

Elderly Caregivers

There is a point in our lives where our minds and bodies begin to deteriorate, and for the majority of us this happens when we are quite a bit older. Chances are you may go through these changes with your spouse, but at a different rate. If you find yourself having to care for a spouse and yourself as you are aging, here are some things to remember:

- Neglecting your own health will only make you a less effective caregiver. It is important to keep up with any doctor's appointments or medications you need. It is also important to continue to eat right and get enough sleep. Don't forget about yourself because you are worried about your loved one.
- Just like your loved one, you are approaching a time in your life where you may need to depend on others. Don't be too proud to do so, there is absolutely no shame in asking for help from a more able person. It is understandable that you want to remain independent, but asking for help is a much better alternative to crumpling under the weight of it all.
- Be gentle, be attentive, but don't be overbearing. If there is a task your loved one can still complete by himself or herself, and if he or she wants

to, allow it to happen. Don't feel the need to do everything for him or her. Remember that your spouse is probably grieving over losing independence just as you are.

- Don't push yourself past your physical limits in order to help your loved one. For example, if your loved one is unable to walk and you are not strong enough to support him or her, don't force it. Look into getting a walking aid or a wheel chair, whatever might work best. You can also ask/hire someone to help your loved one get around. If you try too hard, you could end up hurting both yourself and your loved one.
- Be careful not to ignore any signs that you should slow down because you don't want to give up caring for your loved one. If you find yourself becoming too physically or emotionally exhausted, it may be time to let someone else take over, at least for a little while.

If it becomes too difficult to care for your spouse, our campus offers several different affordable living opportunities. Your spouse will receive the care they need, and you will still be able to spend time with them. If both of you are in need of some assistance, we can help with that as well.