).
- Reduces **physical strain** and risk of injury.
- Supports **independence** and dignity for the individual.
- Provides **peace of mind** and reduces caregiver stress.
- Saves **time and effort** in daily routines.

Categories of AT for Caregivers

- Safety & Monitoring
- Daily Living Supports
- Mobility & Transfer Aids
- Communication & Cognitive Tools
- Caregiver Self-Care

Safety & Monitoring Tools

- Fall detection devices & personal emergency response systems
- Smart sensors (doors, stove, bed)
- GPS / location trackers for wandering or elopement
- Remote monitoring cameras (indoor/outdoor)

Safety & Monitoring Devices



Fall Detection & Emergency Response Systems



←Simpl Door Sensor



Floor Pressure Mats →



Motion Activated Lights

Safety & Monitoring Examples



Personal Trackers

GPS Trackers →





←Smart Watches

Remote Monitoring Cameras-->



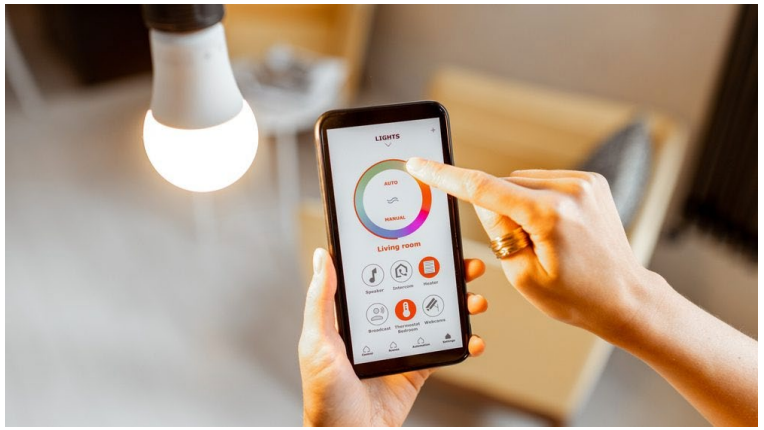
Overall Impact for Caregivers

- Reduce caregiver stress and burnout
- Promote independence for the individual
- Increase safety and security
- Enable caregivers to balance monitoring with other responsibilities.

Daily Living Supports

- Medication management: Smart pillboxes, reminder apps, etc.
- Smart home devices: voice assistants (Alexa, Google), smart lighting, thermostats, etc.
- Eating and cooking aids: adaptive utensils, automatic shut-off appliances.

Daily Living Supports



Smart Lights



Medication Reminder Apps



Medication Dispensers



Voice Assistants

Simplified Remotes →



Daily Living Supports (2)



One-Touch Opener



Stove Shutoff Sensor



Adaptive Clothing



←Adapted knife and cutting board

Overall Impact for Caregivers*

- Less time spent on routine tasks
- Fewer safety concerns
- Increased confidence in leaving the individual alone for short periods
- Improved quality of life for both the caregiver and the individual

Mobility & Transfer Supports

- Transfer boards & lifts
- Wheelchair positioning supports
- Portable ramps
- Passenger Aids
- Other Mobility Aids (e.g. walkers, rollators, canes, etc.)

Mobility & Transfer Supports



Slide Board



←Swivel Seat

Handy Bar →



Floor Lift Assist →





Mobility & Transfer Supports (2)



Wheelchair Supports



Portable Ramps



Hydraulic Bathtub Lift

Overall Benefit for Caregivers^

- Physical relief: fewer lifting and carrying demands
- Safety: Lower risk of accidents or falls during transfers
- Time savings: Easier movement through home and community
- Quality of life: More independence for the individual, less constant supervision for the caregiver

Communication & Cognitive Supports

- Simple speech devices for individuals with speech difficulties
- Memory aids: smart reminders, picture-based systems, wearable prompting devices.
- Visual schedules and task apps for organization

Communication & Cognitive Supports





Speech Generating Devices

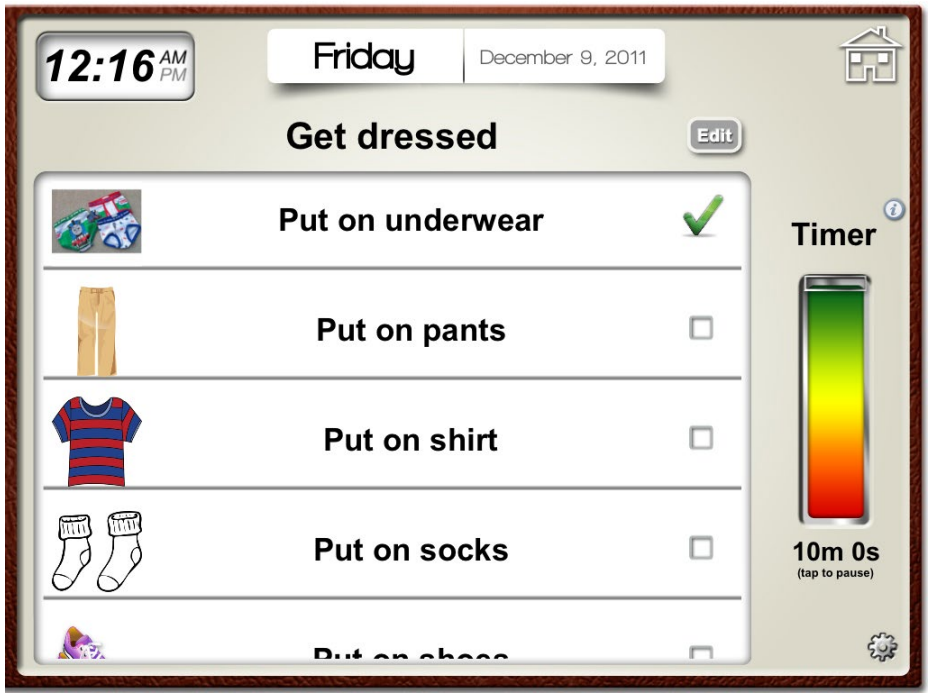


Dementia Clock



Simplified Smart Phone

Communication & Cognitive Supports (2)



Visual Schedule



← Voice Assistants

Smart Watches →



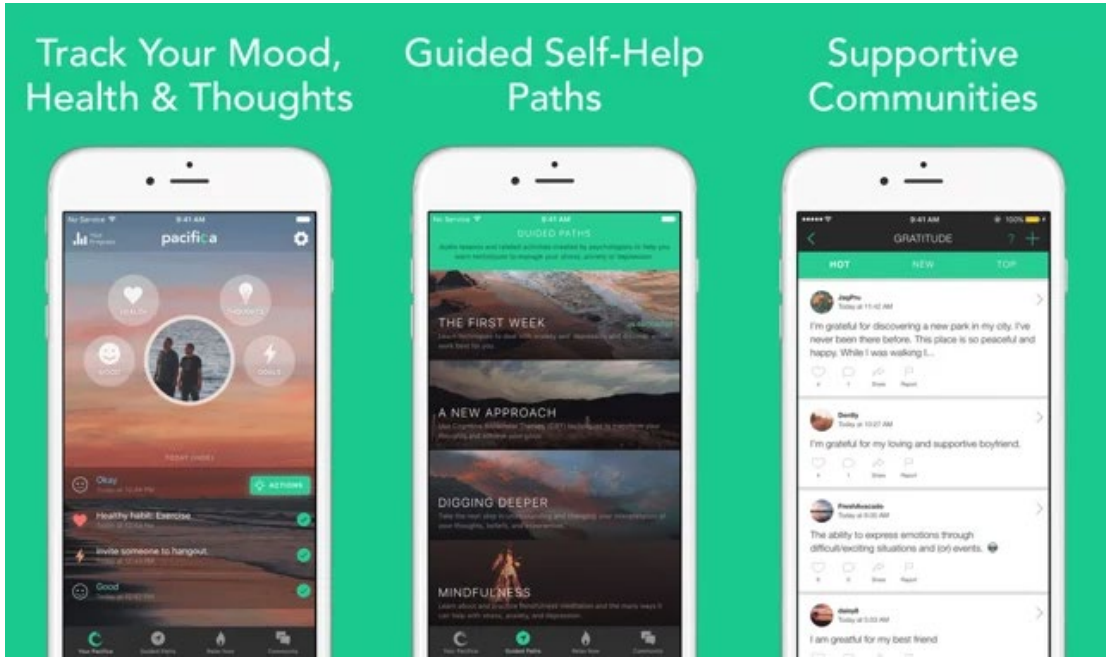
Overall Benefits for Caregivers

- Less time spent on constant reminders or repeated instructions.
- Fewer misunderstandings or conflicts due to communication gaps.
- Increased independence for the individual, which lightens the caregiver’s workload.
- Improved daily routines, making life more predictable and manageable for both

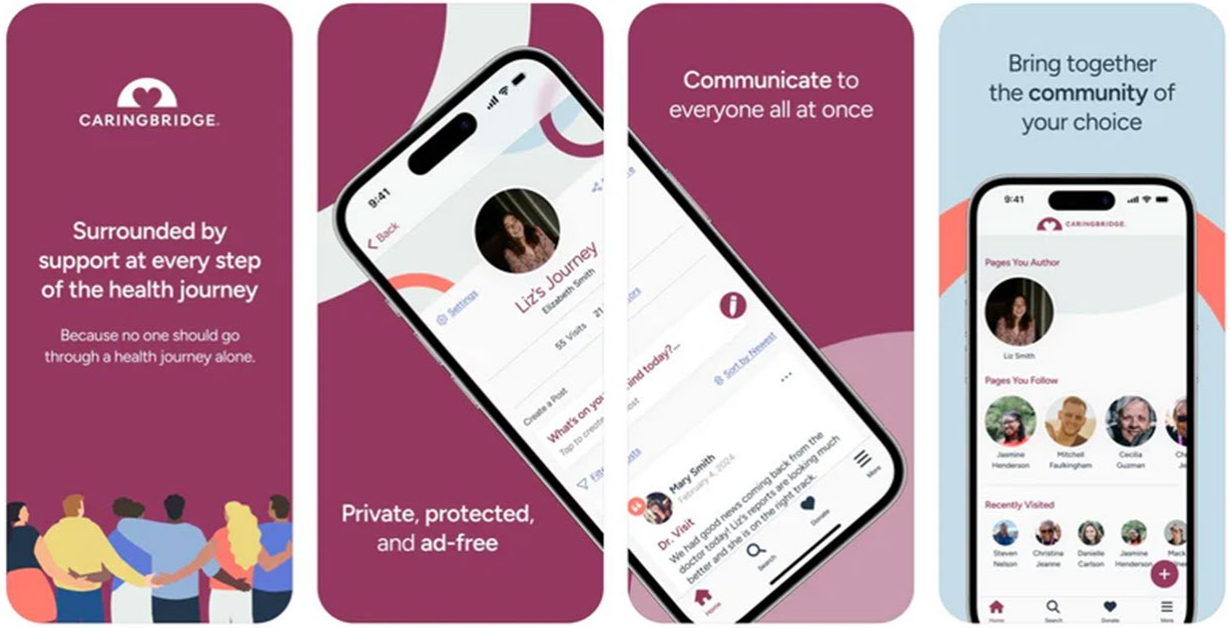
Caregiver Self-Care Tools

- Apps for coordinating care among family/caregivers.
- Stress management/wellness tools (wearables for tracking sleep, heart rate, etc.)
- Online peer support communities & resources

Caregiver Self-Care Tools



Mental Health Apps



Peer Support Groups

"You can't pour from an empty cup. Take care of yourself first"

Why is this important?

- Protects caregiver health: Chronic stress, fatigue, and physical strain can harm caregivers' well-being.
- Improves quality of care: A rested, supported caregiver can provide better and safer care.
- Reduces burnout and crisis risk: Without self-support, caregivers may reach a breaking point, leading to emergency situations.
- Models healthy balance: Shows that caring for oneself is part of caring for others.

Case Study #1: Older adult with dementia

Background
Maria is a 68-year-old woman caring for her husband, John, who is in the mid-stage of Alzheimer's disease. John experiences memory loss, wandering behaviors, and occasional confusion about time and place. Maria is his full-time caregiver, which can be stressful and exhausting.

Challenges Maria Faces

- **Wandering risk:** John sometimes leaves the house unnoticed, creating safety concerns.
- **Medication management:** John takes several medications daily, which Maria must carefully track.
- **Daily routines:** John struggles with remembering appointments and daily tasks.
- **Caregiver stress:** Maria has little time for herself because she must be constantly alert.

Case Study #2: AT for individual with mobility challenges.

Background
David is a 45-year-old caregiver for his mother, Ellen, a 72-year-old woman who uses a wheelchair due to multiple sclerosis. Ellen has limited upper body strength, making transfers and mobility around the home difficult. David often experiences physical strain helping her move between bed, wheelchair, and bathroom.

Challenges David Faces

- **Transfers:** Moving Ellen safely between bed, chair, toilet, and car is physically demanding.
- **Accessibility:** Ellen struggles with getting into and out of certain areas of the house due to steps and narrow spaces.
- **Comfort & Positioning:** Ellen needs frequent adjustments in her wheelchair to avoid discomfort and pressure sores.
- **Caregiver strain:** David worries about injuring his back from frequent lifting and transferring.

Practical Considerations

- Cost & funding resources
- Training and technical support needs
- Privacy & consent issues with monitoring tech
- Involving the individual in choosing AT

Q & A

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