General Caregiving

It's important to acknowledge that the role of caregiver is a stressful one, and that many caregivers feel overwhelmed, burdened, and sometimes burned out. Caregivers should ask for help without feeling guilty.

One of the first issues to think about is **safety**.

- Potential dangers and ways to prevent them are listed in the Caregiver Notebook.
- Safety precautions may already be in place the home. However, when someone has dementia, they present new safety problems that may change over time as the disease progresses.

When someone has dementia, they may present certain **behavioral challenges**, such as repeating questions or stories.

- Everyone with dementia is different, so the way you approach their behavioral problems will be different. However, the material in the Caregiver Notebook presents some general tips to use when dealing with problem behaviors, such as using better communication.
- It is important to get help from other people, including formal support, such as police, fire, and medical personnel, and informal support, such as friends, family, and church members.

**Getting help** from others also helps to take care of **you**.

- Many caregivers neglect their health, their interests, and their emotions when taking care of their loved one.
- It is important to be willing to ask for help and to take that help when it is offered.
- Friends, family, and community should know what they could do to help.

Many caregivers feel like they are completely **alone**.

- It often helps to talk to other caregivers, privately or in support groups.
- Other caregivers can often give good ideas for solving caregiving problems because they’ve experienced them, too.

It is imperative that caregivers take care of their **own health**.

- Continue taking medications and going to doctors’ appointments.
- Caregiving places a strain on the mind and body, and people are often unaware of the toll it is taking.

In addition to the obvious day-to-day issues that happen with Caregiving, it is important to think about **long-term issues** as well.

- Caregivers need to consider issues such as long-term care, financial needs, and legal concerns as the disease progresses.