DE-STRESSING TIPS

Caring for an aging parent is a big responsibility, one that can take a toll on your emotional and physical health. Follow these tips to help manage the stress and demands of caregiving.

**Ask for Help** – Enlist the help of other family members and friends. Give each person a responsibility and divide the tasks.

**Take Care of Yourself First** – Eat well, exercise, get enough sleep, and go to the doctor regularly. You need to take care of yourself or you won’t be able to help others.

**Develop an Informal Care Team** – Make sure to have other people to help you out during emergencies or if your situation is getting very difficult.

**Take a Break** – Arrange any necessary fill-in family, friends, volunteers, or professional caregivers. Take single days or even a week’s vacation.

**See the Positive Side** – Write down three good things that happened in your day: an interaction with the store clerk, a smile from a stranger, or even a pleasant surprise from a friend. Share these at dinner for a family activity.

**Understand and Express Your Emotions** – Feeling anger, frustration, guilt, or grief for your loved one is normal. Talk with your family or friends about this.

**Indulge Yourself** – Treat yourself. Go out to have dinner or find a relaxing hobby. You need to reward yourself for the wonderful care you are providing. You deserve it!

**Relax a Little** – Give yourself a foot massage with a tennis ball, stretch a little bit to loosen up your muscles and mind, or spend five minutes deep breathing while focusing on nothing else.

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