

BEING A LONG DISTANCE CAREGIVER

These days, family members often live in different places, making long distance caregiving a reality.

Long distance caregivers must deal with:

- Travel costs and long distance phone bills;
- Difficulty exchanging information and finding out about services in different communities;
- Feelings of guilt or anxiety about not being able to be with your loved one more often;
- Difficulty travelling frequently due to one's own family responsibilities or job demands

What Can you do to cope?

- Get information and support options from your care recipients community.
- Plan for emergencies to reduce anxiety. Leave a key to your loved one's home with a neighbor or someone else for quick and easy access in the case of an emergency.
- Consider an "emergency response system" so your loved one can contact emergency attention at the touch of a button.
- Consult with doctors and care providers regularly to discuss concerns and assist in relaying information to the other professionals involved. Attend meetings with them when possible.
- Learn about the community and private services that are available to assist you with your loved one.
- Prioritize tasks that you want to accomplish with each visit. Keep a list of people you would like to talk to and things to do. This will help you stay focused.
- Make sure all care providers and services know how and where to reach you. Leave your name and phone number with people who may not be directly involved, for example the bank manager.

In some cases, the condition of your loved one may lead you to move in with them or to move closer to them to provide care. This may be a temporary or permanent arrangement. In other cases, some people decide that their loved one needs to move in with the caregiver. Whatever the arrangement, it is important to remember that there will be significant transitional issues for all concerned. For example, loss of privacy, loss of control, and change in routines.



WE CAN HELP



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