



Tips for taking care of yourself while you care for others

Caring for aging parents can be an emotional and time-consuming experience, one that's made even more complicated when there's an additional household, immediate family, and other obligations to deal with.

Most often, the task of caregiver is given to one person within the family. Usually, that person lives the closest to, or has the best rapport with, the parents. Depending on the parents' health and mental wellness, the caregiver can become the primary contact, intermediary, and interpreter for doctors and other professionals. The caregiver can be asked to do all sorts of things such as shop for groceries, make meals, provide transportation, help with bills, fill prescriptions, monitor the taking of medications, clean, perform home maintenance, and assist with finances. It's not a task to be taken lightly.

It's easy to see why caregivers often neglect their own needs; there just doesn't seem to be enough time and the parents' needs seem much greater than their own. But to do so can be to the detriment of the caregivers' own well-being. You know from your own experience. The healthier and more rested you are, the more you can accomplish and the better care you can administer.

If you are a caregiver, keep in mind these tips for preventing burnout:

- Exercise and eat healthy
- Don't neglect your hobbies
- Take one problem at a time
- Plan time for yourself to just "be"
- Include siblings in care-giving/financial decisions where feasible
- Make use of the resources available to you and your parents
- Don't hesitate to ask for assistance

Being a caregiver is important. But you don't want to lose priceless and enjoyable time with your parents because you've become so worn down in the "job" of caregiver.

If you need a break or just some assistance or information, websites such as SeniorsList.com, ElderCare.gov, and AARP.org offer valuable resources.

Or, call Cypress Home Care and we'll be happy to meet with you and your loved ones to discuss a personalized care solution. There is no charge for this service. We'll also conduct a free care assessment and a free home safety evaluation. Contact us at 517-485-6100 or use the contact form on the Cypress Home Care website - www.CypressHomeCare.net.

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