

Coping Tools for Caregivers

CARING FOR YOURSELF

If you're going to be the main carer, you face a time of many questions and few easy answers. There'll be more and more demands on your time and energy. It may take a toll on your physical, emotional, social and financial wellbeing.

When considering the changes you may face in taking on the care of your loved one, some questions you may ask include:

- Can I do this?
- Can I take a leave of absence from work? Do I need to?
- Is it a good idea or for me to look after my loved one at home?
- How can I set up our house to care for them at home?
- How will we cope financially?
- How will I juggle work, children and day-to-day care of someone I love so much?
- Will I get the physical and emotional strength and practical help I'll need?

If you can't care for your loved one fulltime, it doesn't mean you can't care for them at home, but you'll need to think carefully about your resources as you may need to pay for some care privately. Plan ahead. If you realistically believe you can't care for your loved one, no matter how much you'd like to, it's better to say so at the beginning rather than risk being disappointed when you have to give it up.

GENERAL COPING TIPS

Accept that you will need help from others. Welcome this support.

Identify the people that might be able to help you early on and call on them **EARLY** when needed (they need to help as much as you need them to).

Talk regularly with family/whanau, friends or health professionals – about what you feel, what you need, how they can help.

Find a local or online support group and share your feelings so they don't grow into problems.

Be realistic. Know your limits, and learn to say no – don't take on more than you can handle.

Eat well, exercise regularly and get enough sleep.

Let go of unrealistic expectations and demands. Don't be a martyr.

Hang on to your sense of humour

Make a list the names and phone numbers of everyone who can help you.

Identify things you enjoy and take time out to do them.



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