

TAKE CARE OF THE CAREGIVER

Dedicated to those family members and friends who are primary caregivers of a loved one or friend with mental illness...

1. Be gentle with your self.
2. Remind yourself that you are a loving helper, not a magician. None of us can change anyone else—we can only change the way that we relate to others.
3. Find a place where you can be a hermit—use it every day—or when you need to
4. Learn to give support, praise, and encouragement to those about you and learn to accept it in return.
5. Remember that in the light of all the pain we see around us, we are bound to feel helpless at times. We need to be able to admit this without shame. Just in caring and in being there, we are doing something important.
6. Learn to vary your routine often and to change your tasks whenever possible.
7. Learn to know the difference between complaining that relieves tension and the complaining that reinforces it.
8. On your way home from work, focus on one good thing that happened during the day.
9. Become a resource to yourself. Be creative and open to new approaches to old things.
10. Use the support you give to others or a “buddy” system regularly. Use these as a support, for reassurance, and to redirect your self.
11. Avoid “shop talk” during your breaks or when you are socializing with colleagues.
12. Learn to use the expression: “I choose to ... ” rather than expressions like “I have to...” “I ought to...,” or “I should ... ”
13. Learn to say: “I won’t...” rather than “I can’t...”
14. Learn to say “no” and mean it. If you can’t say “no” — what is your “yes” worth?
15. Aloofness and indifference are far more harmful than admitting to an inability to do more.
16. Above all else—learn to laugh and to play.

–Author Unknown