



Caregiver's Answers, Topics, and Helpful Information

In an effort to continually assist caregivers in their search for pertinent information regarding eldercare, our Family Caregiver Support Coordinator addresses topics of most frequently asked questions via **Caregiver's Answers, Topics and Helpful Information (CATHI)**. Additionally, caregivers are also invited to e-mail individual questions to the Family Caregiver Support Coordinator at caregiver2@senior-resources-guilford.org.

Caring at Work

Are you one of the 65 million Americans who care for a loved one? Do you tend to your loved one before going to work, then return to care again after a long hard day at work? Feeling torn between both "jobs" and trying to perform well at each, this can cause stress that working caregivers are often plagued with more mistakes, conflicts, and stress-related illnesses. These simple tips will help ease that stress:

Talk to Your Employer Honestly: Speak openly with your supervisor about your caregiving demands at home. Make an appointment to discuss your caregiving responsibilities at a time when you are well rested and feeling your strongest so you can state the situation in a professional, emotionally-controlled manner. Don't offer excuses, but instead offer reasons for changes your supervisor might note in your attendance, work schedule, or attitude. Explain why you might need to decline additional hours, a promotion, or transfer. Reassure your supervisor that you are still committed to your company, position and its peak performance and will remain accountable to your duties.

Ask for What You Need: Once you have reinforced your commitment to your job, your employers will be more receptive to ideas to make the workplace schedule more manageable for you. Come to the meeting with your supervisor, prepared with suggestions that will help, for example, coming to work early, staying late, working from home, or taking longer lunch hours to check on your loved one, make personal phone calls, (or take a nap). Brainstorm with your supervisor about other workable options. Often employers allow flexibility in the use of comp

time, sick days, and vacations. In many organizations fellow employees are allowed to donate accrued time off to help a caregiver during a crisis period.

Take Care of Yourself: Caregivers have a higher than normal incidents of illness, those taking care of a loved one with a chronic illness have a 63% chance of dying early; another 63% stated depression is their most common illness. Caregivers often become depleted they cannot maintain the stamina to continue caring for another. Therefore, caregivers must take time in their daily routine to nurture themselves physically, mentally and spiritually.

Physically: Eat well-balanced meals on a regular schedule. Take a multivitamin. Exercise regularly, even if it's simply taking a walk. As difficult as it may be, strive for a minimum of seven to eight hours of sleep a night, and nap when it is possible. Get regular medical checkups and treatments of aches and pains before they turn into something more serious.

Mentally: Be aware of your own feelings and emotions, seek counseling if necessary. While it is not always possible to leave the stress and heartache in the parking lot, try to keep emotions in check at work. Vent your feelings to trusted family members or friends, not coworkers. Schedule time for yourself. Utilize relaxation or stress management techniques, such as mediation, visualization, biofeedback and yoga. Stay actively involved with friends and hobbies. Create a support network and/or join a support group (see following document for support groups in Guilford County).

Spiritually: Take time, even it is only 15 minutes per day, for prayer or mediation. Read or subscribe to inspirational magazines or books to uplift your spirits. Seek the counsel of a minister of religious leader that you trust and respect.

Seek Support: Do not be afraid or unwilling to ask for help. Friends, family, and church group are often eager to assist and are only waiting to be asked and directed. They however cannot read your mind and know that you are needing help. Find respite care that meets your needs and your loved ones needs, so that you can regularly take time for yourself. There are several community, state and national resources to support you not only at work, but at home. Most cities have programs to offer assistance to the caregiver. Another great resource is your local Area Agency on Aging (Piedmont Triad Regional Council) or local resource center (Senior Resources of Guilford). Also utilize the Family Caregiver Support Program in your County, Finally, if needed, you may be able to use The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). It is a national policy that guarantees covered employees 12 weeks of unpaid leave each year to care for a newborn baby, a newly adopted child, a seriously ill family member, or to a recover from their own serious health condition while ensuring job security. Each state has different regulations, but you can contact your state legislator to learn about your state.

This article was adapted from *Today's Caregiver, Caring at Work* By: LeAnna Thieman, Updated April 18, 2018.

****If you would like to join our mailing list to learn more about programs and services available to you contact our Family Caregiver Support Coordinator at caregiver2@senior-resources-guilford.org***

For referrals to community organizations in Guilford County that assist older adults and caregivers, contact Senior Resources of Guilford's SeniorLine at (336) 884-6981 in High Point, all other areas (336) 333-6981 or the Caregiver Support Coordinator, at (336) 373-4816 in Greensboro or (336) 883-3586 in High Point.



North Carolina Family Caregiver Support Program
Completing the Care