

Tips for Caregivers

There are more than 40 million caregivers across the country who support aging parents, ill loved ones, or those with disabilities who remain at home. Many of us will identify with the role of caregiver at some point, as 20% of working individuals are also active caregivers. Whether it is caring for a child, an ill loved one, or an aging family member, the reality of caregiving is often demanding and all-consuming. It gets even more complicated for those who are also employed.

Almost half of all family caregivers are adults caring for their aging parents, and about 1 in 5 are wives or husbands caring for their spouses. A true labor of love, most caregivers must juggle their home lives with working a paid job and meeting the needs of those in their care.

Ten Tips for Caregivers:

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!**



Watching a parent age or seeing someone change drastically due to illness can be devastating. Take some time to monitor your own wellbeing. If you are not sleeping well, exercising, or feel yourself becoming reclusive, speak to a professional about depression. It can hit anyone at any time. There's no shame in feeling overwhelmed. If you or someone you know is an active caregiver, see the ten tips to find out what you can do to give the best care to yourself and others.

To encourage more healthy practices and provide support and information, MSK Direct has partnered with The NYCDCC Welfare Fund to provide caregiving resources on the following page here and registration for webinars and panel discussions based on caregiving at www.mskcc.org/event/caregiver-month.

For more information please visit the Caregiver Action Network at www.caregiveraction.org.