

Your Local Office for the Aging



Albany County, 162 Washington Avenue, 6th Floor, Albany, NY 12210, (518) 447 - 7179
Allegany County, 17 Court Street, Belmont, NY 14813, (585) 268 - 9390
Broome County, 44 Hawley Street, PO Box 1766, 4th Floor, Binghamton, NY 13902-1766, (607) 778 - 2411
Cattaraugus County, One Leo Moss Drive, Suite 7610, Olean, NY 14760-1101, (716) 373 - 8032
Cayuga County, 160 Genesee Street, Auburn, NY 13021-3483, (315) 253 - 1226
Chautauqua County, 7 North Erie Street, Mayville, NY 14757-1027, (716) 753 - 4471
Chemung County, P.O. Box 588, 425 Pennsylvania Avenue, Elmira, NY 14902-0588, (607) 737 - 5520
Chenango County, County Office Building, 5 Court Street, Norwich, NY 13815-1794, (607) 337 - 1770
Clinton County, 135 Margaret Street, Suite 105, Plattsburgh, NY 12901-2966, (518) 565 - 4620
Columbia County, 325 Columbia Street, Hudson, NY 12534-1905, (518) 828 - 4258
Cortland County, County Office Building, 60 Central Avenue, Cortland, NY 13045-2746, (607) 753 - 5060
Delaware County, 6 Court Street, Delhi, NY 13753-1066, (607) 746 - 6333
Dutchess County, 27 High Street, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601-1962, (845) 486 - 2555
Erie County, 95 Franklin Street, Room 1329, Buffalo, NY 14202-3985, (716) 858 - 8526
Essex County, P.O. Box 217, 100 Court Street, Elizabethtown, NY 12932-0217, (518) 873 - 3695
Franklin County, 355 West Main Street, Suite 447, Malone, NY 12953-1826, (518) 481 - 1526
Fulton County, 19 North William Street, Johnstown, NY 12095-2534, (518) 736 - 5650
Genesee County, Batavia-Genesee Senior Center, 2 Bank Street, Batavia, NY 14020-2299 (585) 343 - 1611
Greene County, 411 Main Street, Catskill, NY 12414, (518) 719 - 3555
Herkimer County, 109 Mary Street, Suite 1101, Herkimer, NY 13350-2924, (315) 867 - 1121
Jefferson County, County Office Building, 250 Arsenal Street, Watertown, NY 13601-2546, (315) 785 - 3191
Lewis County, County Office Bldg., 5274 Outer Stowe St., PO Box 408, Lowville, NY 13367 (315) 376 - 5313
Livingston County, Livingston Co. Campus, Building 8, Mt Morris, NY 14510-1601, (585) 243 - 7520
Madison County, 138 Dominick Bruno Blvd., Canastota, NY 13032-3528, (315) 697 - 5700
Monroe County, 111 Westfall Road, Room 652, Rochester, NY 14620 (585) 753 - 6280
Montgomery County, P.O. Box 52, 380 Guy Park Avenue, Amsterdam, NY 12010-0052, (518) 843 - 2300
Nassau County, 60 Charles Lindbergh Blvd., Suite #260, Uniondale, NY 11553-3691, (516) 227 - 8900
New York City, 2 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10007-1392, (212) 442-1000 (or within NYC - 311)
Niagara County, 111 Main Street, Suite 101, Lockport, NY 14094-3718, (716) 438 - 4020
Oneida County Office, 235 Elizabeth Street, Utica, NY 13501, (315) 798 - 5456
Onondaga County, 421 Montgomery St., Civic Center 13th Fl., Syracuse, NY 13202-2923, (315) 435 - 2362
Ontario County, 3010 County Complex Drive, Canandaigua, NY 14424-9502, (585) 396 - 4040
Orange County, 18 Seward Avenue, Middletown, NY 10940, (845) 615 - 3700
Orleans County, County Administration Bldg., 14016 Route 31 West, Albion, NY 14411-9382, (585) 589 - 3191
Oswego County, P.O. Box 3080, County Office Complex, 70 Bunner St., Oswego, NY 13126 (315) 349 - 3484
Otsego County, Meadows Office Cmplx, Suite 5, 140 Co Hwy 33W, Cooperstown, NY 13326, (607) 547 - 4232
Putnam County, 110 Old Route 6, Building 1, Carmel, NY 10512-2196, (845) 225 - 1034
Rensselaer County, 1600 Seventh Avenue, Troy, NY 12180-3798, (518) 270 - 2730
Rockland County, Yeager Health Center, 50 Sanatorium Rd, Bldg. B, Pomona, NY 10970-0350 (845) 364 - 2110
St. Lawrence County, 80 State Highway 310, Suite 7, Canton, NY 13617-1497, (315) 386 - 4730
St. Regis-Mohawk, 29 Business Park Road, Hogansburg, NY 13655, (518) 358 - 2963
Saratoga County, 152 West High Street, Ballston Spa, NY 12020, (518) 884 - 4100
Schenectady County, 107 Nott Terrace, Schaffer Heights, Suite 202, Schenectady, NY 12308-3170 (518) 382 - 8481
Schoharie County, 113 Park Place, Suite 3, Schoharie, NY 12157, (518) 295 - 2001
Schuyler County, 323 Owego Street, Unit 7, Montour Falls, NY 14865, (607) 535 - 7108
Seneca County, 1 DiPronio Drive, Waterloo, NY 13165, (315) 539 - 1765
Seneca Nation Of Indians, 28 Thomas Indian School Drive, Irving, NY 14081, (716) 532 - 5778
Steuben County, 3 East Pulteney Square, Bath, NY 14810-1510, (607) 776 - 7813
Suffolk County, P.O.Box 6100, H. Dennison Bldg, 3rd Fl, 100 Veterans Mem. Hwy, Hauppauge, NY 11788, (631) 853 - 8200
Sullivan County, Sullivan Co. Government Ctr., 100 North Street, P.O. Box 5012, Monticello, NY 12701, (845) 794 - 3000
Tioga County, Countryside Comm Center, 9 Sheldon Guile Blvd, Owego, NY 13827, (607) 687 - 4120
Tompkins County, 320 North Tioga Street, Ithaca, NY 14850-4210, (607) 274 - 5482
Ulster County, 1003 Development Court, Kingston, NY 12401, (845) 340 - 3456
Warren/Hamilton County, 333 Glen Street, 3rd Fl. - Suite 306, Glens Falls, NY 12801, (518) 761 - 6347
Washington County, Washington Co. Mun. Center, Suite B10, 383 Broadway, Fort Edward, NY 12828, (518) 746 - 2420
Wayne County, 1519 Nye Road, Suite 300, Lyons, NY 14489, (315) 946 - 5624
Westchester County, 9 South First Avenue, 10th Floor, Mt. Vernon, NY 10550-3414, (914) 813 - 6400
Wyoming County, 8 Perry Avenue, Warsaw, NY 14569-1220, (585) 786 - 8833
Yates County, 417 Liberty Street, Suite 1116, Penn Yan, NY 14527-1100, (315) 536 - 5515

NEW YORK STATE OFFICE FOR THE AGING

CAREGIVER Tool Kit



A guide to caregiving and improving your quality of life

A Message for Caregivers

I want to thank all caregivers across New York State and extend my appreciation to you for the daily challenges that you meet and the personal sacrifices that you endure. Thanks to you, your loved ones can continue living as independently as possible in the community settings in which they feel most at home.



More than 2 million caregivers in New York State provide care and assistance to loved ones who want to remain in their homes and communities of choice on a daily basis. Studies indicate that approximately 80% of long term care is provided by caregivers outside of the formal care systems, with an economic value in New York State of over \$24 billion.

What I believe is so important to recognize is the fact that caregiving responsibilities will touch us all. During our lives, we will all be caregivers at one point or another. If we have not yet cared for an aging parent, family member or friend needing help, we will in the future. Many of us will be a caregiver for extended periods - first providing assistance to a parent or aging relative, and later to a spouse or sibling. And we must not forget the caregivers of children with disabilities, who often are faced with the difficulties of caring for a child with special needs and an aging parent at the same time. It is important that we not only recognize caregivers, but that we also help them perform their caregiving duties.

Please use the tools in this publication to get the services you need. You care for them. We care for you.

Michael J. Burgess
Director

Elder Caregiver Support Program It's all about YOU!

The New York Elder Caregiver Support Program assists informal caregivers – spouses, adult children, other family members, friends and neighbors - in their efforts to care for older persons who need help with everyday tasks. Because of the assistance they receive, older persons with chronic illnesses or disabilities are able to remain in their own homes, where they want to be. Some local programs also assist grandparents and other older relative caregivers of children and promote the retention of the children in a nurturing family environment instead of placement in foster care. Informal caregivers are an invaluable resource to their loved ones and to the United States' health care system and economy because of the care they provide.

While most caregivers choose to support their loved ones, many find it challenging and that it can cause physical, emotional and financial strains. We encourage caregivers to turn to their local New York Elder Caregiver Support Program for help and support with their unique caregiving circumstances. Offices for the Aging in each county of the state are ready to assist caregivers in their communities with:

- information about services;
- gaining access to services;
- counseling, support groups, and training to assist a caregiver in the areas of health, nutrition and financial literacy and to help them make decisions and solve problems relating to their caregiver roles;
- respite to relieve a caregiver by providing a short-term break, through home care, overnight care in an adult home or nursing home, adult day care or other services; and
- services to complement the care a caregiver provides to their loved one, such as a Personal Emergency Response System, assistive technology, home modifications, Home Delivered Meals, or transportation.

In addition to caregiver services, local Offices for the Aging provide a variety of other services that benefit caregivers and their family members such as

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YES, YOU SHOULD HAVE ONE - BUT WHAT DO YOU DO WITH IT?

HEALTH CARE PROXY FORM

What Do I Do With My Health Care Proxy Form?

This is an important question to consider regardless of whether you are in the process of executing a Health Care Proxy or have already done so. You want your proxy to make choices on your behalf when the time comes, so you want it known that you do, in fact, have a health care proxy. By the same token, if your proxy is unavailable, unable, or unwilling to act, you want medical professionals to be able to determine your wishes.

Conventional Advice The conventional advice has been to inform family and friends of your choice of health care proxy and substitute proxy. In fact, discussing your wishes regarding health care with family and friends can be beneficial in formulating written instructions or guidelines. Others you might talk and give a copy to include your doctor and your religious or spiritual advisor, such as a clergyman, minister, priest, or rabbi.

Of course, your proxy and your substitute proxy should have copies. You also want family and friends to know where your health care proxy form is located so that it can be easily accessed in cases of emergency.

Advance Directive Registries Obtaining quick access to a health care proxy form in times

of emergency has led to the creation of advance directive registries. New York does not have an official statewide registry for health care proxies and other advance directives, such as do not resuscitate orders and living wills. There are such registries available, however, that do serve the state or portions of it.

One advantage of using the services of an advance directive registry is that your health care proxy can be accessed 24 hours a day, seven days

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Elder Caregiver Support Program...

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Home Delivered Meals, Congregate Meals, Home Care Services, Adult Day Care, Transportation, Health Insurance and Entitlement Counseling (Medicare, Medicaid, Food Stamps), and Weatherization Programs. Services vary from county to county. Contact the local Office for the Aging to see how its staff may help you and/or your family member. Call 1-800-342-9871 for assistance on finding services in your community.

Kinship Caregivers: Rising to the Occasion

Beginning in the late 1970's, the number of non-parent, non-foster caregivers of children increased at the rate of 30% per decade. The 2000 U. S. Census showed over 143,000 New York grandparents caring for children without a parent in their homes. Since then the growth of "kinship care" has been steady. In the recent 2006 American Community Survey, the U.S. Census identified grandparents who were caring for children across the United States. Aside from these grandparents, almost thirty percent of "kinship care" is provided by other relatives, mostly aunts and uncles and other relatives or family friends.

"Kinship caregivers" do not plan to care for children. They take on this task when parents are unable or unwilling to care. "Kinship caregivers" are older, often on fixed incomes, often with health issues. In some instances, they must move to find housing which supports children. They must assume responsibility for schooling, for medical care, for the psychological and emotional support of children

who have suffered great losses. They care for children who frequently have multiple emotional and physical disabilities. Despite these obstacles, they offer children the best chance of overcoming these obstacles, because they offer inexhaustible love and sacrifice.

This "informal" system is approximately twelve times larger than the "formal" foster care system. But these relative caregivers do not have the supports and services afforded the "formal" system. Instead, a minimal patchwork of laws and services attempts to facilitate "kinship" care.

Yet the essential fact is that there is no alternative system of care. "Kinship caregivers" are the only large scale recourse for children at risk.

With the focused assistance of both the aging and children networks, "kinship caregivers," who already provide children with the best chance of successful outcomes, could reach the full potential of the "informal child welfare" system.

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Health Care Proxy Form...

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a week by health care providers. This tremendously increases the chances of your health care wishes being made known.

Questions to Ask If you are considering an advance directive registry, here are some questions to guide you in determining whether the service is right for you:

How will my document be stored?

Can I store both a health care proxy and a living will?

Will my health care proxy be reviewed to ensure it meets legal requirements?

Will I be able to access my health care proxy once it is stored?

Will I be able to change or update my proxy?

Will I be prompted to change or update it?

Which health care providers will be able to access my health care proxy?

If I am in another part of the state, will a health care provider be able to access my proxy? Will an out of state health care provider be able to access my proxy?

How confidential is the information I store with the registry?

Can I use the registry even if I do not use the Internet?

Will it cost me anything to use the services of the registry?

Registries In New York State The following entities are known to operate advance directive registries in the state of New York. Remember, however, that New York does not have an official statewide registry.

New York Legal Assistance Group: NYLAG is a not-for-profit law office founded in 1990 to provide free civil legal services to low income residents of New York City who would otherwise be unable to afford or receive legal assistance. It is privately funded through foundation grants and the Interest On Lawyer Accounts (IOLA) Fund. It operates the Total Life Choices Project which provides legal information and services for New York State residents on completing advance health care directives. It provides completely free, lifetime registration of advance directives in the U.S. Living Will Registry. More information can be found at www.nylag.org or by calling (212) 371-6873.

Assuring Your Wishes.org: United Hospice of Rockland (UHR) and the Hospice and Palliative Care Association of New York State (HPCANYS) have collaborated to create a system that enables individuals (and their health care agents and physicians) to securely store and retrieve their

advance directives online. The services are offered through community organizations in Cayuga, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Onondaga, and Rockland Counties. For more information visit www.assuringyourwishes.org.

Chautauqua County Health Network (CCHN): CCHN, an organization comprised of the four hospitals in Chautauqua County, their governing boards and medical staff, developed a health care proxy registry to make the documents electronically available to clinicians and first responders within Chautauqua County only. In an attempt to keep information current, the system has been designed to prompt review of forms at 18 months. Registrants will receive a phone call or mail reminder to update their proxy. More information is available at www.cchn.net or by calling (888) 427-7699.

There are other registries that are national in scope and can be accessed by New York State residents. You may find them by using an online search engine and doing a query for "New York advance directives registry." You should also ask your health care provider to recommend a registry.

Before using any registry, ask questions and be sure it will meet your needs.

Tips for Caregivers...

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The most important thing to remember is it's o.k. to ask for help.

Educate yourself

Knowledge is power. Similar to training, you can educate yourself in a variety of ways that will benefit you and your family. Caregiving can start with minimal support and grow to 24 hours a day/7 days a week. Knowing what to expect as your caregiving role and the needs of your loved one change over time can prepare you for what may lie ahead. Talk to your loved one's health care provider about their illness or disease/frailty, search on-line for information, talk to a staff person at your County Office for the Aging. Some helpful on-line resources include the Alzheimer Association's CareFinder, AARP's Prepare to Care, the National Alliance for Caregiving Family Caregiving 101.

Contact your local office for the aging to talk to someone and to learn about services in your area that can help you. Call the NYSOFA Senior Citizens' Helpline at 1-800-342-9871. You can also log on to the NYSOFA Caregiver website at: <http://www.aging.state.ny.us/caring/index.htm>

Tips for Caregivers...

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you need anything.

- Seek out friends and family to help you so that you can have some time away from the home. And, if it is difficult to leave, invite friends and family over to visit with you. It is important that you interact with others.
- It is also important for you to feel comfortable leaving your loved one. There are a variety of community based organizations such as the County Office for the Aging, Alzheimer's Association, Veterans Administration, Elks, Moose lodge and others that can help you by providing home care, respite services such as adult day care, transportation to medical appointments, day care or senior centers, and other assistance.
- Consider the possibility of adult day care. An adult day-care center can provide you with a needed break during the day to attend a support group to other activity, and your loved one with some valuable diversions and activities with peers.
- If you can't link up right away with someone or some group, consider finding the time to keep a journal. Write down your thoughts and feelings. This will help you gain perspective on your situation and serve as one type of release for your emotions.

Recognize the warning signs of stress and depression

Know what works for you in terms of reducing stress and take action. Take a walk, go to dinner with a friend, talk to someone. Know the signs and symptoms of depression and seek medical attention if needed. Symptoms of depression include feeling down or hopeless, little interest in doing things previously enjoyed, sleep disturbances, fatigue/lack of energy, appetite changes, feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt, difficulty concentrating, slowed movement, recurrent preoccupation with death or suicidal thoughts. Don't ignore depression or wait for it to go away by itself.

In addition to looking out for your own needs, there are two main ways you can help others who are depressed: provide emotional support and help them get the treatment they need. The following basic guidelines will help.

- Educate yourself about the symptoms, causes, and treatments of depression. You need to understand what you're dealing with before you can help.
- Don't underestimate the seriousness of depression. Depression drains a person's energy, optimism, and motivation. Your depressed loved one can't just "snap out of it" by sheer force of will.
- Irritability and hostility are common symptoms of depression. Often, a depressed person will say hurt-

ful things or lash out in anger. Remember that this is the depression talking, not your loved one, so don't take it to heart.

- It can be frustrating to watch a depressed loved one struggle, especially if progress is slow or stalled. Having patience is important. Even with the proper treatment, recovery from depression doesn't happen overnight.
- It doesn't help anyone involved if you are making excuses, covering up the problem, or lying for a friend or family member who is depressed. In fact, this may keep the depressed person from seeking treatment.

Get training

- Training provided directly by community based organizations or on-line can make your caregiving role easier. If a group session is not for you, ask about an individual session or go to your library and check out caregiving books and videos. There is training for everyone such as "Day-to-Day Homecare," "Tips for the Late-Blooming Handywoman," "Men Making Meals, stress reduction, Alzheimer's disease and other health issues, legal issues or benefits for your family. You can also learn skills and receive practical tips such as how to safely move a person from a bed to a wheelchair, how to make adjustments for someone with diminishing sight, or how to deal with grief or loss and end of life issues. Call your County Office for Aging, Alzheimer's Association, Co-operative Extension, local college, Red Cross, Hospice, faith-based group to find out about training programs in your area.

Accept offers to help you

It's okay to ask for, and to accept, help. However, for some, asking for help can often be a difficult even awkward thing to do. Many caregivers avoid asking for help and try to do everything themselves which leads to physical and emotional burn out. If someone - a relative, friend or neighbor - offers to lend you a hand, say "Yes, thank you!" You may find that once you take the first step and ask for help it's much easier than you thought. Keep a list of friends and family you can ask for help and what specific skills and help they can offer. On-line resources such as Lotsa Helping Hands, Share the Care and Caring-Bridge can help you to manage and arrange for help from family and friends.

You can start by asking for help with a small task such as asking the person to spend time with your parent or loved one or provide a meal. Once they have developed a relationship with your parent or loved one you might find that they are able to assist with other things such as transportation to an appointment.

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If you are looking for a quick, easy way to find information about caregiving and caregiving resources, log onto a computer and look up the following, informative sites. There are also several non-web resources for you to access that are listed at the end of this article (see page 4, under "Other Resources").

GENERAL INFORMATION:

<http://www.aging.state.ny.us/findhelp/lofa.htm>

- The New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) website will help you locate your local Office for the Aging (OFA) and learn about caregiver services. OFAs provide a variety of services that benefit older individuals and their families. Services vary among local offices.

www.aarp.org/families - AARP's Family & Caregiving site contains a wealth of information for people caring for someone else.

<http://www.alz.org/apps/findus.asp> - Alzheimer's Association - You can search for a chapter and services near you.

www.caregiver.com - An online newsletter for caregivers that provides various featured articles, information and links to support group resources, conferences, etc.

www.caregiver.org - Family Caregiver Alliance (FCA) is a public voice for caregivers, illuminating the daily challenges, offering assistance, and championing their causes through education, services, research and advocacy. This site contains consumer-focused fact sheets and other helpful information.

www.thefamilycaregiver.org - National Family Caregiver Association --- educates, supports, empowers and speaks up for caregivers who care for loved ones. Through their core messages, they can help you to "Believe in Yourself, Protect Your Health, Reach Out for Help and Speak Up for your Rights".

GUIDES AND TOOLS FOR CAREGIVERS:

www.alz.org/carefinder/index.asp - Alzheimer's Association CareFinder™ - This user friendly site will help you to plan ahead, understand care options, provides information about coordinating care and

how to find good care in your community. Their interactive tool prints out recommended options and a list of questions to ask when screening a care provider.

<http://caregiver.lotsahelpinghands.com/>

Lotsa Helping Hands is an online tool for caregivers to help them arrange for help. In literally minutes, a Coordinator can create, free-of-charge, a private and secure Lotsa Helping Hands web community, define volunteer activities using the supplied templates, and begin inviting members to the community. Through an intuitive interface that requires no training, volunteers can then easily view and sign up for any number of available tasks, review their current commitments, and be confident they won't forget any assignments as the system automatically sends out

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Kinship Caregivers...

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Kinship care has begun to receive more attention. The NYS Office for the Aging has initiatives in over fifteen counties to assist older "kinship" caregivers. The NYS Office of Children and Family Services funds programs in twenty counties and a statewide "kinship navigator" program.

The NYS Kinship Navigator, operated by Catholic Family Center in Rochester, with state administration by the Office of Children and Families, is a state wide information and referral resource. The Navigator's web site offers county resources, over twenty legal fact sheets covering parental delegations, custody, guardianship, financial assistance, and other issues, as well as columns by kinship experts about barriers to successful caregiving. The Kinship Navigator also offers toll free access to a kinship specialist who can refer caregivers to a network of attorneys. See www.nysnavigator.org or call 877-454-6463.

We care about you
because you care
for others.



Help is just a click away...

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email reminders of upcoming obligations.

www.familycaregiving101.org - Family Caregiving 101 was created especially for caregivers and is a great place to find assistance, answers, new ideas and advice. It will provide you with the basic tools, skills and information you need to protect your physical and mental health. It was created by the National Family Caregivers Association (NFCA) and the National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC).

http://www.aarp.org/about_aarp/aarp_foundation/programs_services/prepare_to_care.html - Prepare to Care – A Planning Guide for Families - This AARP caregiver resource will help you to begin to discuss a caregiving plan with your family. The guide includes five steps from beginning a dialogue to taking action and includes information on how to get started, questions to ask and where to find basic resources. Don't be discouraged if you can't answer every question or fill in every blank. The important thing is to start the conversation in a way that works for you and your family.

<http://www.nia.nih.gov/HealthInformation/Publications/LongDistanceCaregiving/> This is a PDF version of "So Far Away: Twenty Questions for Long Distance Caregiving," a National Institute on Aging (NIA) publication. It is an excellent, easy to follow resource for long-distance caregivers. You may call their toll-free information line - 1-800-222-2225 to place an order or order on line at <http://www.niapublications.org/pubs/order/order.asp?id=BK021>

GRANDPARENTS AND OTHER RELATIVES CARING FOR CHILDREN:

www.nysnavigator.org - NYS Kinship Navigator - designed especially for grandparents and other relatives caring for children; resources for kinship caregivers on legal issues, answers to frequently asked questions, county guides on kinship caregiving to find services in your area, or access to a kinship specialist via a toll free phone number. Find answers regarding legal rights on custody & visitation, decision-making authority, access to official records, eligibility for public assistance, foster care, tax credits, childcare and respite.

<http://www.aarp.org/families/grandparents/> - AARP's special site for grandparents and other relatives raising children.

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dfta/html/caregiver/grandparents.shtml> - NYC Department for the Aging

Grandparent Site is a resource for NYC residents. The Center provides information and assistance to people raising grandchildren and other young relatives. Resource specialists can help you and make referrals to appropriate community-based organizations.

OTHER RESOURCES

Caregiving Policy Digest - This focused newsletter from Family Caregiver Alliance's National Center on Caregiving offers a fresh look at this rapidly changing caregiving environment. You'll receive briefings on key legislation, news on innovative public programs, and the latest information on caregiving and long-term care policy at national and state levels. To sign up for this FREE electronic newsletter online go to: http://www.caregiver.org/caregiver/jsp/content_node.jsp?nodeid=836

Relatives Raising Children: A Guide to Finding Help and Hope

Marianne Takas, J.D. Third Edition 2005. This book is based upon what long-term relative caregivers (and family services professionals who work with them) have learned about raising relative children. You'll find useful information, strategies, and ideas, and where you can help. The author has worked on behalf of children as an attorney, a youth worker, a parent and a foster parent. Cost: \$6.00; you can order online at: <http://www.brookdalefoundation.org/publications.htm> or contact The Brookdale Foundation, 950 Third Avenue, 19th Floor, NY, NY 10022, Phone: 212-308-7355, Fax: 212-750-0132 <http://caregiver.lotsahelpinghands.com/>

Caring.com

This website, whose home page states "Everything you need to help your parents", recently featured several articles on male caregivers.

Need help getting services or information?

**Call the NYSOFA Help Line
1-800-342-9871**

Tips for Caregivers

Caregiving is a fundamental aspect of family and community life, but it can be challenging. It can create physical, emotional and financial strains on a caregiver. Studies show that caregivers who experience stress and burden are more likely to 'burn-out' or give up on their daily caregiving responsibilities. They look for alternatives – frequently placing their loved one in a nursing home. Research also shows that caregivers need to take care of themselves first so they can remain healthy and able to continue their caregiving roles.

Caregivers help others with everyday tasks ranging from grocery shopping or driving someone to a medical appointment to taking care of someone 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Caregivers are husbands, wives, partners, daughters, sons, other relatives, friends, neighbors, a grandparent caring for a grandchild, parents caring for a child with special needs, a teenager helping his parents care for his grandfather, and others. Recognize yourself as a 'caregiver' and then take time to care for yourself.

If you have ever been on an airplane, the crew has instructed you – in case of an emergency – to put on your oxygen mask before helping others. The same logic applies in caregiving - you can only help someone else if you are well enough to do so. You need rest, proper nutrition, exercise and socialization.

Take a break

Schedule time for yourself and do what works for you! Find out about respite services in your area. These services provide you with a temporary break from your caregiving role. You can then devote time to yourself while your loved one is cared for by someone else, for example, a trained person in your home or in an adult day care setting.

It is vital for you to take some time away so you don't become overwhelmed. Even taking a short break can help restore and renew your spirit. Taking a break may require some planning so that you can feel secure and comfortable while you're away. Do something you enjoy and as you become more comfortable you can increase the length of your outside activities. Allow yourself time to focus on you and your needs. Here are a few helpful tips:

- Don't feel guilty about wanting or needing time away from your caregiving.
- It's o.k. and necessary to take a break; it will help you feel renewed and restored when you resume your duties



- Start slowly; make plans to spend a short amount of time away.
- Call your County Office for the Aging to learn more about caregiver support and respite services.

Find others like yourself

Caregiving can make you feel lonely and isolated, yet other caregivers face the same issues and experience the same emotions as you. Talking to other caregivers or a caregiver counselor is one way for you to relieve stress and feelings of helplessness. However, when you are a caregiver, finding time for positive, nurturing interactions with others might seem impossible. Without such interaction, you may not have the mental strength to deal with all of the emotions you experience as a caregiver, including guilt and anger. Once you realize how good it feels to be able to talk with others that understand what you are going through, you will wonder why you had not sought out others like yourself earlier. Here are some ideas about finding others.

- Join a support group or seek out a 'telephone buddy.' Seek out people who are going through the same experiences that you are living each day. If you can't leave the house, many Internet support group services are available.
- Many community-based organizations assist caregivers through support groups, home visitors, respite care, transportation, and other services. Call your County Office for the Aging, senior center, senior services organization, family service organizations for contact suggestions.
- Draw strength from your faith or from any faith-based caregiving support service. Members of a congregation in a church or synagogue can provide the encouragement you need to feel good about your caregiving role, and they may also be able to provide you with a break from time to time.
- Arrange a telephone contact with a family member, a friend, a volunteer from a church, senior center or County Office for the Aging so that someone calls each day or on a regular basis to be sure everything is alright. This person could relieve you of some of the responsibility by contacting other family members to let them know the status of the care receiver and if

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