

CARING FOR CAREGIVERS: TIPS FOR REDUCING STRESS

Coping with an act of extreme violence or terrorism, with the concomitant injuries and loss of life, is almost incomprehensible. Every single person in the country can and will be touched directly, or indirectly, by these tragedies. You may find yourself helping others, particularly your children, to understand and cope. You may find yourself helping others who have suffered emotional, physical, or spiritual injuries. You may find yourself coping with, or helping others to cope with the loss of a loved one.



The role of a caregiver is stressful, particularly over time. We would like to remind you of the need to care for yourself, while you are caring for others. We offer you the following suggestions, suggestions that can apply to all caregivers, whether dealing with tragedy, or a chronic illness.

- Identify the stressors in your caregiving role. What tasks or behaviors are most frustrating or anxiety-producing? Think through and plan your responses to these stressful situations.
- Learn and practice stress management techniques. Relaxation exercises such as deep breathing, meditation, and visualization, as well as physical exercise, can be helpful.
- Get adequate rest.
- Recognize that caregiving is stressful and realize that role changes are difficult to undertake. Do not be hard on yourself when you experience impatience, frustration, sadness, or anger. These are natural emotions when caring for someone who may be unhappy, ungrateful, or difficult.
- Be willing to walk away from difficult situations to calm down. Return later and try a new approach.
- Remember to not personalize the problems you are experiencing. The person is not trying to make life difficult.
- Keep incidents in perspective. Try not to overreact to small setbacks or minor crises.
- Simplify and structure the environment; make care routine.
- Set realistic goals regarding what and how much you can do for your loved one.
- Take one day at a time. Try not to worry about what might happen when you have planned the best you can.
- Be good to yourself. Give yourself frequent praise and rewards for your patience and endurance. Say nice things to yourself when the person you are caring for no longer can. Continue to find ways to have fun.
- Use your sense of humor - it relieves stress and is a positive emotional release for both of you.
- Maintain your own physical, emotional, and spiritual health. Find sources for personal satisfaction. Cultivate some emotional detachment.
- Write feelings/thoughts in a journal. Writing things down will often help put them into better perspective and will be a way of releasing emotions.
- Identify and be willing to use your support system. Avoid isolation. Have someone available to vent. If family or friends offer help, accept it.
- Be familiar with your own EAP or counseling services, financial, legal and community resources.

**IF YOU NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO PLEASE CALL YOUR
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

**THERE IS ALWAYS SOMEONE TO LISTEN
24 HOURS A DAY, 7 DAYS A WEEK**

CALL ANYTIME AT 1-800-873-7138

Reading List:

1. **Caregiver's Reprieve: A Guide to Emotional Survival** by Avrene Brandt, Ph.D.
2. **Taking Time for Me: How Caregivers Can Effectively Deal With Stress** by Katherine L. Karr
3. **Caregiving: The Spiritual Journey of Love, Loss and Renewal** by Beth Witrogen McLeod
4. **Hugs for Caregivers** by Pauline Sheehan