



50 Things Every Family Caregiver Should Know

01. A caregiver is someone who cares for an aging, ill, or disabled person.

02. The person receiving care is the care recipient.

03. Caregiving duties range from occasional errand running and other supportive care to 24-hour, live-in support.

04. You don't have to live with the person to be a caregiver.

05. About 1/4 of adults are caregivers, 40% of those are men.

06. There is no one way to care for a person. Each person is unique.

07. You can provide care yourself or bring in other family members. You can also hire a professional caregiver.

08. The person being cared for may live at home, in your home, an assisted living or shared housing situation.

09. When possible, you and the care recipient should make decisions together.

10. The wishes of the care recipient are very important.

11. Your needs and wishes are important, too.

12. Taking care of yourself is as important as caring for your loved one.

13. Be sure to eat well, get enough rest, and exercise regularly.

14. The healthier you are the better care you will provide.

15. Don't be afraid to say you need a break or respite – no one can do it all of the time.

16. Help and support can come from community or religious organizations, family members, friends, or neighbors.

17. When people offer to help, say yes.

18. Keep a list of the things you can use help with, such as picking up groceries, getting the oil changed in the car, or meal preparation. When someone offers to help, have them choose from the list.

19. Find out about meal delivery, transportation services, adult day health centers, or respite care.

20. If you are balancing work and caregiving, talk to your employer about flexibility in your job.

21. You may be able to take time off from work under the Family and Medical Leave Act. This federal law allows qualified employees up to 12 weeks of unpaid time off to care for a family member.

22. A social worker or nurse who assists people in finding care for an older adult is called a care or case manager.

23. A case manager helps find services – whether you live close by or in another city or state.

24. Contact the Area Agency on Aging, Alzheimer's Association, or local nonprofits to find out about respite and support groups in your area.

25. If your care recipient has low or moderate income, you may be able to get financial assistance for care through your county or the State of Arizona.

26. Caregiving duties often change over time. A person may need occasional help now and more care later on.

27. Planning ahead can make caregiving easier in the future.

28. As a caregiver, you will need to learn about medical, financial, and legal issues.

29. Talk to your care recipient about money, medical care, and legal issues, particularly Advance Directives for Health Care Planning.

30. Keep the care recipient's social security number, doctors' contact info, prescriptions, and insurance info where you can find it with ease.

31. Find out about the Durable Health Care Power of Attorney. This gives you the legal right to make decisions if your care recipient cannot.

32. You may need to know about assets, income, bank accounts, wills, and insurance policies.

33. Talk with professionals about legal issues and financing long term care.

34. Learn as much as you can about the person's illness, disease, or condition.

35. Learning to care for another person can take practice and special skills.

36. Learning how to care can help you feel more confident.

37. You can learn how to provide care from health care professionals, YouTube, or books.

38. All caregivers feel overwhelmed at times. If you feel overwhelmed a lot, you may need to get help.

39. If you feel angry or often lose patience with your care recipient, get help.

40. If you use alcohol, drugs, or medications in order to cope, get help.

41. If you are depressed, talk to a doctor, counselor, or therapist. Depression can be treated.

42. It is critical for caregivers to develop a support system.

43. You can get support from a support group, therapist, family members, or friends.

44. One of the best resources for caregivers is other caregivers.

45. Caregiver support groups can help you connect with others who are going through similar experiences.

46. A sense of humor can help you deal with the emotional ups and downs.

47. Caregivers who get help are less likely to burn out.

48. Caregivers who get help are better able to provide care for the long term.

49. Respite or taking a break is vital in protecting the health and well-being of both caregiver and care recipient.

50. Caregiving is not an easy job – but it can be very rewarding.