CAREGIVERS’ SELF CARE

Being a caregiver is draining - physically, emotionally and spiritually. Good self-care is a critical ingredient in providing quality care to others. Some caregivers feel guilty when they take time for themselves. But it is important to stay balanced, healthy, and avoid reaching “the end of your rope.”

It takes practice to recognize what is occurring inside you, while at the same time trying to provide care for others. Change begins with insight. As you start to realize when you are reaching your limits, you can better anticipate and address your needs. In this manner you best care for yourself, and can therefore best care for others.

Everyone has their own unique style of relating to the stress of living. With the added responsibility of caring for another, sometimes you manage that stress well, while at other times you need a break to avoid experiencing Compassion Fatigue. Compassion Fatigue is a state of tension and preoccupation, and can be the result of the cumulative stress of caregiving.

COMPASSION FATIGUE INDICATORS

- Exhaustion and loss of energy
- Physical complaints and depression
- Irritability and impatience
- Disorientation and confusion
- Cynicism and detachment
- Minimization and denial of feelings
- Omnipotence and feeling indispensable

SELF CARE SUGGESTIONS

**Celebrations**
- birthdays
- births
- weddings
- graduations

**Focused Reflecting**
- take a bath
- take a walk
- go for a drive
- listen to music
- write in a journal

**Support**
- take a break
- join or attend a group
- share with others
- seek out a trusted friends or professional
- explore what resources are available to you

**Distracting**
- engage in a hobby
- read a book
- exercise
- practice yoga or meditation
- see a movie

“The bow that is always bent will quickly break, but if unstrung will serve you at your need. So let the mind some relaxation take, to come back to its task with fresher heed.” ~Phaedrus