

**1. ACCEPT YOUR CARE RECIPIENT AS AN INDIVIDUAL WITH THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION**

- Allow your care recipient to make choices for themselves.
- Competent adults-even at age 89-have the right to make their own decisions even if they are bad decisions in the eyes of the caregiver.
- We can't always stop someone from doing what they want to (this does not apply to driving-a category a caregiver may need to be more actively involved).

**2. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF - caregivers don't realize the toll their caregiving can take on themselves**

- Caregivers themselves may become ill as they focus all of their attentions on the person needing care and neglect their own needs.
- You won't be a help to them if you don't take care of yourself.
- Put your needs first.
- Join a support group.
- You may need to consult with a therapist, social worker or psychologist.
- Exercise! Even a walk around the block can help.
- Socialize with friends.

**3. GET HELP - from friends, siblings or professionals**

- You can't do it all yourself.
- Don't be a martyr. Trying to do it all yourself breeds resentment and anger.
- Off-load the dirty work so you can spend your time enjoying the care recipient's company.
- Share the care with others.
- Keep in mind that those with whom you share the care may come to this role with their own issues, their own relationships with the care recipient, their own responsibilities and their own priorities.
- Other caregivers may not see things the way you do, but that doesn't make them wrong.

**4. TAKE A STEP BACK and let go of some things**

- Things might not be perfect, and they don't need to be.
- Things might not be exactly as you would like.

### 5. PLAN

- Make a “to-do” list, but understand that this list may change.
- Caregiving is often crisis driven. It is better in the long run not to react in the moment of crisis, but rather to consider choices calmly and deliberately.
- Get organized.
- Get paperwork in order (carry health info and med list with you at all times).
- Think ahead. Plan ahead.

### 6. SLOW DOWN

- Rushing doesn't work.
- Caregivers often rush to make decisions and in this rush don't always make the best decisions.

### 7. BE FLEXIBLE and learn to roll with the punches

- You can't predict the trajectory of your care recipient's decline.
- You don't know how they will die or how long it will take.
- It will be unpredictable.

### 8. COMMUNICATE, if possible, with the care recipient

- The sooner you talk, the better.
- Find out important information (doctors' names, health history, medications, financial information).
- Does your care recipient want to remain at home?
- What are their opinions about end-of-life care?
- Is there money to pay for care?
- Explain your own needs to the care recipient (marriage, children, job responsibilities).
- Reassure the person receiving care.

### 9. FIND A DOCTOR WHO SPECIALIZES IN GERIATRICS

- The doctor should know the difference between 'quality' and 'quantity' of life.

**REMEMBER THAT WHAT YOU ARE DOING IS MAKING THINGS BETTER.**