

21 tips for '21'

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Being a caregiver for a loved one can be rewarding but it also brings on a lot of extra responsibilities, worries, and challenges which result in added stress. As a caregiver it is easy to push aside your own needs. The stress that results from failing to take care of one's own self-care can result in emotional distress, health issues, anger, and social isolation. Here are some tips that I have found helpful in my caregiver journey:



1. Make a list of all the caregiving tasks that are causing you stress. Circle the things which you have no control over and resolve to let them go. Look at what is left on the list and focus on items where you have some degree of control and tackle these items one at a time.
2. Don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it. Family and friends may want to help but don't know how. Consider making another list of simple tasks that they could help with such as running an errand or making a meal for your family. If you are sharing the caregiving responsibility with family members schedule periodic family meetings to talk about how things are going, and how everyone is feeling. Join a support group, in-person or online.
3. Take time for yourself. Practice Mindfulness and learn some relaxation techniques such as meditation, deep breathing, guided imagery, yoga, laughter yoga, progressive muscle relaxation and aromatherapy. Spend time with family and friends doing the things you enjoy.

It is also helpful and important to familiarize yourself with resources in your community that offer home care, respite care, hospice, and adult day care services. Remember, you must be at your best to continue to care for your loved one.