



Grandparents Corner

August 2017

Resources and Support

You have heard it before: if you are a family caregiver, you are at greater health risk. That's because by devoting yourself to the needs of someone else, you tend to neglect your own. You may not recognize, or you may ignore, the signs of illness, exhaustion, or depression that you are experiencing.

How can I get help if I'm feeling overwhelmed?

When you are raising grandchildren, you may feel overcome with emotions. You may feel grief, sadness, and a sense of loss and disappointment that your child wasn't able to raise his/her children, or you may feel angry or resentful about having to take on this role. If your feelings are getting in the way of your day-to-day life, it can be helpful to talk to a mental health professional. Ask friends, family or your doctor for names of a therapist, counselor or social worker who offers counseling, or call your local department of mental health for a referral. Remember, by taking care of your own mental health needs, you will be better able to care for your grandchildren.

How do I find support services in my neighborhood?

You probably will be able to find services and support for you and/or your grandchildren in your community. Start by checking out these resources:

- Schools - Talk to the social worker at your grandchild's school about what kind of help might be available.
- Children's Services/Children and Families/Child Welfare Office - Call your town or county government offices to find out what kind of help you may be eligible for.
- Faith-Based Organizations - Religious organizations often have programs to help families even if they are not members of their faith.
- Community Centers
- YMCA and YWCA
- County Extension Offices
- Boys and Girls Clubs, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and other youth groups.
- Mentoring programs, like Big Brothers and Big Sisters.
- Local colleges and universities may have free legal clinics in their law schools, or might have students who can work with your grandchildren.

Sources: AARP - www.aarp.org; National Family Caregiver Alliance - www.caregiver.org

Domestic violence among older adults is a form of elder abuse, and it can turn a home into a place of fear, hopelessness and desperation. Read the issue and answer True or False to the questions below.

1. Substance abuse can impede a caregiver's ability to provide adequate care. It also increases the risk of financial abuse as the caregiver struggles to finance a substance abuse habit. T F
2. Violence does not occur at disproportionately higher rates among adults with disabilities. T F
3. Neglect can include refusing to provide food, medicine and personal care such as bathing or helping a person with toileting; over-medicating; or withholding eyeglasses, dentures or walking aids. T F
4. Intentionally keeping the person from friends and family or verbally attacking or demeaning a person is not a form of abuse. T F
5. People with dementia are especially vulnerable to mistreatment, partly because caring for them can put so much stress on those who provide care. T F
6. Changes in the person's behavior or emotional state, such as withdrawal, fear or anxiety or apathy, could be a sign of abuse. T F
7. Each year, hundreds of thousands of adults over the age of 60 are abused, neglected, or financially exploited. T F
8. The Adult Protective Services Agency is typically responsible for investigating reports of domestic elder abuse and providing families with help and guidance. T F
9. If you suspect that an older adult is at risk from a neglectful or overwhelmed caregiver, or being preyed upon financially, it's important to speak up. T F
10. Tricking a senior into signing documents is not financial abuse. T F

KEY: 1. T 2. F 3. T 4. F 5. T 6. T 7. T 8. T 9. T 10. F