

## Caregiving Basics



- **When the person you care for is an adult.** Unless there is significant cognitive impairment, your loved one has the right to make decisions about their life.
- **Offer choices.** The ability to choose is a basic freedom. Recognizing that health and financial constraints can create challenges to caregiving, permit choice whenever possible.
- **Provide help only with those things that your loved one cannot do.** Oftentimes, caregivers will perform a task because it's 'easier' or 'quicker'. While the activity, such as dressing, may take a little while longer, it is important to encourage and support the independence of your loved one.
- **Take care of yourself.** Job, family, children, school, extracurricular activities, PLUS caregiving creates tremendous strain. It's important to eat properly and get enough rest and exercise. Speak to family and friends to help schedule yourself a break.
- **Your family is your first resource.** There can be deep emotional currents when serious or prolonged illness occurs. Some family members will want to help with everything, others may need to be asked, and others will not want to become part of the caregiving at all. Have a family meeting to discuss the care needs and what you're feeling. Work toward including everyone's help with the caregiving and develop a schedule of care.
- **Use the resources in your community.** They're there for you, to make it easier for you to care for your family member.