

ELDER LAW REVIEW

June 2016 Edition

Tips for Caregivers' Stress

Here are a few helpful tips you can use now to help ease your anxiety as a caregiver:

- ☞ Recognize and admit that you are feeling stressed and anxious.
- ☞ Become aware of your body's symptoms. Don't let them scare you, let them talk to you.
- ☞ Try to pinpoint what it is you are anxious about. What happened yesterday? What were you thinking about before you went to bed? If you can't pinpoint it, don't worry about it and move on.
- ☞ Give yourself permission to feel anxious about whatever it is that is bothering you. Tell yourself, "Of course, I feel anxious about this problem, anyone would. But how much anxiety is too much?"

If you do know what it is that is bothering you, what can you do to eliminate or minimize the situation in some way so that it isn't so stressful? Most importantly, so you won't be so affected by this situation?

Here are some things to think about:

- ☞ Listen to the dialogue within yourself. Are you filling yourself full of negative thoughts about a certain situation? What could you say to yourself that would feel more comforting?
- ☞ Listen to the dialogue of those around you. Is someone around you being negative and dragging you down with them? If so, how could you change your reaction to their negative attitude, so that you would be less affected by it?
- ☞ Are you overwhelming yourself with "should haves and could haves" and high expectations? If so, which ones could you eliminate?
- ☞ Are you blaming someone else for your anxieties, unhappiness, poor health, lack of success, etc.? How can you take responsibility for yourself and make some positive changes?
- ☞ Give yourself positive reinforcement for even the smallest accomplishments.

No one lives a life without a certain amount of stress and anxiety. The key is to get the level of both down to a manageable level. Listening to your inner voice is a step in the right direction. You know best what you need.

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