



UNDERSTANDING HOW CARING FOR A LOVED ONE AFFECTS YOU

Caregivers Who Work Outside of the Home

Most working caregivers have little time to relax. They often give up hobbies and social activities to care for their loved one. There are ways to balance the demands of home life and work.

Why Is It Important to Get Help?

Caregivers work for many reasons. You may work out of need to support your family. You may work for enjoyment or to build a career. No matter why you work, there are ways to lessen your stress.

What Do You Need to Know?

- Talk with your boss about your caregiving responsibilities. Explain that you want to do a good job at work.
- Ask if the Family and Medical Leave Act applies to your workplace. Some workers may take unpaid leave to care for loved ones. The “More Resources” section at the end of this fact sheet has more information on the Family and Medical Leave Act.
- Ask if your employer offers insurance benefits and other benefits to help you care for your loved one.
- Talk to your boss about flexible work schedules. Tasks in some jobs can be done from home. Consider working fewer hours. Think about sharing a job with another employee.

How Can You Find Help?

- Ask your employer or local Area Agency on Aging (AAA) about the National Family Caregiver Support Program's benefits and services in your state. The “More Resources” section at the end of this fact sheet has contact information.
- As a Veteran, your loved one may be eligible for in-home and community care services. Talk with a social worker at your local VA.
- Use respite care and adult day services.

For more information on stroke caregiving, visit the RESCUE home page:
<http://www.rorc.research.va.gov/rescue>

Helpful Tips

Make time for yourself – You will be a better caregiver if you do things you enjoy.

Set priorities – Decide what things are most important. Say "no" to those of less importance.

Accept that you cannot do everything – Do not feel guilty about working. Get help from others. Make a schedule for family, friends and community helpers.

Have a "back up" plan – Be prepared for other persons to provide care in emergencies.

Find ways to make your life easier – Hire someone to do chores if you can afford it. Use organizing tools. A dry erase calendar can help track tasks and care.

Remember

- Be open with your boss. Ask about insurance benefits, leave time and flexible work hours.
- Find ways to make your life easier. Ask for help from family and friends. Get services from volunteer and community agencies.
- Take care of yourself. Find time to relax and enjoy your family and friends.

More Resources

The following resources contain internet links. The location of internet pages can change. Therefore the links provided may not always work. For the most current version of this list, go to <http://www.rorc.research.va.gov/rescue/resources>. This page will be updated frequently.

Link Disclaimer: Links to information and Web sites outside of the Department of Veterans Affairs do not indicate an endorsement of products or services offered by the sites. In addition, these sites may have privacy and security policies that are inconsistent with those of VA.

AARP (American Association of Retired Persons)

Web: <http://www.aarp.org>

Phone: 1-888-687-2277

AARP has helpful information for working caregivers. Read the fact sheet “How to Balance Work and Caregiving” at

http://assets.aarp.org/external_sites/caregiving/planAhead/work_and_caregiving.html

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Department of Veterans Affairs

Web: <http://www.va.gov>

The Department of Veterans Affairs has more information on VA benefits and services.

If you are new to the VA, the “Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors” booklet will help you get started. Also available in Spanish. Go to this link: http://www1.va.gov/OPA/publications/benefits_book.asp

Eldercare Locator, Area Agency on Aging

Web: <http://www.eldercare.gov>

Phone: 1-800-677-1116

Eldercare locator can help you find community-based services like transportation, meals and caregiver support services. These resources are found through your local Area Agency on Aging.

Family Caregiver Alliance

Web: <http://caregiver.org>

Phone: 1-800-445-8106

The Family Caregiver Alliance provides information, education and services for caregivers. Some information is also available in Spanish.

The “Family Care Navigator” tool lists help for family caregivers by state. Go to this link: http://caregiver.org/caregiver/jsp/fcn_content_node.jsp?nodeid=2083

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

Web: <http://www.dol.gov/whd/fmla>

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) requires some employers to allow up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave. Some states have laws that expand leave.

My HealthVet (MHV)

Web: <http://www.myhealth.va.gov>

My HealthVet (MHV) provides trusted information on stroke and other health conditions. It also provides resources for stroke caregivers and tools to track your loved one’s health.

Also visit the Caregiver Assistance Center on the My HealthVet Web site. This section provides more information on caregiving.

- Go to: <http://www.myhealth.va.gov>
- Click on the button that says “Enter Here”
- Click on “Research Health” on the top bar, then “Healthy Living Centers”
- Click on “Caregiver Assistance”

For more information on stroke caregiving, visit the RESCUE home page:

<http://www.rorc.research.va.gov/rescue>

References: Family Caregiver Alliance. (1999). *Work and eldercare*. Retrieved October 23, 2008, from http://caregiver.org/caregiver/jsp/content_node.jsp?nodeid=413; Wilken, C.S. (2006). *Balancing work and caregiving: A guide for employers*. University of Florida IFAS Extension. Retrieved October 23, 2008, from <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FY873>; Pandya, S.M. (2005). Caregiving in the United States. AARP Public Policy Institute. Retrieved October 23, 2008, from <http://www.aarp.org/research/housing-mobility/caregiving/aresearch-import-685-FS82.html>



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