

RESPITE: CARE FOR CAREGIVERS



Caregiving for an older or ill family member can be very satisfying but can also be physically and emotionally draining. It's important for caregivers to take a break occasionally to recharge. Caregivers are at an increased risk of health issues from chronic stress. Respite is the key to recharging to protect your health, strengthen family relationships, prevent burn out and allow your loved one to be able to stay at home longer. It is best to use respite for a break before you think you need it. It is essential to your wellbeing before you become exhausted, isolated, and feeling overwhelmed. Respite also provides benefits for the care receiver too.

Deciding on respite care? Here are some things to help you plan.

1. Involve your loved one. Getting their input on how much time you're away and who they will be spending it with can assure them they will benefit from the break as well.
2. What are your loved ones needs. What type of care will be needed while you're away and will the respite provider need any special training or skills.
3. Use a calendar. This will assist everyone to track appointments.
4. What type of respite do you need? Formal and informal, in home and out of home options may exist in your area.

Benefits of Respite Care

1. Support from other caregivers. A chance to connect with others doing the same great work.
2. Rest and relaxation. Getting a breather will help you return refreshed.
3. Taking care of yourself. Good self-care is important to replenish yourself physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Take the time to eat a healthy diet and get some form of exercise often.
4. Education. Respite can provide the opportunity to enroll in programs which may be helpful in your role as a caregiver.

When a caregiver needs help

If you feel like you are impatient, irritable or simply not feeling like yourself these may be indications that you need help. Ask for support and respite, and seek guidance from your EAP. Your EAP can provide resources and assistance to help manage the important role of being a caregiver.

Resources

DSHS Aging and Disability Services Administration has information and resources on their website

www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/hcs/kinship-care/benefits

www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/home-and-community-services/caregiver-resources

<http://archrespite.org/home>

http://nfca.typepad.com/nfc_month_2015/

www.caregiveraction.org/