CAREGIVING: HOW TO SURVIVE AND STAY SANE

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KEEP CALM CAREGIVING IS NOT FOR WIMPS!

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Who is a caregiver?

Any person who provides help and assistance to a person in need

Nationally about 1 in 3 adults will become an informal caregiver

Feelings of anger, frustration, exhaustion, isolation and sadness can easily arise

"There are only four kinds of people in the world - Those who have been caregivers, Those who are currently caregivers, Those who will be caregivers And those who will need caregivers."

Rosalynn Carter
RISK FACTORS FOR CAREGIVER STRESS

- Being female
- Living with the person you are caring for
- Social isolation
- History of depression
- Financial difficulties
- No choice in being a caregiver
What are signs of caregiver stress?

- Increased feelings of worry and feeling overwhelmed
- Feeling tired often
- Too much sleep or not enough
- Frequent physical problems
- Abusing alcohol and/or drugs
- Weight gain or loss
What is caregiver burnout?

A state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion

It can be accompanied by a change in attitude

No longer feeling connected to what you are doing

Burnout may create feelings of fatigue, stress, anxiety and depression
Causes of caregiver burnout

- Role confusion
- Unrealistic expectations
- Lack of Control
- Unreasonable demands
How can we manage caregiver stress?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Find</th>
<th>Find someone you trust</th>
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<tr>
<td>Accept</td>
<td>Accept help</td>
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<tr>
<td>Set</td>
<td>Set realistic goals for yourself as a caregiver</td>
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<tr>
<td>Get</td>
<td>Get connected</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seek</td>
<td>Seek social support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Try</td>
<td>Try to be realistic about your loved one’s disease</td>
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Communication tips for caregivers

- Realize that illness may make communication difficult
- Remember to exercise patience
- Try not to take things personally
- Sometimes you may have to step away from the situation
- Use humor to ease stressful times
- Talk to other caregivers who understand
- Hugging, kissing and touching are important ways to communicate

Source Credit: DC.gov
Resources-The Team You Bring With You*

- The researcher
- The experienced caregiver
- Chief cook and bottle washer
- The special skill person
- The handyperson or weekend carpenter
- The doctor visit accompanier
- The driver
RESOURCES TO SUPPORT ALS CAREGIVERS

- Jobs Caregivers Can Share*
- Care Connection*
- Lotsahelpinghands.com*
- Caringbridge
- Home delivery services such as Instacart, Amazon, local stores in your area
- Mindfulness/meditation
Self-care isn't always chocolate cake and trips to the spa. Sometimes, it's meal planning, going to bed early or letting go of a bad friend. It's forgiving yourself for not meeting your own impossible standards, and understanding that you are worthy. Always.

Self-care isn't just luxuries, but a means for survival.
RESOURCES TO SUPPORT ALS CAREGIVERS: HELPFUL APPS*
PRACTICAL RESOURCES TO SUPPORT AND EMPOWER ALS CAREGIVERS

- In-home care programs
- Respite
- Accessibility
- Caregiver only supportive programs and weekend retreats
- Resource groups
- Loaner equipment program
- Visiting Volunteer programs
- Advance Directive Planning
3 Options:

- Vent
- No Vent/Hospice
- Not making a decision—often results in emergently being vented
HANDOUTS
