

Caregivers

Taking Care Of Yourself and Supporting Loved Ones



At some point in our lives, most of us take on the position of caregiving. **CAREGIVING IS BOTH ENRICHING AND EXHAUSTING**, and taking care of others while not forgetting to care for ourselves is critical. It is normal to feel tired, frustrated, and annoyed with those we caretake from time to time. This does not make us bad caretakers, merely human ones.

Several resources can be accessed to obtain additional information, evaluate caretaker fatigue, and the like. One excellent resource is listed on the back of this page.

A few general principles can help us through the various phases of caretaking. When taking on such a role, it helps to do the following:

Recognize the limits of what we as caretakers can do.

It is unnecessary to do EVERYTHING for those we caretake; it is essential to do what we can, especially if the caretaking is for an extended period of time

Ask for help from others when overwhelmed.

It helps immensely to build a support network for additional help and respite. Work to identify people who are truly available to help when needed.

Continued on back side

We are here to help

Please call **877-274-4693 (TTY: 711)**
or visit ssmhealth.com/mental-health

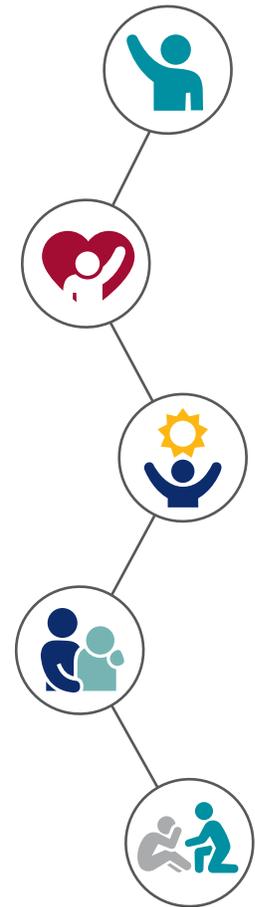
 **WellFirst Health**[®]
provided by SSM Health Plan

Caregivers

Taking Care Of Yourself and Supporting Loved Ones

When taking on such a role, it helps to do the following *(continued)*:

- Do not let your life and what you enjoy get lost in the work that you are doing for the people you caretake.**
Consider setting aside specific “me” times that you can use for your interests, hobbies, and social interactions with others. It may sound impossible, but try to take up a new interest or hobby so that you can distract yourself from your caretaking duties.
- Encourage your loved one’s independence, and be an advocate for that person.**
Work to have your caretaking duties become less over time. Be creative with solutions. Some work, and some do not. Try to encourage your loved one to resume normal activities, and encourage what that person can do. Routines can help, such as phone calls daily or weekly. Please do not dwell on what they cannot.
- Maintain your sense of humor and faith.**
- Use coping strategies to adjust to changes in your environment.**
Do not neglect your physical health; exercise and make sure that you get enough sleep.
- Many organizations can provide additional resources for you as you go through the caregiving process.**
The Family Caregiver Alliance (1-415-434-3388/www.caregiving.org) is one example.
- If you feel that you are struggling excessively, please do not hesitate to seek professional help.**
There is no reason to suffer in silence.



If you are in emotional crisis, thinking about suicide, or are concerned about someone who might be, please call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. You can also call the National Suicide Hotline at 1-800-273-8255 or contact the Crisis Text Line by texting HOME to 741741.

We are here to help
Please call **877-274-4693 (TTY: 711)**
or visit ssmhealth.com/mental-health

 **WellFirst Health**[®]
provided by SSM Health Plan