



Tips to Help You Cope with Long-Distance Caregiving Responsibilities

Without a doubt, long-distance caregiving can create great difficulties and increased stress, but with the right mix of dependable support, task organization and useful resources, it can be accomplished successfully with less physical and emotional wear and tear on the caregiver.

Create a Network of Support: Family, friends and trusted neighbor who can check on your loved one regularly; clergy; volunteer organizations; your loved one's primary physician; the local Area Agency on Aging for meals, chores and transportation; home care services; reputable bank officers and elder law attorney to assist with legal documents needed to make healthcare, legal and financial decisions.

Take Full Advantage of Periodic Visits with Your Loved One: When you have the opportunity to spend one-on-one time with your loved one, take care of those important things that make the biggest difference for your loved one. Take the time to reconnect personally with your loved one by talking, reminiscing, watching a favorite movie, going for a walk or participating in activities you enjoy together.

Meet with local relatives, friends and neighbors to assess your loved one's health, safety and mental status. Ask if anyone noticed any changes or decline. If others offer to help, be sure to give them *specific tasks*, e.g., pick up mom's prescriptions at the pharmacy once a month.

Take stock of environmental cues that might suggest problems or further changes. What is the condition of the home, inside and outside? Are bills being paid or are there stacks of unopened mail?

Use Skype and Care-Coordination Websites: Skype allows your family to speak with and see your loved one from anywhere in the world. There are useful online caregiver resources such as Caregiving.com, LotsaHelpingHands.com, Care.com that can make your job a lot easier by helping you stay in touch and coordinate the care, medication and monitoring of a loved one.

For caregivers who recognize that the needs of their loved one are beyond what they can safely and appropriately manage in the home environment, [leading Memory Care Assisted Living communities](#) (MCALs) such as [North Woods Village at Edison Lakes](#) and its "[New Directions](#)SM" program are available to assist you. "[New Directions](#)SM" provides a safe, professional environment and proven "best-practice" programs and services specifically designed to address the [total physical, emotional and social needs](#) of individuals with Alzheimer's, dementia or other serious form of memory impairment.

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