

Caregiver Support

*Tips to Help Those Who Give
Care.....*

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Discussion Topics

Former First Lady Rosalynn Carter once said: *“There are four kinds of people in this world: those who have been caregivers, those who currently are caregivers, those who will be caregivers, and those who will need caregiving.”*

The objective of today’s discussion is to offer tips that we can use to help those who are Caregivers of loved ones living with special needs. Topics include:

- Recognizing The Signs of Caregiver Burnout
- Avoiding Caregiver Burnout
- Problem Solving for Caregivers
- Affirmations to Minimize Caregiver Stress
- Caregiver 7-Up’s
- Survival Strategies
- Personalized Serenity Prayer
- Compassionate Communications
- Caregiver Record Keeping

Recognizing Caregiver Burnout

Caregivers often neglect their own health and welfare caring for loved ones. Signs of Caregiver burnout include:

- Stress
- Complaining about always having a headache
- Blowing up at the littlest thing/things
- Complaining about a lack of sleep
- Sudden weight gain or loss
- Headaches, aches and pains
- Oversensitive to other's comments
- Forgetting appointments or losing things
- Lack of focus and concentration
- Memory Impaired
- Spike in blood pressure
- And other health complications

Avoiding Caregiver Burnout

Suggestions for ways to avoid burnout:

- *Always Seek God for Strength and Guidance!!!*
- *Ask for help!! (from family members or friends or Family Support Ctr.)*
- *Seek out respite care to give you a break*
- *Organize yourself to relieve confusion and frustration.*
- *Keep a calendar of appointments, respite care and when, etc.*
- *Participate in activities important to your health and well-being (i.e meditate, exercise, hobbies, visiting friends, etc.).*
- *Eat and drink healthy and get enough sleep.*

Avoiding Caregiver Burnout (cont.)

- *Keep a journal to write down your thoughts, events, etc. so you can reflect on where you are now and before.*
- *Meet your spiritual needs (attend Church; study/read your Bible daily, etc.).*
- *Stay socially connected (don't isolate!!).*

Problem-Solving for Caregiver Burnout

One way to avoid Caregiver Burnout is through problem-solving...

A lot of burn-out is attributed to not being able to do certain things for yourself.

An example:

I don't read because I have no time.

Problem-solving: I will listen to an audio book while I'm driving or doing other things...

Affirmations to Minimize Caregiver Stress

Affirmations that we can encourage Caregivers to use:

- “More and more, I can let go of worrying about things I cannot control and focus on my own inner peacefulness.”
- “More and more, I am learning to be gentle and compassionate towards myself.”
- “More and more, I am learning to save my energy for what truly matters.”
- “I am grateful for my own resilient courage and tenacity. I salute the fortitude I have shown and will continue to show.”

The Caregiver 7-Up's

The 7-Up's are those "Up's" that you can do for yourself

- Wake Up – Decide to have good day.
- Dress Up – Put on a smile and something colorful
- Shut Up – And listen to others and your inner self
- Stand Up – For yourself and your care-partner
- Look Up – To whatever gives you strength (God)
- Reach Up – Exercise will help relieve stress
- Lift Up – Your thoughts. Focus on something positive

Survival Strategies

Making Life Easier – Daily Survival Strategies for the Stressed:

- Spend time with God (pray, do daily devotional, listen or view sermons or programs)
- Organizing your daily environment (place for your things)
- Go through your mail daily (sort, toss or keep)
- Make list in calendar/notebook you carry (to do, phone calls, appointments, groceries, etc.)
- Schedule a realistic day (important things first, doesn't have to be perfect)
- Create a "What If?" plan (what if care-receiver wonders, falls, etc.)
- Prepare for each day the night before (prep meds, meals, clothes, review to-do's, etc.)
- Rise before care-receiver does (pray, workout, meditate, shower, eat, have favorite cup of coffee/tea, etc.)

Survival Strategies (cont.)

Strategies for minimizing daily stress and irritations:

- Do one thing at a time (multi-tasking isn't always effective when you are stressed)
- Know your limits and learn to say "No!" (protect your time, energy, health, etc.)
- Be prepared always (food in house, meds refilled, full tank of gas, extra house/car keys, etc.)
- Keep up maintenance (fix, replace and maintain vehicles, home, appliances, etc. – do it yourself or ask someone)
- Take care of your own health (regular physical exams, eat healthy, sleep well, exercise, etc.)
- Maintain good relationships (apologize, forgive others and yourself)

Personalized Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity
To accept

Name of care-receiver

just the way _____ is;
He/She

The choices _____ makes;
He/She

the courage to change my reactions
to _____ and the circumstances;
His/Her

and the wisdom to let go of the things
I can't do anything about.

Compassionate Communications

We must learn to speak with compassion using words to lift up and encourage Caregivers. God instructs us to encourage each other....

Proverbs 12:25 says: “Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, But a good word makes it glad.”

Proverbs 16:24 says: “Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, Sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.”

“One person caring about another represents life's greatest value.” — Jim Rohn, author

Record Keeping

- It is important for Caregivers to monitor and document what is going on over the months, and perhaps years, of caring for their loved one.
- It's important for them to do it because it reduces those feelings of burnout, anxiety, etc. that a Caregiver can feel by keeping them organized.

Record Keeping (cont.)

Benefits of keeping good records and logs:

Gives Caregivers confidence and peace of mind that you are doing a job in their role as Caregiver.

Documents that Caregivers are doing what needs to be done.

Substantiates Caregivers assessment of their care-receiver's status and explains your choices.

Contains important data needed when dealing with doctors and family members.

Allows Caregivers to easily find important information and protect Caregivers should anyone question their actions.

Contact Info.

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