

How Caregiving Changes Your Relationships

What is Caregiving?

Errands	Housework	Home repairs	Transportation,	Meal Preparation
Bathing	Housecleaning,	Giving medications	Doctor appointments	Being on call for emergencies
	Financial support	Legal and financial assistance help	Emotional support	

Signs of Caregiver Stress

- ❖ Feeling overwhelmed or constantly worried
- ❖ Feeling tired often
- ❖ Getting too much sleep or not enough sleep
- ❖ Gaining or losing weight
- ❖ Becoming easily irritated or angry
- ❖ Losing interest in activities you used to enjoy
- ❖ Feeling sad
- ❖ Having frequent headaches, bodily pain or other physical problems
- ❖ Abusing alcohol or drugs, including prescription medication

Strengthening Relationships

Couples

- Prioritize the relationship with your partner
- Make communication a priority
- Make time to do things together
- Adopt a team mind-set

Parent/Child

- Balance care needs of family members

Family and Friends

- Take time to stay connected

Managing Difficult Emotions

Dealing with Emotions

- Acknowledge what you are feeling
- Give the feelings a name
- Try to identify what is causing the feeling
- Take action

Adaptive Thinking

- Identify frequent reoccurring thoughts
- Write these thoughts down
- Think how you might change each thought
- When you have a negative thought, change it to a positive

Family Meetings

- ❖ A communication style that focuses on the feelings or beliefs of the speaker.
- ❖ Invite everyone who might be interested
- ❖ If possible, find a professional to run the meeting
- ❖ Decide on an agenda
- ❖ Set ground rules
- ❖ Start with a status report
- ❖ Let everyone express how they feel
- ❖ Avoid expressing anger and pushing emotional buttons
- ❖ Clearly express the problem and the specific help you want
- ❖ Ask what each person can contribute
- ❖ Write down the help that is offered
- ❖ Provide everyone with a copy of the written plan
- ❖ Try to hold regular meetings

Self-Care

Ask for and
Accept help

Focus on what
you are able
to provide

Make time for
yourself

Join a
caregiver
support group

Seek social
support

Care for your
body

Resources

- ❖ Area Agency on Aging
 - New Mexico Aging and Long-term Services
 - <http://www.nmaging.state.nm.us/aaa.aspx>
- ❖ Alzheimer's Association
 - <https://www.alz.org/newmexico>
- ❖ AARP
 - <https://www.aarp.org/caregiving/local/info-2017/important-resources-for-caregivers.html>
- ❖ Caregiver Action Network
 - <https://caregiveraction.org/>