

8 Tips for Caregivers

1. Learn about your loved one's disease, illness, or disability so you know what to expect.

For example, a cognitively impaired person will succeed if you break down tasks into single easy-to-manage steps. If your care recipient repeats a question, answer it as if this is the first time s/he asked.

If s/he honestly remembered the answer, s/he would not ask.

2. Attend support group meetings or participate online.

Ask questions even if you think you know the answer. You are not alone. Others are walking the same road. Together you will learn better ways of caregiving.

3. Make direct eye contact first then meet your loved one where she is.

If happy, smile and greet her enthusiastically. If solemn, speak to him in a lower and more calming tone. Touch him and give him a hug, if appropriate.

4. It's okay to get frustrated and feel angry.

Find an appropriate outlet for your feelings. Run in place in another room or outdoors. Call a fellow caregiver. At the very least, STOP and then take a deep breath.

5. Seek respite, even for five minutes.

Don't make promises you can't keep. Martyrs are not heroes. Caregiving is like picking up an acorn then lifting the whole oak tree! Consider your options—in-home care, adult day care, residential care, assisted living, skilled nursing, palliative care, and ultimately, hospice.

6. Find the JOY in the smallest things. SMILE. LAUGH.

7. Seek competent professional advice regarding legal, financial, and healthcare matters.

Then talk with someone you trust about the advice you receive. Have all your questions answered before you sign anything.

8. Avadian's DIAMOND TIP for CAREGIVERS

Care for your loved one the way you would want to be cared for IF you were living with the same disease or illness.

Repeat the first tip.

©2014 Adapted from: *"Where's my shoes?" My Father's Walk through Alzheimer's* (2nd ed.)

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