

Eldercare Answers

March 2010



Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC, is the Founder and Executive Director of Eldercare Services and is a Fellow and President Elect of the National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers.

The sandwich generation: caregiving for aging parents and children at the same time as holding down a full time job can be overwhelming, taxing, expensive and stressful. How does one do it? Often, we hear individuals in classes or support groups report on all their caregiving responsibilities and wonder how they can possibly juggle so much.

Most of us, as children or young adults, looked forward to the time when we would make our own decisions and be in control of our lives. We had no idea that we would be caring for aging parents at the same time we ushered teens into adulthood. Some of us might have lived in multi-generational households. Due to family values, we just assumed we would care for Mom or Dad in our home, too! However, we forgot that we had a stay at home mom without the obligations of a job or children with many activities taking all her time.

Even if we enjoy all aspects of being part of our children's lives, or caring for a parent who cared for us, it can be a stressor when we don't factor in time for relaxation, renewal and just being in the moment.

The Sandwich Generation

Guilt is often felt by those who take time to relax or self-care; especially when permission is not granted by others. However, in support groups, others often encourage the "over caring" family member to take time off so they can continue to care.

Often a primary family caregiver experiences a medical incident or develops a chronic health issue because of the inability to find the time and energy to care for themselves. When we balance the "have to" with the "want to" we are more able to give to others. An example of good self care is this prescription: "Take a long walk, have lunch with a friend, go to a movie, read a good book in one sitting." What would your week be like if you did this?

Reducing stress is possible when you are able to "share the care". When you think you are the only one who can do it right then you could become the recipient of ill health and a shorter life. When you balance care of others with care of self, you can juggle all the balls in a healthy way. That means saying, "no" at times and it means saying "yes" to finding ways that bring you pleasure every day.

One of my clients, years ago, said she made two lists every day – one was things she had to do and the

other was things she wanted to do. She would scratch them off the list as she did things but she went from one list to another not down the list in a row. That way she had time for lunch with a friend and time for paying mom's bills and then time for dinner with her husband and a call to mom's doctor. If we just do what we have to do we will seldom get to the things we want to do.

Take care of yourself – remove yourself from the sandwich. If you don't care for yourself you will not be able to care for others for as long as you might desire.

Eldercare Services provides Vacation Respite, Caregiving, Care Management, Counseling and Support Groups to aid Family Caregivers. If you or someone you know could benefit from self-care, give us a call at (866) 760-1808.

Self-Care

Check List

1. Consider your "wants" with your "needs"
2. Share the Care with Eldercare Services or other family members
3. Say "No" when possible and say "Yes" to fun
4. Call us for Vacation Respite, Counseling or a Support Group at (866) 760-1808



Help us do our Part

To receive this newsletter by email and conserve paper please send a request to BeryIA@EldercareAnswers.com



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Walnut Creek, CA 94595

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Eldercare Services has offices in Marin, Oakland, San Francisco and Walnut Creek, CA. Visit us on the web at <http://www.EldercareAnswers.com> for more information.

Community Classes
Walnut Creek
Caring For An Aging Family Member
Friday, March 12, 2010 from 9 AM to 1 PM
Families Dealing with Dementia
Friday, March 26, 2010 from 10 AM to Noon
Families Dealing with Dementia
Thursday, April 22, 2010 from 10 AM to Noon
Dementia – Middle of the Road
Friday, May 14, 2010 from 10 MA to Noon
Class Registration: Please call at least 3 days ahead
For more information regarding classes and support groups,
please call (925) 937-2018, (415) 469-8300 or email us at
info@EldercareAnswers.com

Support Groups
When concerns for aging family members are part of every day life, or when they interfere with work, your health or other relationships, you need to join a support group.
Caring for An Aging Family Member
2nd Thursday of every month from 7 to 8:30 PM
1808 Tice Valley Blvd., Walnut Creek, CA 94595
1st Tuesday of every month from 6 to 7:30 PM
605 A Cheney St., San Francisco, CA 94131
Cost for Support Groups: None
Support Group Registration: Not required