

Getting Help With Your Caregiving Responsibilities

As a caregiver, it is important to know and accept your own limits. This is not a failure. Having a support system is part of taking care of your loved one and yourself. Decide which tasks you will do on your own, and which you will need help with.

Here are some things you can do that will help you in your role as a caregiver:

Check with family and friends

Are there any family members, friends, members of your faith community, coworkers, neighbors, or others you can ask for assistance? Often people want to help. You just need to ask. Be specific about the kind of help you need, and keep records of who is handling what task. Certain Web sites can make it easier by providing calendars and other helpful tools for coordinating care (such as www.carecalendar.org or www.lotsahelpinghands.com).

Learn about respite care programs

Respite caregivers spend time with your loved one while you run errands or take some personal time away. They may help with feeding, bathing, or daily routines. Contact **Visiting Angels of Burlington and Mercer Counties** for more information.

Know your rights

If you work for a company with 50 or more employees and have worked there for at least one year, you are probably allowed unpaid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act to provide care for your loved one. Many smaller companies allow their employees to use sick days and vacations for caregiving purposes. Ask your company's human resources department for help.

Talk to a mental health professional about your feelings and worries

Many caregivers feel overwhelmed and alone. You may need more than friends or family members to talk to. Speaking with a counselor or oncology social worker may help you cope with some of your feelings and worries.

Join a support group for caregivers

Talking with other caregivers can also help you feel less alone. These groups provide a safe haven where you can share your concerns and learn from others who are going through similar situations.

Call Visiting Angels

Our professionally trained staff understands the unique challenges that caregivers face. We can work with you one-on-one to develop strategies for coping with whatever emotional or practical challenges you may go through.

Tips courtesy of www.cancerca.org