

Care for Caregivers

If you are caring for an aging parent or facing the challenges of assisting a loved one or friend who is chronically ill, disabled or elderly, you are not alone. You are one of the 22 million Americans who care for an older adult. Caregivers provide 80 percent of in-home care, but unlike nurses and home health aides, they are unpaid for their labor of love.

"Caregiving is a difficult job that can take a toll on relationships, jobs, and emotional well-being," says Dr. Elizabeth Clark, executive director of the National Association of Social Workers. "Those who care for others need to be sure to take care of themselves, as well."

Here are some important tips for caregivers:

1.) Don't Be Afraid to ASK FOR HELP

We tend to wait until we are in crisis before asking for help and consultation. Seek out the help of a licensed clinical social worker or other trained professional.

2.) It's Not Easy to Tell Your Parents What to Do

The most difficult thing about caring for a parent is the day you have to tell them they need to have help; they can no longer drive, or they may have to move from their home. Discuss long-term care wishes and desires before any decline happens.

3.) Take Care of Your Mental Health

It is not unusual to feel frustrated with your parents or children when they refuse your input and help. Seek a referral to a professional who can help you cope with any personal issues and frustrations.

4.) Stay Informed

We live in a world of constant change. Medications and treatments are constantly changing and the only way to keep up to date is to stay informed with the latest news. Attend local caregiver conferences, participate in support groups, speak with friends and relatives, and talk with professionals in the field of gerontology and geriatrics.

5.) Take Time Out

Caregivers who experience feelings of burnout need to accept that occasionally they may need a break from their loved one in order to continue provide him or her with the best care.

6.) Laugh

Humor and laughter are tremendous healers.

7.) Hire Help

If possible, you may want to hire help. The most important thing is to find trustworthy people to provide assistance. Use recommended home care agencies, talk with friends about their experiences, and interview professionals before deciding on the one you are going to retain.

If you need help please don't hesitate to call and schedule a consultation with one of our senior care professionals:

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