

The Child/Adolescent Caregiver



CARE GIVING TIPS FOR CHILD AND ADOLESCENT FAMILY MEMBERS

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PROVIDING CARE for a family member in need is a centuries-old act of kindness, love and loyalty. And as life expectancies increase and medical treatments advance people are living longer and more and more children and adolescents will participate in the caregiving process.

Unfortunately caregiving can take a heavy toll on you if you don't get adequate support. Caregiving can often cause serious changes in the way things normally play out at home which in turn can cause you conflict, household disruption, financial pressure and lots of work. Everyone's role in your family is subject to become affected and even change, including your own.

QUESTIONS:

Is anyone here currently providing care or helping to provide care for a relative who is ill? Who is the relative? What is the illness?

QUESTIONS:

Has taking on this honorable and noble responsibility changed your personal life in anyway? Do you expect it too in the future?

QUESTION:

What is it that you do to stay focused, pleasant and calm in order to keep yourself from going BONKERS?



TIPS

1. LEARN AS MUCH AS YOU CAN

Don't be afraid to ask questions. Ask about your family member's illness and/or what you need to do in order to provide the care that is needed. The more you know the better you will be at it. And the better you are at it, the better you will feel about what you are doing.

2. KNOW WHEN ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

Be for real with yourself and know how much time and energy you can afford to give. Take into consideration the other obligations you have including school, chores, maintaining good relationships with family and peers and most importantly your obligation to enjoy yourself. YES... you are obligated to enjoy yourself some of the time, because this is the only time in your life that you are going to be the age that you are now, and only you can live your life.



TIPS

3. ACCEPT ALL OF YOUR FEELINGS

Caregiving can cause a host of emotions, some good and some not-so good. Appreciated, respected and valued are some good ones, while, anger, fear and guilt are the more common not-so good ones.

QUESTION:

What do you think a reason or reasons might be that a child or adolescent caregiver would feel guilty?

It is extremely important for YOU the caregiver, to remember that it is absolutely OKAY to take time to chill, have fun and to feel happy.

Please make time to do things that you enjoy with the people who make you laugh and who make you feel good about being you!

And remember to get plenty of exercise and rest.

4. CONFIDE IN OTHERS

Talk to people about what you are feeling!

Talking honestly about your feelings will keep you from going bonkers!

Trusted family and friends can make really good listeners;

Your school counselor, Pastor or family physician may be able to provide you with ideas or advice on how to get you extra assistance if you need it.