

November is National Caregiver Month

National Family Caregiver Month is celebrated each year in November. What better month could we express our gratitude for the over 65 million family caregivers that provide countless hours of care to their loved one?

When we speak of family caregivers, we are speaking of a significant percentage of the country's population. Caregivers often provide complex medical care, keep commitments of working a full-time job, and maintain relationships with other family members while providing excellent care for their loved ones.



Caregivers often sacrifice their own physical, financial and emotional well-being. They dedicate themselves to helping others without expecting recognition or thanks, but that makes them all the more deserving of both. Caregivers are the unsung heroes of our nation.

Our Agency would like to thank all family caregivers for the selfless acts you do each day. We encourage you to make caregiving for yourself a priority as a caregiver. Don't neglect to take care of you! Follow the ten steps below to nurture yourself physically, mentally, and spiritually every day. When you take care of yourself, you can care for your loved one even better.

1. Eat well-balanced meals - drink six to eight glasses of water a day.
2. Exercise every day - move your body daily, even if it is simply just 15 minutes of stretching, yoga or walking. Use the stairs if possible to keep your circulation going.
3. Go outdoors - fresh air renews the body and spirit. When possible, open a window.
4. Make sure you rest - strive for a minimum of seven to eight hours of consecutive sleep in a 24-hour period. Nap when your loved one naps.
5. Treat yourself - seek treatments for your own aches and pains before they turn into something more serious.
6. Don't ignore your emotions - pay attention to your own feelings and emotions, and seek counseling if needed. Vent feelings to trusted friends or family members.
7. Take time for yourself - use relaxation or stress management methods such as meditation, visualization and yoga. Books and videos are available to guide you in these techniques.
8. Read, pray or meditate - for at least 15 minutes a day.
9. Chuckle more often - laugh, reminisce and share stories of happy times.
10. Ask for help - friends, family and religious groups may be eager to assist and are only waiting to be asked and directed.

For more information about caregiver support services and programs through the Area Agency on Aging District 7, please call us at 1-800-582-7277 or e-mail to info@aaa7.org. We are ready to answer any questions or concerns you may have and help you find resources in your community to help you in your caregiving role.

When you talk to the person you are assisting, do they understand you? Do you understand them? No matter how hard it can be to communicate, don't give up hope and keep trying. Read the issue and test your knowledge by answering True or False to the questions below.

1. Communication is not just about talking. T F
2. Most of our actions are unspoken words that contribute to communication.
T F
3. The tone of our voice does not mean more than the words that we actually say.
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4. Many of us are guilty of not really listening to what others say. T F
5. To let other people feel that they are respected, treat them with dignity by not talking down to them. T F
6. Body actions, such as hugging, are some of the ways we can communicate with people who have lost the ability to understand spoken language. T F
7. A person with hearing loss may appear like they are slow or uninterested. T F
8. Aside from their hearing aid, some people need their eyeglasses to see you better when communicating. T F
9. When talking with a senior with Alzheimer's, make sure to have a quiet environment with minimal background noise. T F
10. It will not help the person to understand you if you are at eye level with them.
T F

KEY: 1. T 2. T 3. F 4. T 5. T 6. T 7. T 8. T 9. T 10. F