



Grandparents Corner

February 2017

Self-Care for Caregivers

Grandparents and other relatives raising and parenting children come in all shapes, sizes, colors and ages. They may be young, in their 40s, retired, or still working. Whatever the differences, grandparents and other relatives all have something in common...that is, raising children that you did not expect to be raising.

Feelings and reactions to caregiving roles will vary also. Depending on health, the financial situation, and what else was planned instead of raising children other than your own.

While they love these children they are parenting and would never want for them what the alternative might be, they may also feel that if they had done a better job as parents raising their children, they wouldn't be doing this all over again - so they may feel like everything is mixed in together, trying to sort out different emotions.

Other relatives parenting children, such as aunts and uncles, may experience it differently. Though they may be willing and even happy to step in to raise and parent someone else's children, they may also wonder why they are picking up the pieces. Non-grandparent kinship caregivers do not usually deal with the guilt (warranted or not) of "what did we do wrong?"

Some grandparents are raising children on an informal basis with no legal arrangement. This can cause many problems when it comes to enrolling children in school, obtaining medical and mental health services, and even providing a secure and stable environment for children.

Other grandparents have obtained the legal status necessary, but have often spent many thousands of dollars in legal fees in the process. Many have had to utilize their retirement programs, taking out second mortgages, or paying legal fees with credit cards.

Whatever the situation, one thing is certain; lives have changed. The change may bring happiness or sadness, and with that change, comes stress. Understanding the stress and finding the proper way to deal with it is vital for your own emotional and physical health as well as for the health of the children. TAKE CARE OF YOU!

Below are Easy Steps of Self-Care:

- Avoid drugs and alcohol - even though this may seem to be a temporary fix to feel better, but in the long run, drugs and alcohol can create more problems and add to your stress instead of taking it away.
- Find support - seek help from a partner, family member, friend, counselor or doctor to have someone with a sympathetic, listening ear. Sharing about your problems and stress can really lighten the burden.
- Connect socially - after a stressful event, it is easy to isolate yourself. Make sure that you are spending time with loved ones. Consider planning fun activities with your partner or friends.
- Take care of yourself
 1. Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet
 2. Exercise regularly
 3. Get plenty of sleep
 4. Give yourself a break if you feel stressed out
 5. Maintain a normal routine
- Stay active. You can take your mind off your problems with activities like helping a neighbor, volunteering in the community, and taking the dog on a long walk. These can be positive ways to cope with stressful feelings.

Source: Centers for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov) and www.raisingyourgrandchildren.com

When you learn how to control and balance your own body, you can safely control and move another person. Read this issue and answer True or False to the questions below.

1. *When getting someone out of bed, it's best to pull them up by their arms. T F*
2. *While lifting, keep your back in a neutral position with knees bent and weight balanced on both feet. T F*
3. *When you have the person standing, instead of twisting your body to reposition them, turn them by pivoting on one foot. T F*
4. *Flannel sheets make it easier for someone to turn over in bed. T F*
5. *Thin pile carpet is easiest to walk on and best for movable assist devices. T F*
6. *If you've strained your back, the best treatment is to rest on a heating pad for about 30 minutes. T F*
7. *Before starting to move someone, make sure they know what's about to happen. T F*
8. *For a safe transfer, have the person place their arms around your neck while moving them. T F*
9. *When a lot of assistance is needed with transfers, tie a strong belt or a transfer belt around the person's waist and hold it as you complete the transfer. T F*
10. *Sitting for long periods will make your back feel better if it's hurting. T F*

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