



Family Caregivers of British Columbia

Family Caregiver Help

Caregiving can bring out the very best in us when we attend to ourselves as well as we attend to the person for whom we are caring. Roles, boundaries, self-care strategies, and how to simply listen are all key.

Three Caregiver Roles

No one can do it all and sharing the responsibility helps considerably. Which role are you presently fulfilling? Which role would you prefer? Remember, a happy caregiver is kinder and healthier. How well are you doing on a scale of 1 - 10? (1 is terrible and 10 is the best you can imagine.)

Healer

How well are you doing on a scale of 1 - 10? To simply be with another living with a disease, disability can be profound in its validation of a person. Honouring another's feelings and spiritual beliefs respects the very nature of the humanity of the healing process. In essence, the task of the healer is to listen.

Empathic Partnership

How well are you doing on a scale of 1 - 10? As an empathic partner, your focus is on the ill/disabled person's emotional and psychological well-being. This relationship requires an insightful intellectual awareness into another's feelings, emotions, and behaviour. It requires patience as well as compassion. Emotional distance is crucial in serving as a link between medical staff and the person who is ill/disabled.

Advocate

How well are you doing on a scale of 1 - 10? Advocates are those witnesses who help find the best medical care and treatment for the person living with disease, disability. They are the go-getters having the energy and the persistence to do the research necessary.

Boundaries

Blanket suggestion: Reflect upon those things you do which create energy and do 1 or 2 of them this week!

Communication

1. Ask questions and listen carefully to the answers
2. Use “I” language
3. Be willing to be persistent and assertive
4. Practice saying “no”; practice saying “yes”

Emotional Well-Being

1. Be with people who are kind
2. Keep a journal of your feelings and thoughts
3. Play

Energy Management

1. Draw a circle and divide it into 4 domains (health, relationships, spiritual, work/education) identifying all the activities that you do within each domain
2. Prioritize the activities and do the most important to you first

Physical Well-Being

1. Eat healthy
2. Practice relaxation strategies (i.e. meditating, walking, yoga, etc.)
3. Get enough quality sleep

Spiritual Well-Being

1. Reflect on what meanings you make of caring for another
2. Reflect on how helping others helps you

Time Management

1. Do weekly activities analysis (each day record what you do by the hour)
2. Choose to reduce or even eliminate certain activities if your analysis is jam-packed

From Network News, Volume 13/No. 1 May 1998