

Community care contact sheet

Nine kinds of help, written down before you need them, with the exact words to ask.

Asking for help is not a personality trait you either have or lack. It is a logistics problem, and logistics problems get solved on paper. **The hard part is never the person saying yes. It is having to invent the name, the number, and the sentence while you are already underwater.**

Start here. Fill in these five lines even if you skip the rest of the sheet.

I can call this person at 3am

Same day, no notice, no explanation

With a few days' notice

Paid help I can call instead of a favor

Warm line or support line I keep saved

Two names beats one. One name beats none. A blank line is information, not a verdict, and the last page is about what to do with the blanks.

Rides			
appointments, the airport, the pharmacy, getting home after a procedure you cannot drive away from			
Name	Best way to reach them	When they're actually free	The exact ask they are good for

Paperwork and forms			
insurance calls, benefits applications, disputes, portals, anything with a deadline and a login			
Name	Best way to reach them	When they're actually free	The exact ask they are good for

Food

a meal dropped off, a grocery run, groceries put away, someone to cook next to

Name	Best way to reach them	When they're actually free	The exact ask they are good for

Body doubling

somebody on the phone or in the room while you do the thing you cannot start alone

Name	Best way to reach them	When they're actually free	The exact ask they are good for

Emotional support

the people you are allowed to be un-fun around, with no performance and no update owed

Name	Best way to reach them	When they're actually free	The exact ask they are good for

Advocacy

somebody who comes to the appointment, the IEP meeting, the HR meeting, and says the thing out loud

Name	Best way to reach them	When they're actually free	The exact ask they are good for

Pet help

walks, feeding, litter, the vet run, and who takes over if you are admitted or flat on your back

Name	Best way to reach them	When they're actually free	The exact ask they are good for

Emergency errands

the prescription, the forgotten thing, the 11pm run, the plunger

Name	Best way to reach them	When they're actually free	The exact ask they are good for

Company

no agenda, no crisis, no conversation required. Just not alone.

Name	Best way to reach them	When they're actually free	The exact ask they are good for

The scripts

Composing the message is where most asks die. Copy these, fill the blanks, send them. Every one of them ends with an exit, because an ask with a built-in no is easier to send and easier to receive.

Rides	Are you driving anywhere near _____ on _____? I have _____ at _____ and I can't drive myself back. Totally fine if it doesn't work.
Paperwork	I'm stuck on _____ and I keep bouncing off it. Could you sit with me for 45 minutes on _____ while I do it? You don't have to help. I just can't start it alone.
Food	Cooking isn't happening this week. Could you drop something off, do a grocery run, or send me _____? Any of the three helps.
Body doubling	I'm working on _____ at _____. Want to be on a muted call while we each do our own thing?
Emotional support	I don't need advice, I need someone to hear this. Do you have 20 minutes tonight?
Advocacy	I have _____ on _____ and I don't get taken seriously when I go alone. Would you come and back me up? I'll tell you exactly what I need you to say.
Pet help	If I end up in the hospital, can you be the person who gets _____? I'll show you where everything is now, while nothing is wrong.
Emergency errands	This is an emergency-tier ask: _____. If you can't, just say no and I'll go down my list.
Company	No crisis. I just don't want to be by myself tonight. Can I put you on speaker while I do dishes?

Two rules that make asks land: name the specific thing instead of asking whether they can help, and give the deadline. “Can you take me to Vanderbilt Thursday at 2” gets an answer. “Are you around this week” gets a maybe that costs you three more messages.

What I have to give

This is a network, not a charity case. Filling this side in is what makes the asking side sustainable, and it counts even when what you have is not physical labor.

Things I can do from bed or from my phone	
Things I can do on a good day	
Things I am weirdly good at that people need	
Money, gear, space, or food I can share	
Who I have already helped this way	

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The empty rows

An empty category is not proof that nobody loves you. It is an empty niche in the habitat, and niches get filled deliberately. Look at your blanks and pick the one that would take the most weight off if it had a single name in it.

The blank that costs me the most	
One person I could plausibly ask	
What I will ask them for, specifically	
By when	

Where the names come from when the list is short

Already in your phone	Group chats, old coworkers, the friend you keep meaning to text back, people who have asked you for help before. The person who has already accepted your help is the safest person to ask.
Proximity	Neighbors, the building, the block, the person whose dog you have met. Proximity beats intimacy for errands and pets, every time.
Mutual aid	Local mutual aid networks, disability justice groups, food not bombs chapters, buy nothing groups, the Facebook group for your county. These exist to be used and they are not keeping score.
Congregations and rooms	Churches, temples, recovery rooms, and community centers usually have a person whose whole role is rides and meals. You do not always have to be a member to ask who that is.
Online, on purpose	Discords, group calls, and text threads cover body doubling, company, and paperwork better than most in-person options, and they work at 2am.
Paid, when you can	Task apps, dog walkers, a few hours of a professional organizer, a patient advocate. Paying removes the favor economy entirely, and that is allowed to be a relief.

Cut these out

One for the wallet, one for the fridge, so the list exists in a place your future self can find it on the worst possible day.

WHO I CAN CALL

3am

Ride

Food

Come with me

Pet

Company

WHO I CAN CALL

3am

Ride

Food

Come with me

Pet

Company

Fix the habitat, not the habit. Copy it, print it, change the categories, hand it to somebody who needs it.