

WOODSON CENTER FOR ADULT HEALTHCARE

.....when you've outgrown the kid stuff

5 Keys to Caregiver Survival

Don't put your head in the sand. Ostriches get their backsides shot off all the time.

If there is even a hint of concern about whether or not your senior needs help, check it out immediately. Why is Mom so forgetful? Should Dad still drive? Should they still live alone? Do they need all of these medicines? If you have questions, find a doctor who specializes in the care of older adults (a geriatrician), get a comprehensive geriatrics assessment and level of care prescription (LOC Rx).. **Don't be afraid to get help.**

Take the "S" off your chest, or step away from the Kryptonite.

You are not "SUPERCAREGIVER!" Many families try to cover 24 hours of care with only one or two people when three shifts of nurses do this in nursing facilities. You cannot do this alone. **You need help.**

'Don't Ask; Don't Tell' Won't Work.

It takes a village to support an older adult, too. Neighbors can alert you to problems before they become dangers. Friends can make helpful suggestions and give support. **Let people know you need help.**

If you don't want to have to drive all the time, take your hands off the steering wheel.

Some caregivers actually discourage people who want to help. You should insist on the care plan the doctor prescribes, but don't major in the minor. Does it really matter whether a helper offers the red shirt, or the blue one? Chicken or tuna salad? Assemble your team of helpers; be the quarterback, not the lineman. **Let people help.**

Protect the primary resource. THAT'S YOU!

You cannot give care, supervise care, or advocate for anyone when you are physically ill, financially strapped, emotionally exhausted, or spiritually bankrupt. Get the help you need and make time to take care of yourself. Keep your doctor appointments and follow your doctor's advice. Protect your finances and plan for your own healthy retirement. Exercise, rest, take a class, pursue a hobby, join a group, maintain your other relationships and nurture your spirit. Remember what flight attendants say, in the event of an emergency, **put your mask on first! Help them by helping yourself.**