**Caregiving Does Not Have to Cause Burnout or Stress**

When an aging parent needs regular personalized care, from a family member, it is a heavy responsibility. Caring for an aging parent or grandparent involves not just taking care of their physical needs but also their emotional, spiritual, social, and other needs as they arise. While providing care, you may feel guilt, obligation, or a host of your own emotions. You may start to feel that only you can do the job, or because you do it best, it’s easier for you to manage the care and do everything yourself. It may start as just providing a few meals and transportation but over time, the responsibilities will grow. If your parent or grandparent live in your home daily care becomes an obligation.

Providing this level of care for another person, while managing your own life and family, can become overwhelming. You may start feeling anxious and irritable. You may have difficulty sleeping and start feeling run down or having health problems. You may even begin to feel resentful or depressed and some family members start drinking or eating more and withdrawing socially from friends and family. Social isolation and loneliness can begin to creep in and affect your mood and attitude.

It is a difficult job that can take its toll on you and you are not alone.

There are ways to cope with the burnout and stress that you may be feeling as a caregiver.

1. **It is okay to ask for help.** Others around you see the hard work you are doing and often want to help but don’t know how to best help. You can plan out specific care needs and let others take the lead in managing those steps. Whether it’s children in your home or other family members, who live at a distance, there are tasks that others can do that will make your life easier. Perhaps a child can play a card game with them each day or a family member at a distance can call on a weekly basis to visit with them.
2. **This is not your whole life.** Make sure to take time to visit socially with your friends or keep up on your hobby. Take time to talk with those around you or a therapist to get the support you need in your own life. Think about what your parent would wish for you in your life and be okay with taking a time out to take care of yourself. Self-care is what makes it possible for you to face each day with strength and empowerment.
3. **Get outside professional help.** There are professionals who help families take care of their loved ones. They are called Aging Life Care® Managers. They will help your family manage care and relieve the burden and stress. They will also have ideas on ways to create engagement for your aging parent so that they can do activities that they truly enjoy. While you know they are enjoying themselves, it makes it easier for you to step away and do something that you enjoy.

Caregiving can be a rewarding service to those you love if it is managed in a way that doesn’t cause burnout or stress. Your well-being is an important part of making sure that you remain strong and able to manage all that is being demanded of you.