

# Supporting Yourself As A Caregiver

With An Aging Family Member

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**G**

## GET EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

- Locate and attend support groups virtually or in person.
- Talk with friends and family who can offer emotional support.
- Seek professional therapy for your stress and anxiety, if needed.
- Find spiritual support through your church or local ministries.

**R**

## RECOGNIZE YOUR NEED FOR HELP

- Build a care team of people who can be a resource for you.
- Say “Yes!” when people offer to help.
- Utilize community resources (respite, palliative care, In-Home Senior Services, hospice, local senior center).

**A**

## ATTEND TO YOUR HEALTH

- Make those doctor’s appointments you have been neglecting.
- Find time for breaks to have coffee with a friend, have your haircut, read a book, watch tv, meditate, journal.
- Eat well and maintain your sleep.
- Be active through forms of exercise that you enjoy.

**C**

## CALM DOWN STRATEGIES

- Learn strategies that work best for you and have a plan.
- Practice strategies like the following as part of your natural daily routine: breathing techniques, yoga, praying, tai chi, listening to relaxing music, walking, calling a friend.
- Focus on the positive; avoid “what if’s” and negative talk.

**E**

## EDUCATE YOURSELF

- Listen to podcasts about dementia.
- Watch YouTube videos to learn strategies.
- Read books and articles. Subscribe to a magazine on dementia.
- Join Facebook groups on dementia and follow people who are educating others on Instagram (or other social media sites).
- Attend a dementia conference, event, or networking opportunity.
- Learn about your local resources and how to access them.

“Worrying doesn’t empty tomorrow of its sorrow,  
it empties today of its strength.” Corrie ten Boom



# Supporting A Child

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**L**

### **LISTEN TO YOUR CHILD**

- Allow your child to express feelings as their relationship with a loved one with dementia changes.
- Validate the feelings that your child has are normal.
- Listen to your child as their time with you may be decreased.
- Provide opportunities for a child to express feelings through activities such as journaling, art, music, and drama.
- Contact a children's pastor at your church for spiritual support.
- Seek professional counseling if a child needs to speak with someone outside of the family.

**O**

### **OFFER PREFERRED ACTIVITIES**

- Create opportunities for success by preparing activities that your child and loved one can easily do together (i.e. looking at a photo album, reading a story, playing with playdough, playing a simple game, brushing a pet, listening to music, coloring)
- Reinforce your child's positive interactions with a loved one.
- Use a consistent routine during a visit to increase familiarity.
- Talk with your child about the visit to discuss why things worked well or how something could be adapted.
- Ask your child to be part of a dementia walk with you or a fundraising event in honor of a loved one.

**V**

### **VIEW FROM CHILD'S PERSPECTIVE**

- "Step into your child's shoes" to build your empathy for their feelings (fear, anxiety, sadness, anger, etc.)
- Avoid guiltting a child into visiting a loved one.
- Capitalize on your child's natural gifts to help them see their value as a care team member.
- Create special times for just you and your child. Your child will miss how things used to be.

**E**

### **EXAMPLE SETTING**

- Model and teach calm down strategies for handling emotions.
- Use resources, such as children's books, to educate about dementia.
- Role model how to advocate for a loved one with kindness.
- Treat a loved one with dementia with respect and dignity.
- Celebrate all the victories, no matter the size.

"Love is the strongest force in the world." Corrie ten Boom