

Re-energize Yourself!

No one can anticipate what it will take to care for another person. It starts out with little things, and then slowly progresses to more and bigger things. Pretty soon you find yourself spending an enormous amount of time and energy taking care of someone else. The responsibility becomes overwhelming. You no longer seem to have time for what you used to enjoy, and it feels selfish to try to fit those things in. You are exhausted, resentful, frustrated and alone. And on top of everything, no matter how much you do, it still doesn't seem like enough. It has become difficult to feel good about yourself and your life.

The above scenario is real to many people. If you are in a situation like this, you are experiencing caregiver burnout. These are normal feelings, but they are signs of stress and must be addressed. It is time to put your own needs on your priority list! Maintaining your energy and vitality is important to you and those around you.

You can fight burnout by talking to someone about your feelings, letting go of thinking you must do it all, taking care of your physical health, continuing meaningful social activities, and regularly taking time to care for YOU.

Everyone has their own unique way of re-energizing. It may be a walk, coffee with a friend, reading a book, exercising, playing piano, listening to music, meditation or anything that gives you energy and makes you feel refreshed. Find the things that give you a boost and make it a priority to do them regularly.

Carving out time for yourself can be a challenge but is important to do. Consider asking (or paying) someone to take over for you to give you some respite, then use that time to "re-energize." Be purposeful in using snippets of time (during their nap, favorite show or other independent activity) to do something for you instead of washing dishes or cleaning. Allow friends and neighbors to help you. Be open to moving your schedule around to accommodate things you enjoy.

In the busyness of your life as a caregiver, one of the best things you can do is to make time to re-energize yourself. Scheduling a time every day or week to do something you love will benefit not only you, but the person you are caring for and everyone else in your life. Find ways to re-energize so you can be the best caregiver you can be!

If you are interested in finding out how the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) can help by assisting you to find some respite options to be able to care for yourself as the caregiver, please feel free to call toll free at (877) 886-2372.

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