

Coping Checklist for Caregivers

Caring for someone who is sick, taking on new responsibilities, and worrying about the future can be exhausting at the very least --and can quickly lead to "burnout." **When you are busy caring for the someone, who is taking care of you?**

So take a moment to look at the statements below, which describe some healthy situations and ways of coping. They'll give you an idea of how well you are holding up, and maybe some thoughts about where you need to make a few changes to care for yourself. The more of these strategies you can use, the better. **If you don't already use all of these 10 ideas, look at ways you can start adding those that appeal to you. They can help you expand your coping skills.**

1. I have a supportive family around me.
2. I pursue a hobby or project for work, church, or my community, for example.
3. I take part in a social or activity group more than once a month.
4. I am within 10 pounds of my ideal body weight for my height and bone structure.
5. I use relaxation methods such as meditation, yoga, or progressive muscle relaxation five times a week
6. During an average week I exercise at least 5 times for 30 minutes or more.
7. I eat a well-balanced, wholesome meal 2 or 3 times during an average day. A balanced meal is low in fat and high in vegetables, fruits and whole-grain foods.
8. I do something enjoyable "just for me" at least once during an average week.
9. I have a place where I can go to relax or be by myself.
10. I set priorities and manage my time every day (such as deciding what tasks are most important, how much I can and can't do, and by getting help when needed.)

Although it can be hard to find the time to do all these things, they can help a lot in keeping some balance in your life during this very stressful time. If your schedule is too crowded, see who you can find to ask for help. If there is no one to help you, talk to your loved one's cancer care team to find out what resources may be available in your area.

Some coping methods aren't as healthy, though. If you use any of the following 4 strategies to help you get by, you may find that over the long term they actually lower your ability to deal with important issues in your life. They can also make



you less healthy and lead to serious problems. If you need help quitting tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs, talk with your doctor.

1. I smoke cigarettes or use tobacco several times a week.
2. At least once or twice during an average week I use medicines, alcohol, or other substances to help me sleep.
3. At least once or twice during an average week I use alcohol, medicines, or other substances to reduce anxiety or help me calm down.
4. I bring work home at least once or twice during an average week.

