

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.