



# Caring for the Caregiver



**What  
Are  
Your  
Needs?**

Caring for a loved one who is chronically ill is one of life's most demanding tasks. Caregivers owe it to themselves as well as to the person cared for to recognize and care for their own needs.

**Look for these resources in your community.**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| adult day care                            | meal delivery services                          |
| alcohol and drug abuse treatment services | medical, legal, financial and social assistance |
| alternative housing                       | nursing homes                                   |
| family support groups                     | respite care                                    |
| hospice care                              | transportation services                         |
| housekeeping services                     | visiting nurses                                 |

## **Need to understand and accept the nature of the illness**

- What's the outlook for the patient? Will there be eventual recovery, or is the illness terminal? If it's terminal, what's the patient's life expectancy? Will I be able to take good care of the patient?
- How am I meeting this need now?
- What would help me meet this need in the future?

## **Need to accept outside help for both my physical and emotional needs**

- For my own health, I must learn to ask family members and others to help with the care of the loved one. Such outside help will also allow me to address my needs for rest, recreation, stress reduction and the sharing of my feelings.
- How am I meeting this need now?
- What would help me meet this need in the future?

## **Need to recognize and share my feelings, including grief**

- My feelings may include guilt, anger, sorrow, grief or even joy. How can I share my feelings so that I don't become emotionally isolated?
- How am I meeting this need now?
- What would help me meet this need in the future?

## **Need to enjoy good times, both with and apart from the person cared for**

- What good times can I plan with the patient? These don't have to be elaborate or expensive. They could be as simple as a massage with scented oil, reading or sharing music. What plans have I made for my own pleasure and recreation?
- How am I meeting this need now?
- What would help me meet this need in the future?

## **Need to know my limits and to include them in planning for long-term care**

- Am I staying within the limits of my ability to care for this person? Will there be a time when I can no longer manage the care? What plans have I made for such a possibility?
- How am I meeting this need now?
- What would help me meet this need in the future?

## **Need to identify resources, support services, information services and physical help**

- Am I familiar with the resources and support services that are available in my community? Do I know where to find out more about such services?
- How am I meeting this need now?
- What would help me meet this need in the future?