



Caregiver's useful tips

When you are a professional caregiver, your job may last a few hours at the time, but at the end of the day, you always come back home. You have an opportunity to relax and recharge.

However, when you care for a chronically ill loved one, the demands of caregiving are completely different and often can be really exhausting, and overwhelming. Caring for your loved one can be very rewarding, although involves many stressors that can lead to anxiety, depression and burnout.

But there are steps you can take to rein in stress and regain a sense of balance, joy, and hope in your life.

How to cope in stressful situations?

Any kind of chronic illness such as endometriosis or fibromyalgia can take a toll on any couple.

Being a caregiver who is not sick and who does not know how to handle stress can be extremely difficult to manage life with new challenges.

But with patience and commitment you and your partner can deal with the strain, a chronic illness can place on your relationship.

On the next page you will find useful caregiver's tips for managing your needs, despite increased physical, emotional and cognitive demands from your chronically ill partner.



Find support.

Feeling angry eventually makes you feel guilty and alone, so talking to other people who also care for a family member can be helpful for you to cope. You can google support groups on Facebook or Twitter and join them to connect with other caregivers who have similar experiences as you.

Get help.

There is no shame in asking for help. Try to find new ways to provide care for your spouse and seek help for yourself from others.

Consider hiring someone to help you with chores or childcare. Family or friends may be willing to assist you. Consider making a list a family, friends, neighbors, or even local organizations who can help and what tasks they are available to do.

Make time for yourself.

Spending time doing something you like can give you a much-needed break. Taking breaks will help you to be an effective caregiver. Spend more time with other people who are important to you. They are important for your well-being.

Be kind to yourself.

Many caregivers experience occasional anger or frustration. It makes them feel guilty for having these feelings. In order to cope with these difficult feelings, you could include talking with supportive friends, exercising, or journaling. Writing a blog is one of the best ways to cope, you express how you feel and help other people at the same time.

Identify personal barriers.

Pushing yourself, doing too much, and not setting personal barriers can stand in the way of caring for yourself. If you don't take care of yourself, it will become a pattern.

However, as a family caregiver, you must ask yourself: "What good will I be to the person I care for if I become ill? If I die?" Breaking old patterns and overcoming obstacles is not an easy proposition, but it can be done—regardless of your age or situation.

The first task in removing personal barriers to self-care is to identify what is in your way. For example:

Communicate.

Relationships suffer because people do not talk about their problems. It's as simple as that. A lack of discussion leads to feelings of distance and a lack of intimacy. You need to try and find ways to talk openly to your partner about the things that bother you.

Your spouse shouldn't judge you - we all have issues we want to resolve, that includes your loved one. You have to find a middle ground by allowing both of you to express what you feel, and listen without judgments to one another.

Try to be patient.

What they say is true - patience really is a virtue! It's true when it comes to being a caregiver! There will definitely be times when it doesn't seem like you can continue. This is where self-care can be very helpful, so take some time out for breathing, meditating, going for a walk or eating well instead of taking out your frustrations on the person that you're taking care of.

Don't stop learning.

Learn as much as you possibly can about your loved one's condition. It may be endometriosis or fibromyalgia, but being armed with knowledge will help you provide the best care. You can provide the courage and power you need during difficult times.

Remember your loved one.

The person you are caring for may seem or even look different. They may be someone completely different and no longer laugh as easily as they used to, they may forget things or even appear lazy and unmotivated. They may also see changes in themselves, which can be scary and frustrating.

Remember that negative emotions can manifest themselves as unusual behaviors such as yelling, or even refusing to speak. However, despite these changes, try to picture what that person you are caring for was like when they were well when you met them.

Remember that your loved one is still there inside their ailing body. Keep the faith!

Approach caregiving with your heart.

Being a caregiver is a very important job! If you let your heart lead your actions, you will have a very positive impact on the life of your loved one. Being a caregiver should be something that you want to do, not something you have to do.

Knowing that the person you care for is not a total stranger but your beloved partner or a member of your family should make you feel closer to them.

Be respectful.

The person you are caring for may be physically or mentally impaired. After all, chronic illness impacts mental health, but it's important to remember that your loved one still has an opinion. Even someone who is unwell can teach you important life lessons. Respect their opinion.

Be sensitive.

Try to be as sensitive as possible. Even your loved one may be unable to verbalize it, they may have a critical health problem or personal care need that you can help address.

Trust in your ability to be a caregiver.

Have faith in yourself, in being a caregiver. There is no perfect way to be one, there is no formula to it, perfection isn't necessary. What is important is that you are doing your best. There will always be some days that are better than others.

Know your limits.

Being a caregiver does not mean that you have to respond immediately to every wish or issue.

If there is a problem that isn't urgent and you can't immediately get to it, acknowledge the request and tell your loved one you'll help as soon as possible. Set boundaries, it will help you both in the long run.

Try not to be judgemental.

Oh yes! It can be hard... Remember that the person you care for did not choose to be chronically ill. It's likely that they want to be and feel independent. If you try to put yourself in their shoes and imagine the challenges of being ill and unable to do what you may want to do, you realise, you have nothing to complain about. You're healthy!



Daily tips checklist:

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Get help.

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Make time for yourself.

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Be kind to yourself.

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Identify personal barriers.

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Communicate.

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Try to be patient.

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Don't stop learning.

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Remember your loved one.

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Approach caregiving with your heart.

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Be respectful.

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Know your limits.

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Don't forget to take care of yourself!

Aside from caring for your loved one, it's important to take care of yourself!

If you are not physically and emotionally healthy, it will be difficult to tackle all the jobs of taking care of someone else. If you don't know anyone in your community and don't have a family nearby, taking a break from caregiving by setting boundaries can be impossible.

But you can always find online support services in your area. Remember that If you don't take care of yourself first, you'll not be able to care for another person. You don't have to feel guilty about it. Your own self care must come first!

