

Eldercare - Taking Care of Others

The number of families faced with the care and support of elderly members is growing. Family members need to watch for signs that the elderly person's health, both physical and mental health, is deteriorating. Here are some guideposts for coping with aged parents.

1. Reassure your parents – Let them know that you are supporting them and can be depended upon to help them solve their problems.
2. Educate yourself - You and your parents need to become information specialists in areas relevant to their changing situation such as legal matters, financial arrangements, health care resources, housing and recreation services and current knowledge on the aging process.
3. Take stock – Obtain an assessment of your parents' problems and needs. A professional geriatric consultation team could do this.
4. Help parents retain control – Respect your parents' decisions to remain in control of their lives. Avoid making major decisions in haste. Some degree of participation in the decision making process is almost always possible.
5. Share the work – Share the emotional and physical responsibility among family, friends, professionals and paid helpers.
6. Think Creatively – Brainstorm ways to help your older family member maintain identity, continue interests on some level and have as much decision-making opportunity as possible.
7. Make small changes – Don't be overwhelmed by the complete care that may be necessary in 5 years when partial help is all that is needed right now.



HelpPeople can provide personal support and help with finding resources.