

# Balancing Caregiving, Family and Work



**DE LORO**  
caregiver resource center

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Caring for an older, ill or disabled person can take a lot of time and energy. For people who work or have other family obligations, caregiving can be very challenging. The tips below can help you find a balance.

## No one can do it all.

- ✓ If you are working, taking care of a family and trying to provide care for an aging, ill or disabled adult, you may feel tugged in different directions.
- ✓ You may not be able to give 100 percent everywhere. This is a time when you will have to make hard choices.
- ✓ Be gentle with yourself. No one can do it all.



## Set priorities.

- ✓ Make a list of your personal, caregiving, family and work obligations.
- ✓ Let go of less important commitments wherever you can.
- ✓ It is important to put your personal needs first. You cannot care for another person if you are not healthy.

## Talk to your employer.

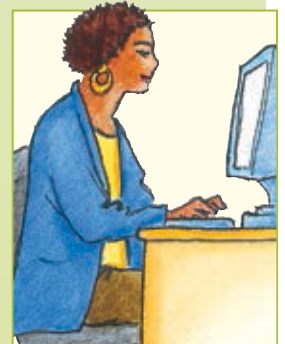
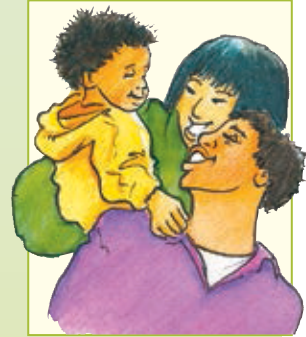
- ✓ Find out if you have an Employee Assistance Program that offers support to caregivers.
- ✓ Keep your work and your caregiving responsibilities as separate as possible. For example, make phone calls to find caregiving resources on lunch breaks, not during work time.
- ✓ Consider job sharing or working part time if possible. Or find out about flex-time schedules.

## Join together.

- ✓ Don't try to carry the load alone. Enlist the support of other family members. Even children can help in some ways.
- ✓ Talk with your spouse and children about how difficult it is to be torn between responsibilities. Protect those family times that are most important.

## Call a family meeting.

- ✓ If other family members are not helping enough, call everyone together to discuss options. Don't wait until you are burned out.
- ✓ Even distant family members can help by making regular phone "visits," paying bills or researching local agencies by phone.

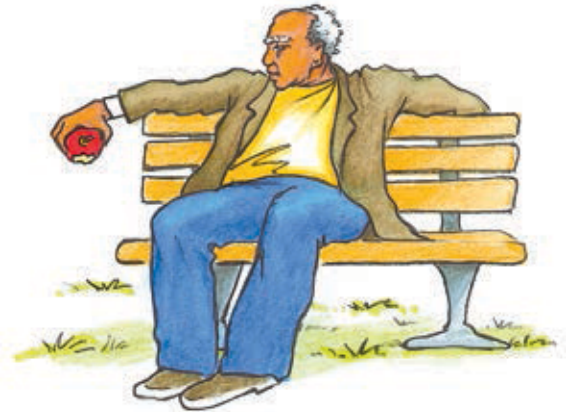




- ✓ If you are feeling overwhelmed, talk to a family member, friend, counselor or health care provider. Consider joining a caregiver support group.
- ✓ See a health care provider if you are depressed, drinking alcohol more than normal, or using prescription or other drugs to help you cope.
- ✓ Take time away from responsibilities for a few hours each week.

### Consider alternatives.

- ✓ It is important to reassess your loved one's needs periodically – and your ability to provide care.
- ✓ You have the right to get help and relief from the stress of caregiving.



### Seek help outside the family.

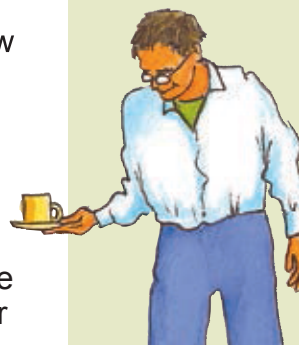
- ✓ A friend or coworker may be able to help by running errands or walking your dog.
- ✓ Consider hiring help for household chores and other tasks you would normally do yourself.

### Use community resources.

- ✓ Use professional caregivers or adult day care. Try meal delivery, transportation services or volunteer support.
- ✓ Think about hiring a care manager. This is a social worker or nurse who specializes in finding care for older or disabled adults.
- ✓ Talk with an attorney or financial advisor about how to finance outside care.
- ✓ Free or low-cost care management and legal aid may be available in your county.

### Take care of yourself first.

- ✓ Taking care of yourself means that you can provide better care for your loved one. You have to be your first priority.
- ✓ Try – no matter how hard it is – to have a life outside of caregiving. This will help you stay healthier, both mentally and physically.
- ✓ Be sure to eat healthy meals, get enough rest and exercise regularly.



To find information about support groups and services in your area, consult your local phone book or search online. You can also call the Eldercare Locator at 1-800-677-1116, or visit its website at [www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov) on the Internet.



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