

## Balancing Work, Family and Caregiving

Caregivers must often balance the demands of family, work, community groups, and caring for an aging or injured loved one or a child with special needs. As an employee, parent, significant other or grandparent, as well as caregiver, you may feel pulled in many different directions. Now is the time to take charge of your life and prioritize.

When you take time to identify your own needs, what has to get done, and what is important for all family members, you will be able to make the most of the time you have together.

### Ways to Balance Your Time

- Set priorities. Decide what is important, less important and in-between. You may need to say "no," even if it might disappoint others. Set priorities for your own needs, family needs, job needs and the loved one's needs. You may have to limit community service until you have fewer demands on your time. Priorities will change from day to day and week to week, but a ranked list will help set priorities for you.
- Rearrange commitments creatively. Schedule appointments and errands together in the same area to make the most of your time.
- Invest time or money in things that will help you manage tasks. Consider paying the kid next door to take care of your lawn or hire a cleaning service, if you are able to. Or, you might want to consider talking to your church about volunteers to help. Most importantly, learn to accept help when friends offer.
- Meet with other caregivers and self-help groups for support. Sharing eases tension, gives a new view of the situation, increases understanding and builds support. Support groups can help you feel less alone and gives you a chance to share what you have learned.
- Accept your limitations. Get help from another family member, a neighbor or community services when you need to take a break. What will you give up that will make life easier for you? Perhaps it is involvement on a committee that you have served on for a long time.
- Make time for yourself. Set aside time on a regular basis to be alone, take a walk, exercise or just have quiet time, even for a short period. You will be more productive, have more energy and know yourself better. The person you care for will also benefit when you take time to renew yourself. Take time to be with friends or to do things that you enjoy. This will help you be a more relaxed caregiver and prevent you from "burning out."
- Keep good records. Caregiving requires the use of many services. Working with service providers, insurance companies and others is often confusing and time-consuming. Keep track of contacts and information. Avoid over-relying on your memory. Make notes as you talk in person or over the telephone. Keep brochures and other information provided by organizations and agencies. Keep copies of letters you write regarding services, as well as those you receive. Ask lots of questions. No question is a dumb one. Clip and file articles about services you may need.

### Reach Out for Help

Take the first step in reaching out for help. Log on to [www.MagellanHealth.com/member](http://www.MagellanHealth.com/member) or call your program's toll-free number 800-523-5668 to get the information, help and support you need.