

Helpful Hints for Caregivers

by Pam Erickson, R.N

1. Accept your feelings. All caregivers feel frustrated, guilty, overworked and alone. It's okay.
2. If you find yourself being negatively affected by responsibility, have the courage to change your care strategy. Spot early warning signs of trouble such as persistent irritability, sleep problems, depression, anxiety and temper flare-ups.
3. Participate in support groups that will give you time away from responsibilities, as well as an opportunity to share with others in similar situations.
4. Recognize available options and be willing to exercise them.
5. Trust others with jobs and responsibilities, not only you can "do it right."
6. Prioritize tasks. Don't feel like everything must be done today.
7. Take breaks. Give yourself a daily change of scene. No one cares for the caregiver but you. Pam Erickson, R.N., is founder of Professional Respite Care, Inc., Denver, Colorado and consultant to NSA.