

November is National Family Caregivers Month

National Family Caregiver Month is celebrated each year in November and is a time to recognize and honor family caregivers across the country. It offers an opportunity to raise awareness of caregiving issues, educate communities, and increase support for caregivers.

The Area Agency on Aging District 7 (AAA7) provides help to caregivers through the Caregiver Support Program, which is designed to assist caregivers with finding answers about how their caregiving role impacts their life and where to find resources and services to decrease caregiver stress. Caregivers may be caring for an older adult, their adult child with a disability, or the caregiver may be a grandparent caring for their grandchildren or non-relative child. Services include assessments, training, information and assistance, supplemental services, respite, as well as counseling.

Family caregivers manage health emergencies, juggle priorities, and suffer isolation. Read over these “10 Tips for Family Caregivers” from the Caregiver Action Network:

1. Seek support from other caregivers. You are not alone!
2. Take care of your own health so that you can be strong enough to take care of your loved one.
3. Accept offers of help and suggest specific things people can do to help you.
4. Learn how to communicate effectively with doctors.
5. Caregiving is hard work, so take respite breaks often.
6. Watch out for signs of depression and don't delay getting professional help when you need it.
7. Be open to new technologies that can help you care for your loved one.
8. Organize medical information so it's up to date and easy to find.
9. Make sure legal documents are in order.
10. Give yourself credit for doing the best you can in one of the toughest jobs there is.

The AAA7 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. Join us for one of our monthly Telephone Caregiver Support Groups for further help and assistance and a time to share and gain support from other caregivers. Calls take place the third Thursday of every month from 1:30 pm until 2:30 pm. To register or learn more, please call 1-800-582-7277 or e-mail info@aaa7.org.



QUICK QUIZ

Stress occurs as a result of too many pressures that demand too much of you. It is easy to feel victimized in this situation; you are caught up in the problems caused by someone else's illness. Answer True or False to the questions below.

1. *It is important to find a way to get respite from caregiving before you reach the point when you feel your life is out of control—burned out. T F*
2. *Caregivers can underestimate the impact of the work they are doing and the time and emotional energy they are using. T F*
3. *Burnout may have some of the same symptoms as depression, but is not the same and cannot be helped with medication. T F*
4. *Using ways of coping, such as alcohol, overeating, or misusing drugs, is not destructive. T F*
5. *If you are physically ill and not going to the doctor or following the doctor's instructions about how to care for yourself, this can be a sign of burnout. T F*
6. *Fears of dependency and loneliness, or isolation, are common in families of those who are ill. T F*
7. *Having foot pain problems corrected and toenails trimmed can prevent falls. T F*
8. *Spouse caregivers have special problems as they gradually lose the emotional support of the partner who is ill and must now be his or her emotional, as well as physical, support. T F*
9. *Hand washing is almost always an issue in dementia. T F*
10. *Mental health experts say it's not wise to let feelings of neglect build up. T F*

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