

# Caregiver Support: Help for the Helper

The responsibility of caring for an elder relative or friend can make you feel overwhelmed or burned out, especially around the holidays. During these times, it is important to step back, assess your life situation and to do a little soul-searching. You want to be the best caregiver you can be. Here are some tips:



- **Balance your priorities.**

Are you in the best position to provide the physical and emotional support your elder needs? Consider seeking outside help from friends, relatives or support groups, or possibly hiring another caregiver.

- **Be willing to make sacrifices you can live with.**

It is important that, once you make the caregiving decision, you do not let yourself become resentful about the missed opportunities this commitment can create.

- **Put yourself in the elder's shoes.**

Imagine yourself at his or her age and condition. Then, treat your elder as you would wish to be treated.

- **Assess your performance.**

Is the elder getting the right level of care? Are needs being met? Without being too hard on yourself, make the commitment to do the best that you can.

- **Assess the elder's role as care receiver.**

Does the elder understand the role you are providing? Do you need to talk to the elder about his or her attitude?

- **Explore ways of maximizing your efficiency.**

Are there shortcuts you can take without diminishing the quality of care?

- **Acknowledge your feelings.**

Emotions left unresolved can cause conflicts and interfere with your ability to provide care. If, for example, you feel you need more help from other family members, summon a family meeting and ask for it.

- **Stay in touch with relatives and friends.**

Keep family members abreast of the elder's condition and communicate your concerns. Do not lose your link to the outside world.



**Making time for yourself is important.** By taking care of yourself, you are assuring greater quality of care for your elder. This holiday season, consider the variety of support services for caregivers and take advantage of the help they can offer.



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