

Re-writing our roles

The reversal of roles in caregiving situations can be a major challenge in the caregiver-care receiver relationship.

In this tool, we offer some line of thinking and strategies for dealing with them in a positive and proactive way.

What is role reversal in caregiving?

As the seasons change, so does the role of caregiver. Over time, the caregiver is called upon to take charge of things that they haven't or weren't to do in the dynamics of the relationship with their loved one.

For example, domestic chores, financial responsibilities, daily living habits that the person is no longer able to carry out for a variety of reasons. Things that they used to relying on their loved one to get done.

"It's strange, you know, my partner could never do without the the wheel. Now he can't drive. And here I am, never been the driver in the family, having to take the wheel all the time. It's as if the world had turned upside down."

It was always her behind the stove. Now here I am, never been much of a cook, having to juggle pots and pans and recipes. It's as if the roles had been reversed, and I'm learning to cook for two."

"Life isn't about waiting for storms to pass, it's about learning how to dance in the rain."

-Seneca

How role reversal affects our role as a caregiver ?

How to recognize the good and the bad of a role reversal ?

If we take the time to reflect on how these changes affect us, it can help us understand them better.

For example:

- by noting how our relationships or responsibilities change;
- by observing how this affects our well-being and that of our loved ones, we can better see the effects of these changes.

This can help us find ways to adapt and manage new realities.



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Reflection questions to help you explore role reversal

**Am I comfortable in this or these new roles?
If not, what could help me reflect on it?**

Examples :

- Participate in a support group
- Exchange with my counsellor

What changes have happened between my loved one and me through the role reversal?

Example : My loved one can no longer cook.

What states or emotions do I experience when there are situations where my role is different?

Example: Anger, powerlessness, adjustment difficulties ..

From my point of view, what can my loved one experience through role reversal in our relationship?

Example : I think my loved one feels sad that he is no longer able to drive.

What impact does this have on our relationship between caregiver and cared-for?

Example : More responsibility = more stress

Strategies for taking time out to reflect:

You can try taking a quiet walk to think things through, discussing the situation with a friend or caregiver, writing down your thoughts in a notebook, listening to relaxing music, moving around in the space you're in or changing rooms, express your feelings by coloring or drawing, include your loved one in the discussion as much as possible, take a few moments to breathe consciously and meditate for a few minutes.

Role reversal is a bit like going from winter to spring. We adapt, we grow, and even if the tree of our relationship changes over time, it remains strong nonetheless. Each change brings its own challenges, but it's also a source of hope, because our bond continues to grow, just like a tree that, despite the seasons, remains deeply rooted.