

Social Security Disability and Medicaid Law Newsletter



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A FREE LEGAL UPDATE FOR ELDERS AND OTHERS WHO SEEK ASSET PROTECTION ♦ JULY, 2015 EDITION

TOP 5 WAYS TO CARE FOR THE CAREGIVER OF PATIENT SUFFERING DEMENTIA OR OTHER ILLNESS

The title of caregiver may be complimentary. But a caregiver has lots of stress and can sometimes experience personal problems as a consequence of taking care of a loved one. It can come with a lot of responsibilities.

Some caregivers may feel underappreciated or overwhelmed. Caregiving can be a difficult job, and many caregivers also have other jobs in addition to the time they spend helping a friend or loved one with a chronic illness such as Alzheimer's disease.

No matter how much time one spends in the caregiver role, caregivers often dedicate so much time dedicated to another person that it can be easy to overlook caring for themselves. We're here to support you!

Here are the **Top 5 Tips for Caring for the Caregiver:**

1. Set aside "me" time. Everyone deserves time for himself and there's no need to feel guilty about it. It's important to establish boundaries and to designate this time for yourself.

Relaxation means something different to everyone. Carve out "me" time in your calendar to do something you find relaxing, whether it is spent reading, at the gym, or listening to music. This time allows you to decompress and focus on your own needs, in addition to those of your loved one.

2. Accept others' offers to help and ask for help when you need it. Remember that you don't have to do it all. Often people are willing to help but may not know how to help or even how to offer.

Speak up when you're in need and give people specific tasks to assist you, even if this just means letting someone else drive your loved one to a dialysis treatment or a doctor's appointment. There are also many organizations that help with transportation, bathing and meals.

3. Do something to relieve stress. Too much stress can take its toll on your health. Physical responses to stress include faster

breathing and heart rate, a spike in blood pressure, dilated pupils, tense muscles and increased levels of fats and sugars in the bloodstream. To relieve stress, take a walk. Listen to music. Set aside time to relax. Write in a journal. Everyone releases stress differently, but do what works for you.

4. Pay attention to your own mental and physical health. Caregivers aren't invincible. They can also get sick. It's important to keep healthy or it will be difficult to care for someone else.

Don't take care of another's health needs to the detriment of your own emotional and physical health. Listen to your body for cues. Eat meals sitting down rather than on the go, and aim to get 6-8 hours of sleep each night. Schedule regular check-ups, and don't neglect seeing your own doctors just because you spend a lot of time at the doctors' offices of your loved one.

5. Connect with others who understand what you're going through. There are support groups that exist to connect caregivers with other caregivers. These caregivers meet to form a community of empathetic people who understand and identify with common problems.

You can also speak with a friend, clergy member or therapist for more one-on-one support. You're not alone. You can call the Alzheimer's Caregiver Support, Inc. at (954) 588 - 1967 or e-mail to alzacs.org@gmail.com. Be part of a support group! It will help answer your questions and listen to your concerns.

How can music help people who have Alzheimer's disease?

Recent research suggests that listening to music can benefit people who have Alzheimer's disease in various ways. Glen Campbell, the legendary musician was able to stay active and productive for more than 100 concerts since a diagnosis of Alzheimer's. His family attributes this to his music.

For example, music can:

1. Relieve stress
2. Reduce anxiety and depression
3. Reduce agitation

Music can also benefit caregivers by reducing anxiety, lightening the mood and providing a way to connect with loved ones who have Alzheimer's disease — especially those who have difficulty communicating. If you'd like to

use music to help a loved one who has Alzheimer's disease, consider these tips:

1. Think about your loved one's preferences. What kind of music does your loved one enjoy? What music evokes memories of happy times in his or her life? Involve family and friends by asking them to suggest songs or make playlists.

2. Set the mood. To calm your loved one during mealtime or a morning hygiene routine, play music or sing a song that's soothing. When you'd like to boost your loved one's mood, use faster paced music.

3. Avoid overstimulation. When playing music, eliminate competing noises. Turn off the TV. Shut the door. Set the volume based on your loved one's hearing ability. Opt for music that isn't interrupted by commercials, which can cause confusion.

4. Encourage movement. Help your loved one to clap along or tap his or her feet to the beat. If possible, dance with your loved one.

5. Pay attention to your loved one's response. If your loved one seems to enjoy particular songs, play them often. If your loved one reacts negatively to a particular song or type of music, choose something else.

Keep in mind that music might not affect your loved one's behavior or quality of life and that further research on music and Alzheimer's disease is needed.

News You Can Use

2015 FLORIDA MEDICAID LIMITS

Gross Monthly Income Limit for Medicaid Applicant:	\$2,199.00
Personal Needs Allowance:	\$105.00
Asset Limit (Individual):	\$2,000.00
Asset Limit (Couple):	\$3,000.00
Medicare Part B Premium:	\$104.90
Community Spouse Resource Allowance:	\$119,220.00
Minimum Monthly Maintenance Income Allowance:	\$1,966.25
Maximum Monthly Maintenance Income Allowance:	\$2,980.50