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## Caregiver to Caregiver

Often the most important ideas for dealing with the challenges of caregiving come from other caregivers. Below is a list of the top 20 ideas from family and professional caregivers, educators, and support group facilitators from their own experiences and that of others with whom they work.

1. "Involve the care receiver in decisions unless that person is incapable of doing so. No one likes to be told what to do even if your intentions are to be helpful."
  2. "Recognize that their independence is probably being diminished and they are experiencing a sense of loss of independence and identity."
  3. "Think of how you would feel if the roles were reversed."
  4. "Patience, patience, patience....."
  5. "Be prepared. Keep documentation up to date: doctor's names and medications, medical/legal directives, lists of financial records/accounts."
  6. "Communicate with friends, family and others and ask for help to help meet care receiver needs and what you need."
  7. "Take care of yourself! It is difficult to help someone else if your health (mental and physical) is suffering."
  8. "Take care of your self - that means proper diet, exercise, rest and diversion."
  9. "If you don't take care of yourself, you can't begin to take care of someone else."
  10. "Educate yourself, find your resources and use them: 2-1-1, contact Area Agency on Aging or Meals on Wheels, go online to websites such as [www.familycaregiversonline.net](http://www.familycaregiversonline.net)."
  11. "Don't try to do it all--enlist whatever help you can."
  12. "Obtain help from someone: family, friend, church or synagogue, to give you relief for at least several hours during the week, OR if you can afford it, hire someone to come in. Ask about the Respite Program at the local Area Agency of Aging."
  13. "Make some ME time."
  14. "Make a life for yourself - either continue working full or part time or have regular volunteer and community activities."
  15. "Maintain or improve spiritual practices and physical health."
  16. "Take time for fun, friendships and learning every day."
  17. "Maintain a list of things for which you can be thankful."
  18. "Build the relationships. Communicating openly between family members – caregivers, elders, siblings, as much and as well as possible, will make everything else easier."
  19. "Share. Share your feelings, your experiences and ideas, resources you've discovered."
  20. "Know that you are not alone."
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