



Care for Caregivers: How to Help Yourself as You Help Someone Else

Caring for an aging loved one is both rewarding and challenging. When you focus your energy on someone else, it's easy to forget to take care of yourself. However, without self-care as a caregiver, you can feel burned out.

The Weight of Caregiving

As a caregiver, you may manage doctor's visits, medications or things that your loved one can't do for themselves. It's hard to see an aging parent decline in health and independence.

Nearly 20% of the U.S. adult population gives unpaid care to another adult. The group that cares for aging relatives at the same time as they raise their own children is called the "sandwich generation." About half of caregivers report that they've taken on debt to support their loved one. Long-term stress leads to burnout, anxiety and depression.

Self-Care for Caregivers

Caring for yourself is important even as you care for someone else. Here are some ways to help:

Support Groups — Connect with others who share similar experiences. Look for them in your community or online.

Mental Health Resources — Ask your loved one's doctor for a referral to caregiver mental health services. You deserve support, too.

Self-Care — Make space for what helps you recharge, like exercising, reading or spending time with friends.

Boundaries — You may not be able to meet all your loved one's needs, and that's okay. It's okay to say no sometimes.

Caring for someone else doesn't mean you have to do it alone. Take time to care for yourself, too.

#CareForCaregivers #RespectOurElders

If you or someone you know is older and struggling mentally, or needs support while caring for an aging loved one, you can find more resources through the **National Council on Aging** at www.ncoa.org.

Reviewed by Senior Director, Clinical Strategy & Research (LCSW, BCBA, CCM) and Clinical Director, EAP.