

Living Well

TOTAL WELLNESS FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Caring for the Caregiver

Learn...

- To solve your wellness puzzle
- To develop action plans with professionals, family and friends
- What works for you

I think that the most stressful thing about being a caregiver is frustration. I am used to identifying problems and solving them.

Suddenly, I'm faced with a range of baffling conditions I can't understand – let alone fix.

A.S. - from a note about her mother.

When caregivers become stressed or exhausted, it affects their loved ones. Thus, it is very important for caregivers to take care of themselves, while helping others.

Peace of Mind?

What if your primary caregiving goal was to help you *and* your loved one to find peace of mind, forgiveness, happiness or love?

Would anything be lost? And what might be gained? How often is love or prayer a good medicine?

Work Closely with your Care Team

As a caregiver, it's very importance to work closely with your doctor(s) and your care team (eg., nurses, therapists, aides). Caregivers *should* know:



- **Warning signs to watch for**
- **What questions to ask when those signs appear**

Our *Caregiver's Guide to Warning Signs and Care Questions* can be downloaded without charge for our website. Use it to keep track of symptoms and discuss your questions with the professionals on your team.

For more information and help contact:

- *NY Connects* (a service of the NYS Office for Aging) offer free unbiased information about any long-term care needs regardless of the patient's age. www.nyconnects.ny.gov
- 2-1-1 is a free United Way telephone referral service that offers information about many needs including: health, counseling, financial and education.

Warning Signs and Care Questions for...

Stress, Moods and Behavior

- Behavioral Symptoms
- Cognitive loss and Dementia (p 4)
- Moods (p 5)
- Stress (p 6)
- Delirium (p 7)
- Psychotropic Drug use (p 8)

Social/Spiritual Satisfaction

- Activities (p 9)
- Psychosocial well being (p 10)

Physical Abilities and Problems

- Activities of daily living (p 11)
- Use of Feeding tubes (p 12)
- Use of Physical restraints (p 13)
- Communication (p 14)
- Visual function (p 15)
- Urinary incontinence (p 16)
- Dehydration (p 17)
- Dental care (p 18)
- Pressure ulcers (p 19)
- Falls (p 20)
- Malnutrition (p 21)
- Pain (p 22)



Four Steps to Living Well

This little poem can help both caregivers and their loved ones to “live well.”

***Start solving your puzzle. Start making a plan.
Use four ways to stress. Use help when you can.***



START SOLVING YOUR PUZZLE

Any piece of the wellness puzzle can help or harm the other pieces.

Which pieces of the Wellness Puzzle are most important for you?
....and for your loved one?



START MAKING YOUR PLAN

Keep a written record of:

- the warning signs you’ve observed
- the steps you’ve been taking to address each issues

Bring someone with you to each medical appointment. Share your record and questions with the doctor. Write down your doctor’s advice.



USE FOUR WAYS TO STOP STRESS

Use the *satisfaction skills* to help you:

- improve communication between you and the person you care for - and between you and your care team
- Stop your stress (if only for a minute or an hour)
- And (if spirituality is important) to pray



USE HELP WHEN YOU CAN

Find trusted help in your community and on the Internet - then work with professionals to get the best outcome.

Explain these steps to **family and friends**. Ask for their support and invite them to joining you in *Living Well*.

If spirituality is important to you, seek support through your faith community and prayer.

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