

10 Tips for Family Caregivers

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1. Caregiving is a job, and respite is your earned right. **Reward yourself** with respite breaks often.
2. **Watch out** for signs of depression, and don't delay in getting professional help when you need it.
3. When people offer to help, **accept the offer** and suggest specific things they can do.
4. **Educate yourself** about your loved one's condition and about how to communicate effectively with doctors.
5. There's a difference between caring and doing. **Be open** to technologies and ideas that promote your loved one's independence.
6. **Trust your instincts**; most of the time they'll lead you in the right direction.
7. Caregivers often do a lot of lifting, pushing, and pulling. **Be good to your back.**
8. Grieve for your losses, and then allow yourself to **dream new dreams.**
9. **Seek support** from other caregivers. There is great strength in knowing you are not alone.
10. **Stand up for your rights** as a caregiver and a citizen.

The following publications are available in BHS (Behavioral Health Services):

- ALTC (Aging & Long-Term Care) Directory
- Senior Living Strategies Resource Guide of the Tri-Cities
- National Institute on Aging—*So Far Away: Twenty Questions for Long-Distance Caregivers*

There are also several informative websites available to help you:

- Family Caregiver Alliance: www.caregiver.org
- National Alliance for Caregiving: www.caregiving.org (Includes “*Family Caregiving 101*”)
- National Family Caregivers Association: www.nfcacares.org

For additional resources or coping skills, please call BHS at 376-4418 to make an appointment.

Source: National Family Caregivers Association, “10 Tips for Family Caregivers,” www.nfcacares.org.