



Checklist to Help You Cope With Caregiving

- Talk to someone about your feelings. For example, are you feeling lonely, scared, embarrassed, useless, powerless, depressed, panic, self-pity, or anxious? Identify the situations that bring up these emotions.
- If you have never been close to your parent or if you grew up in an abusive environment, you have some choices to make. First, do you want to take care of your parent, and can you? Is it best to hire someone else to tackle the daily care, allowing you to monitor care from a distance?
- Take one day at a time, but prepare for the future. Recognize which problems you can do something about, and which are beyond anyone's control; focus on the former.
- Be realistic about your abilities and how much you can do right now. Don't try to do it all yourself, even if you think you're the best person for the job.
- Be realistic about your parent's abilities. Enjoy the memories but realize your parent's needs and relationships are changing. There are still many rewards and blessings to be had.
- Take time out. In caregiving terminology, it's called respite, and every caregiver needs more than they admit or realize. Ask family, friends or community agency workers or volunteers to come in while you go out. You may not be able to stop thinking about the situation but at least you will have some time away from it. That can do wonders to keep you going.
- Set limits on what you are able to do for others.
- Be forgiving of your own limitations and mistakes. If you can't fulfill all your promises, do what you can, and recognize this is all you really can do. It is good enough!
- Keep a positive attitude and a sense of humor. Don't be afraid to share happy memories and special moments. Keep a journal. If you have children that will never know their elders, they might enjoy reading about these relatives when they get older. The journal may be helpful to you during times of frustration.
- Set aside time just for yourself, and make it stick. Make sure family and friends honor your request for personal time.
- Keep up your own interests and activities as much as possible. When you are no longer a caregiver, you still have your life to live.

For additional information about caregiver stress, contact Quest EAP at 1-800-364-6352 and ask for our Eldercare Referral Service.