

How To Reduce Stress as a Caregiver

Caregiving for loved ones can send you on a physical and emotional roller coaster ride. In any 24 hour period you can experience a range of emotions such as fear, anxiety, hope, sadness, fatigue, then suddenly change over to joy, compassion, and love.

To keep yourself in good shape and reduce stress, it is important that you take care of yourself first. Some feel it could be selfish, but to the contrary; you will actually be a better caregiver by doing so. *Before* you are drained of all physical and emotional reserves, here are a few recommendations to rejuvenate the spirit:

Pamper yourself. Enjoy a massage or a manicure, or do absolutely nothing.

Laugh! Find humor in everyday situations. Laughter is surely the best medicine!

Take care of your physical self. This can be as simple as taking time to eat nutritious meals, getting adequate sleep, or going for a quick walk.

Buy yourself flowers. There is nothing like a colorful bouquet to lift spirits.

Confide in a close friend. Take time to nurture your closest relationships as these can restore energy and alleviate some of the psychological effects of burnout.

Set limits. Do not try to do it all yourself. *Accept help when it is offered.* Do not be afraid to ask relatives and friends for assistance; true friends will always be available for you when in need.

Circumstances often occur when caregivers need a true break in caring for others. A respite stay for your loved one can be an effective way to rejuvenate yourself. I see too many families on the verge of burnout. It can be comforting to know that your loved one is in a safe and secure environment while taking needed time off to relax and recharge. If you would like to take advantage of our respite services, or arrange for a tour, please feel free to call Kim Richardson or Roxana Laguerre at Lakeside at 410-749-4480.