

Tips To Help You Keep Life In Balance

(NAPSA)—While rewarding, helping out an aging loved one can be stressful and present feelings of frustration. Do you drive your mother to doctors' appointments? Are you managing medicine for your grandfather? Have you had a parent move in with you? Whether your help is hands-on or offering support, assistance and guidance from a distance, you aren't alone. You're far from it. It's estimated that there are 42.1 million family caregivers in America facing similar challenges.

Connecting with other caregivers who know what it's like to care for a loved one and joining communities of those with similar experiences can offer great support in a difficult time. AARP's new Caregiving Resource Center is a great starting point to join an online community of caregivers and connect with information, resources and advice. Whether you're caring for your mother who lives 20 minutes away or for your in-laws living across the country, the Caregiving Resource Center offers tips for caring for your loved ones, both near and far:

Balancing Work and Caregiving at Home

- **Learn your company policies**—Talk to your Human Resources Department or manager to learn about your company's policies regarding caregiving. Some companies offer programs to help find services, support groups or flexible work arrangements.

- **Know your rights**—Learn about the Family and Medical Leave Act, which entitles eligible workers to unpaid leave—up to 12 weeks a year—for family caregiving without losing job security or health benefits.

- **Talk to your manager**—Let your manager know about your role as a caregiver and what it requires of you.

Caring From Afar

- **Create a contact list**—Put together a list for yourself and



Balancing everyone's needs—including your own—may be a bit easier when you know where to go for help.

your loved one of addresses and phone numbers of those who can be reached in an emergency: friends, neighbors, doctors or other family members who have regular contact with your loved one.

- **Organize information**—No one wants to think about emergencies, but it's always better to be prepared. Collect and keep handy important information before a crisis.

You might even consider an electronic health record—such as the AARP Health Record—to manage critical information. Keep handy medical records, medications, doctor names and numbers, insurance information, names of utility companies, financial information and important documents including birth certificates, Social Security cards and home deeds.

- **Make visits productive**—Time with your loved one should be enjoyable but it's also a great opportunity to assess possibly changing needs. Make a list of things to take care of before you arrive, including scheduling appointments in advance or making shopping lists. When you're there, note anything out of the ordinary and look around the house for safety hazards.

- **Community services**—Look into community services that may provide support and assistance.

Learn More

For more helpful tips and resources, visit www.AARP.org/caregiving.