

when to seek help

If you find that you are depressed or angry and no longer look forward to your caregiving responsibilities, it is time to seek help. Caregiving can be lonely if you don't reach out.

Remember that there may be others who may help also. When people (especially other relatives) ask what they can do, tell them. They may withhold their offers of help for fear that you will not welcome them. As much as possible, try to be generous and trusting. Many communities have visiting nurse and Hospice services available, and community religious groups may have programs that can make your job easier.

Professional counseling is helpful if you are experiencing guilt, depression or exhaustion. There is help available. Don't allow yourself to become a shut in.

Help is available

Aspirus Employee Assistance Services has counselors available to help you and your family. You can call the confidential helpline 24 hours a day at:

800.236.4457
TDD# 715.845.4928

Remember,
Aspirus Employee
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Tips for Caregivers



reviving your helping attitude



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You are the caregiver for a sick relative. You are needed. You want and are willing to help. But now you feel guilty because you are dissatisfied with the situation. What can you do to revive your helping attitude?

the nurturer's role

Being the main caregiver to a sick relative can remind you of parenting. Being needed and giving love and physical care can give you great satisfaction. However, the responsibility can be overwhelming and exhausting. As babies grow older, they require less vigilant care. The future with a sick relative may hold no such promise of reduced demand. The thought that this time may end in the loss of your loved one is also frightening.

Caregiving can be very routine. At times, the work can be drudgery. You bathe, help with elimination and provide other basic physical needs. Your loved one's attitude may be difficult at times.

take care of yourself

Do not lose sight of the good you are doing and of the effort you have already given. It is vital that you respect yourself. Taking time to care for yourself is essential. Eating healthy foods, exercising, taking leisure breaks and finding someone who can show you some care are important for a caregiver. You are giving so much, you need to receive something back. Let your friends and family do you some favors.

Plan some enjoyable activities for yourself, such as special nights out, so you can look forward to them on a particularly hard day. Mini-breaks with pleasant thoughts are important, but you have to follow through with the fun, too.

Try to make your caregiving more enjoyable. You might start a hobby which both of you can share. You can even read the paper aloud, or read a book or talk about events of the past that you shared. Audio book tapes from the library will be stimulating for the both of you. Music in the background can be relaxing.

