

Coping

Caring for aging loved-on



Don't Feel Guilty ∞
You Can't Do It All!

Coping with aging parents or loved-ones is a complex issue that can easily overwhelm adult children. By acknowledging the reality that being a caregiver is filled with stress, caretakers can be fore warned and guard against burnout. Always remember, the best way to be an effective caretaker is to take care of yourself.

Prepare And Communicate

Much of the anxiety associated with caring for aging loved ones can be relieved by planning ahead, instead of dealing with changes or crisis as they arise. Good planning starts with communication:

- Discuss aging issues with loved ones before they need help.
- Let loved ones know that you are partners in their care, and that they can rely on you to respect their wishes.
- Involve other family members in discussions about lifestyle, financial, and medical planning. Emphasize family bonding and mutual support.

Get Educated

Aging parents and their adult children need to become knowledgeable about age-related issues such as:

- Legal and financial decision making, and paperwork related to power of attorney, living wills, and estate wills.
- Financial management and planning.
- Housing and living arrangements.
- Healthcare, including general knowledge and specific health needs and lifestyle changes associated with age related illnesses and conditions.

Professional Assessments Are Crucial

As a loved-one's abilities and condition change, assessments let you know exactly what you're dealing with. Assessments are best handled by physicians, nurses, and social workers. Lawyers and financial advisors are also very helpful.

Don't Go It Alone!

Taking on too much responsibility in the care of aging parents often leads to caretaker burnout. Don't try to do everything yourself. Share the emotional and physical responsibilities with family members, friends, and paid assistants. Use family and social contacts, or the internet, to network with other caregivers and families. *Seek out professional counseling if the situation or relationship with an elderly parent becomes overwhelming.*



Need more information?

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
"Healthy Aging"
www.cdc.gov/aging

National Institute on Aging (National Institute of Health)
www.nia.nih.gov

Administration on Aging – US Department of Health and Human Services
www.aoa.gov

Today's Caregiver
www.caregiver.com

Elder Law Answers
www.elderlawanswers.com