



CIGNA Behavioral Health

Eldercare



If you've taken on the responsibility of caring for an elderly loved one, it might help to know that you're not alone. Millions of Americans are providing at least some level of care for the elderly.

Being a Caregiver

How can you provide for someone else and care for yourself, too? The tips below might offer some help.

Avoid Isolation

One of the biggest problems for the caregiver is the feeling of isolation, particularly if your elderly relative is seriously ill. If a relative can provide some care each week, or if you can occasionally pay for a temporary healthcare worker, take the time to pursue outside interests. You need the time to regenerate and you might feel more capable of coping after an outing to a mall or movie.

Be Assertive

It's very easy to get caught up in the caregiver role, then wonder why no one else will help out. Learn now to ask for specific help. Rather than saying, "I wish someone else would take mother to the doctor," say "Mother needs someone to take her to the doctor on Thursday at 1 o'clock. I would appreciate it if you would take her."

Join Others

Ask your doctor, community hospital or public health department for referrals to support groups available to people providing eldercare and consider joining in. You'll not only have a source of support, but often others will have already solved problems you might be having. They'll be happy to share their experiences and information with you.

Investigate Day Care

Some communities have day care programs for the elderly

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and many provide transportation, too. If your relative is not too ill to participate, he or she might like to be out of the house and socializing with a group of peers. This will also relieve you of all-day responsibility.

Avoid Burnout

Many times you feel obligated to "do it all," but providing eldercare can easily sap your inner resources without your knowing it. The resulting stress can be uncomfortable for everyone. Make it a point to talk regularly with others outside the home and don't hesitate to get counseling if you begin to feel overwhelmed. Often, just one or two minor adjustments in your routine can make the difference.