

# Stress and the Caregiver



Central Plains Area Agency on Aging

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Caring for a person with an ongoing illness or for an older adult can be very stressful. These tips will help you manage the stress that comes with the difficult job of caregiving.

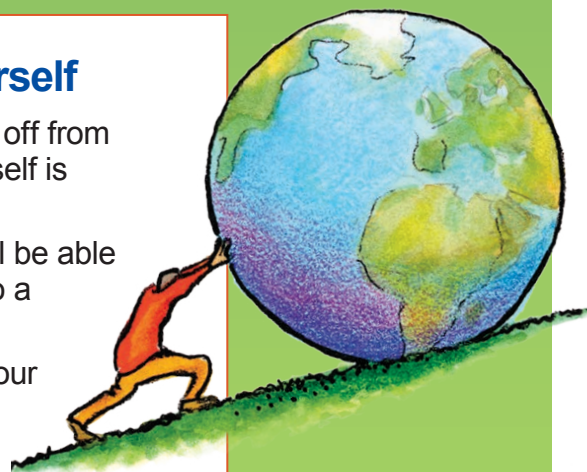
## 1. Talk with Other Caregivers

- ✓ Talking about the stresses of caregiving can give you a great deal of relief.
- ✓ Join a support group. Sharing with others who are going through the same kinds of things can help you feel better. You may also learn new ways to cope.
- ✓ You may want to talk with a friend or relative. Or, you may be more comfortable talking with a counselor.



## 2. Take Care of Yourself

- ✓ Make sure you take time off from caregiving. Time to yourself is essential!
- ✓ By taking breaks, you will be able to avoid “burnout” and do a better job of caregiving.
- ✓ You will also be saving your health and emotional well being.
- ✓ Consider hiring a health aide to give you a regular break.
- ✓ Don't forget to take care of yourself. Get regular checkups – your health is also important.



## 3. Ask for Help

- ✓ Caregiving is a huge job – and it is too much to do alone.
- ✓ Ask family or friends to pitch in. Make a list of ways they can help. Have it ready when they offer.
- ✓ Use respite services. Contact your local social services to find out about respite care, adult day care and other resources in your area. For more information, visit [www.eldercare.acl.gov](http://www.eldercare.acl.gov) on the Internet. Or, call the Eldercare Locator at 1-800-677-1116.
- ✓ Consider hiring someone to clean your house and run errands.



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## 4. Learn to Let Go

- ✓ Focus on those things that are most important. Let go of less important commitments.

- ✓ Accept that you may not be able to do things the way you used to. For example, you may not be able to clean your house as often or do the dishes after every meal.

## 5. Rest As Much As You Can

- ✓ Without good rest, you will quickly wear down. Things that used to be manageable may seem unbearable!

- ✓ Help the person you are caring for get on a sleep schedule so that you can too.



- ✓ If possible, sleep in a different room. Use a monitor to let you know if the person wakes up.

- ✓ Have someone else stay with the person one or two nights a week so that you can catch up on sleep.

## 6. Eat Well

- ✓ Food is our body's fuel. Without good food, we quickly wear down.
- ✓ Eat regular, healthy meals. Make sure you get plenty of fruits, vegetables, grains and protein.
- ✓ Avoid eating too much sugar, fat and salt.
- ✓ Avoid foods and drinks with caffeine.

## 7. Avoid Alcohol

- ✓ Alcohol and other drugs may seem like they are helping stress. But in the long run, they will wear your body down.
- ✓ If you are using alcohol or other drugs to help you deal with stress, talk to your doctor or a counselor!



To find information about support groups and services in your area, consult your local phone book or search online. You can also call the Eldercare Locator at 1-800-677-1116, or visit its website at [www.eldercare.acl.gov](http://www.eldercare.acl.gov) on the internet.



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