

Support for Caregivers

As you care for your loved one, it may seem hard for you to find the time and energy to take care of yourself, too. But you too deserve caring and support, just as your loved one does. Caring for yourself is good for you, and it will help you be a more effective caregiver as well.

Emotional support is just as important for you as for your loved one. You can find this kind of support through friends, co-workers, a religious community, support groups, or a professional counselor. In addition, the Mind Body Medicine staff and the Pastoral Care staff at Midwestern Regional Medical Center are available for listening and support.

Below are some other ways you can take good care of yourself:

- Getting enough sleep, eating well, and getting some exercise
- Visualizing yourself being calm and relaxed and feeling good
- Making time to do things you enjoy, e.g., reading, listening to music, playing with pets
- Sharing your feelings with someone who cares
- Breathing deeply, stretching, relaxing in the tub

You may have friends and/or family members who want to offer support, either at home or when you're here, but who don't know how to help. When you let them know how they can help you and your loved one, they will likely feel relieved and appreciative, and you'll be taking care of yourself by making sure that what they do is in line with what you need. Here are some ways that others might help you:

- Shopping or other errands
- Doing housework and yard work
- Bringing food or cooking for you at your home
- Providing rides to appointments
- Bringing music, videos, books, or other things for relaxation and comfort
- Walking the dog
- Making or answering phone calls
- Spending time together; being available to listen
- Staying with your loved one while you get out to do other things

Even if it's difficult for you to accept support from others, doing so is a way to take care of yourself and your loved one. It will make it easier for you to carry on and to find some balance in your life during this very challenging time.