

## Are You Prepared for the Role?

There is a certain pride and honor in caring for a relative. Caregiving can be one of life's most difficult challenges. How do you juggle your million other obligations that are all competing for your time? If the stress of caregiving is left unchecked, it can take a toll on your health, relationships, and state of mind—eventually leading to burnout.

Give yourself permission to acknowledge the challenges of being a caregiver and decide what you're going to **let go** in your "**To Do**" list. The stress you feel is not only the result of your caregiving situation but also the result of your perception of it. Release the negative self-talk – remember your mind believes what you tell it.

Take action and make a plan.

- Asking for help does not make you a failure and taking a short break can help reenergize and refresh you. You may need to ask family or friends for help.
- Give yourself a break - There is such a thing as giving too much. Consider hiring in-home help, such as companions or home health care. Put an ad in the local paper looking for help or check with a local church for someone who has experience with caregiving. Meet up and talk with friends. Take up a hobby. Learn an instrument.
- Take care of your health – Get plenty of sleep, eat well and exercise. Take out your calendar and mark off days just for you – one day a week minimum. Plan ahead and make a date with yourself.
- Join a support group - Attend some meetings to receive feedback and learn coping strategies.

Spending time with the care recipient is another reward of caregiving. Find activities you both enjoy. Try to think of things to do together that are fun so you are not there counting the hours. Go to a park, the beach, church, shopping or eating out. Try to make it the best time for the both of you. When it is all said and done, these times you will remember the most.

Find strength in knowing your senior loved ones appreciate what you do, even if they can't communicate it. Every day you alleviate their fear as they take a very scary journey.

Visit our website at <http://www.lacoe.edu/Home/EASE.aspx> for Elder Care Services.

**Give yourself credit for doing the best you can in one of the toughest jobs there is!**  
EASE has counselors available if you want to talk 800-882-1341.



*“Strength is the courage...to reach out!”*