

Employee Enhancement Newsletter

Helpful Resources from your Employee Assistance Program

August 2015

Page 1

Caregiving: Adjusting to Your New Role



For most people, change is not easy. This may be especially apparent in the changing roles experienced by caregivers and those they care for. The role of caregiver can bring with it a variety of tasks and responsibilities that require both you and your aging family member to make adjustments. You may be a full- or part-time caregiver providing hands-on care, a long-distance caregiver, or one who

is watching over the care of a loved one in a nursing home or assisted living facility. The caregiver/care-receiver relationship will continue to change as your loved one's care needs increase and more demands are placed on you.

Your aging family member is also adjusting to many changes. The loss of freedom, the transition from an active life to one of confinement, and the relinquishment of decision making power can lead to feelings of worthlessness, anger, and sadness. Aging persons are forced to accept help as their abilities begin to decline. Becoming dependent on others can be a frustrating thing to deal with.

The new roles you and your family member will be taking on will likely offer a new set of challenges and a variety of emotions. From the caregiver perspective, more will be expected from you and that can cause stress, guilt, depression, anger, and resentment. Your loved one may offer some resistance and may be feeling personal shame, worthlessness, and resentment toward you as the caregiver.

Don't despair! Caregiving can also bring with it feelings of accomplishment and the knowledge that you are helping your loved one. Care-receivers may feel gratitude toward their caregivers and are often relieved that they are no longer burdened with many of the chores required in daily living.

Online Seminar Reminder

Strategies for Multigenerational Caregiving

When:

August 18, 2015

Where:

www.deeroaks.com

Webinar Times (CST):

11:00 AM- 12:00 PM

AND

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM





Caregiving: Adjusting to Your New Role continued...

Most caregivers enter into the caregiving experience unprepared to deal with the feelings associated with these responsibilities. Watching the decline of your once active parent can be difficult. Perhaps you and your parent never had a good relationship, and now he or she must rely on you to provide daily assistance. There may also be competing demands between these new caregiving responsibilities and the needs of your own family and work.

Adjusting to Changes:

- Keep a positive attitude.
- Get family members involved so responsibilities can be shared.
- Try to anticipate and prepare for changes that may be coming.
- Maintain open communication with the care-receiver and if possible, keep him or her involved in decision-making processes.
- Remember, your loved one is probably experiencing the same intense emotions as you are.
- Seek professional help from your Employee Assistance Program (EAP), financial advisors, counselors, or an elder care specialist.
- Attend a support group and encourage your loved one to do the same.
- Make yourself knowledgeable about the aging process and any disease-related information.
- Concentrate on the strengths of the care-receiver and help him or her remain as independent as possible.

Workplace Options. (Reviewed 2015). Caregiving: Adjusting to your new role. Raleigh, NC: Author.



Packing a Lunch Punch



Think ahead, plan ahead, and first wash your hands before packing a school lunch (or your own).

“Think about the perishability of the foods you’re making,” said Rutgers University professor Don Schaffner, a food scientist and spokesperson for the Institute of Food Technologists. “Perishable foods can remain at room temperature for no more than 2 hours. Properly refrigerated foods can last a long time, but most school children won’t have access to a refrigerator where they can store their lunchbox.”

The Institute offers some guidance for parents as they pack lunches:

- Start each day with a clean box or bag. Insulated, vinyl lunch bags are popular and do better at keeping foods cool than paper bags or metal lunch boxes. When kids come home, clean out lunch bags using warm soapy water and allow to dry completely overnight before packing the next day. This helps deter the growth of bacteria in the bag.
- Choose secure packing materials, such as sealable, single-use sandwich bags that can be disposed of when used, or reusable plastic wear that is dishwasher safe.
- • As much as possible, opt for foods that are not perishable, such as peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. A kid favorite, and you don’t have to worry about refrigerating it. PBJs will last from the time you prepare it in the morning until lunchtime. Single-serve fruits in prepackaged containers, such as apple sauce or fruit cocktail, are also great options because they’re less perishable.
- Encourage older kids to assemble lunch on their own at school. Pack bread in one container and place fillings like meat or cheese separately with a cold pack. Having kids assemble the sandwich themselves ensures the freshest possible results—and no soggy bread!
- Cold packs are designed to keep food cold, not cool it down. If you make the sandwich in the morning with room-temperature ingredients, it’s unlikely the cold pack will be able to cool the food sufficiently. Instead, make the sandwich the night before and refrigerate the whole thing, or use refrigerated ingredients to ensure the sandwich starts out, and stays, cool.
- Always use a cold pack when you are packing anything perishable, like a sandwich with meat or fresh-cut fruit with a yogurt-based dip. Place the perishable food right against the cold pack in the bag. Wash the cold pack in warm soapy water after every use before returning it to the freezer.
- For hot foods like chili, soup, or stew, use an insulated container. Before storing the food, fill the container with boiling water, let it stand for a few minutes, empty it, and then add the hot food. Keep the container closed tightly until lunchtime to help minimize the risk of germs.

Give back to the community

Goodwill, Salvation Army, and Habitat for Humanity are just a few options to consider when donating your household goods. Not all items may be accepted, so check with your local charity if you are planning on donating furniture or any larger items. Many will send a truck if you call them for pickup.

Health-e headlines™

Get rid of it!

Purge items in the recycle and trash piles so they no longer take up space in your home. Consumers spend one year of their lives looking for lost items, according to the National Association of Professional Organizers. Having more space in your home makes it easier to organize and find the things you keep.

Health-e headlines™

An EAP Reminder

Life Can Be Hectic. The EAP Can Help You Find Your Balance.

Deer Oaks, your EAP, is always available to you and your household members.

If you are struggling with children, finances, or just want some practical advice on health or the mind-body connection, contact Deer Oaks by calling the Helpline.

Counselors are available 24/7 to provide you with immediate care.



Health-e headlines™



Clinician's Corner..

Monthly Advice from the Deer Oaks Clinical Team

The Sandwich Generation

Caring for elderly family members has become one of our most frequently discussed topics here at Deer Oaks. Our lengthening life expectancies in combination with the large number of baby boomers who are nearing late adulthood, more and more of us are faced with the emotional and frightening task of caring for parents, perhaps in addition to caring for our own children.

If you have yet to fully be immersed in that stage of life in which you become a caregiver for your own parents, the best thing you can do is be proactive. Discussions about end of life care can seem daunting, unpleasant, and scary. However, the small amount of stress you may feel in talking with your parents can help prevent the excessive and often unmanageable-feeling stress that can come with caring for a parent without a plan. Talk with your parents about things like a living-will, available finances, and their plans and wishes for their elderly years. Take advantage of many of Deer Oaks' free resources, such as downloadable legal forms, consultations with attorneys, and online will preparation. In fact, it is never too early for you to have your own will drawn up or updated. Consider taking advantage of these services to help start the conversation with your own children.

Already caring for an elderly family member? One of the most important interventions is your own self-care. Unfortunately, most caregivers share that they not only feel as if they do not have time for self-care, but they feel painfully guilty for doing something to help them feel better, as opposed to doing something for their family member. For some people, taking time to engage in deep breathing or other relaxation exercises can feel foreign at first. But, learning to incorporate routine self-care into your routine is like learning a language; you wouldn't attend a foreign language course for one day and expect to be fluent. It is unlikely that doing one relaxation exercise will end all of your stress. But, learning to practice these exercises daily can lead to an increased sense of balance and well-being.

Finally, caregivers often feel as if they are isolated. Surrounding yourself with positive support, both personally and professionally is an integral part of caring for multiple generations. If you have siblings, even if they live in another state, be sure to reach out to them and ask them for help, or tell them directly what they can do to assist. Stay connected with good friends, talk with your spouse about your experiences, or find a caregiver's support group near you. Deer Oaks can help to find these resources in your area, and can also offer you free, confidential counseling services to help you develop a plan to care for yourself while you care for others. Talk with your company's human resources department to learn more about FMLA and sick-leave policies to help practically manage your time.

Visit us at www.deeroaks.com for more information.

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Frugal Back-to-School Shopping Tips



As the summer season winds down, the start of a new school year is fast approaching. Every new school year presents new challenges and opportunities for kids. The new school year also presents a challenge for parents: how to pay for all the school supplies children need for the year without overspending.

The best strategy for back-to-school shopping is to start with a plan. Many schools provide a list of the supplies students will need during the school year, so make sure you have that list before you start shopping. Now that you know what supplies your kids will need, start looking for ways to save.

See what school supplies you already have. Back-to-school supply lists usually don't vary much from year-to-year. Check to see what your child brought home at the end of last year to see if there are any salvageable school supplies they can use this year.

Look for special promotions. Right before the school year begins, many stores offer back-to-school sales. Watch for special promotions such as free shipping and those useful "two for one" deals.

Do your shopping during tax-free days. These days usually last for an entire weekend in either July or August. This is a great time to buy t-shirts, socks, and school uniforms.

Shop at local consignment stores. The end of summer is when many thrift stores receive gently-used clothing. These stores offer low-priced quality merchandise. Thrift stores have strict policies for accepting items so you don't have to worry about buying anything damaged.

Take advantage of Thursday sales. Many department store sales begin on Thursday and run through Sunday. Many people save their shopping for the weekend, but a trip to the mall on a Thursday can produce great savings, plus, you'll get first rights on merchandise.

Finally, to save on back-to-school shopping it's important to set a budget and stick to it. With proper planning, you can prepare your children for another school year without breaking the bank.

About Money Management International

Money Management International (MMI) is a nonprofit, full-service credit-counseling agency, providing confidential financial guidance, financial education, counseling and debt management assistance to consumers since 1958. MMI helps consumers trim their expenses, develop a spending plan and repay debts. Counseling is available by appointment in branch offices and 24/7 by telephone and Internet. Services are available in English or Spanish. To learn more, call 800.432.7310 or visit www.MoneyManagement.org.