

Caregiver's self-care guide

Take care of yourself so you are able to take care of others



Ask for help, if needed

Discard thoughts such as...

- I don't want to shift the burden of caring onto other people
- I don't think anyone can take care of them as well as I do and with the dedication that I have
- I don't want to show any sign of weakness by asking for or accepting help



Do not isolate yourself

When providing care for another person, it is common to feel a certain degree of isolation, which can affect your mood and enthusiasm to partake in activities. Socialising and social relationships are important to maintain because they:

- Provide you with enjoyment and entertainment
- Are a network of support and emotional relief
- Can offer relief from the burden of care
- Promote your emotional well-being
- Allow you to give and receive affection



Structure the type of care offered

The greater the demands and burden of care, the greater the need to 'draw a line' that stops the formal care you provide to another person from compromising your health and future

Establishing limits is important:

- Identify tasks that the person you are caring for can do on their own
- Encourage them to participate and be responsible for their own care, to the extent that their illness allows
- Assess what tasks you can't do without help and establish a daily routine to share those tasks



◆ To combat sadness, anxiety or depression...

...aim to have a positive attitude. The ability to change your way of thinking and behaviour is an essential part when addressing these types of problems

- What you do is very important, and you should feel proud
- Maintaining regular physical activity will really help you to overcome negative attitudes
- Take 'time out' every day: set aside time for yourself, even if it's only for a few minutes
- When you have negative thoughts, analyse if they are logical and if they will help you to improve the situation. If not, work on discarding them
- Set realistic goals for yourself and the person you care for: setting unattainable goals will cause you heightened feelings of frustration
- It is important to dedicate time to rest; it is as important as family care
- Remember to maintain your hygiene and your appearance: it will make you feel better and make it easier for you to adopt a positive attitude
- Be active: the more active we are, the less we engage our minds in counterproductive thoughts



◆ Feelings of guilt

Feelings of guilt are common among caregivers, although these can occur for different reasons

- Identify why you feel guilty and in what situations. Sometimes guilt is just one emotion on the surface, under which there could be many deeper feelings. Understanding them is knowing ourselves better and being more prepared to act before they overwhelm us
- Pay attention to how you express yourself and talk about your responsibilities of providing care. If you use words like 'must', 'could do', 'should do' etc., perhaps the pressure you put on yourself is too high
- If you find it impossible to overcome feelings of guilt, you should seek the help of a healthcare professional