



Tip sheet

Aging parents Common issues

What do I need to know?

Caring for an aging parent or elderly family member presents difficult challenges – especially when a crisis hits and you are suddenly faced with the responsibilities of taking care of the aging parent while also taking care of children, working and keeping up with your household. When you care for an aging parent or relative, you may feel stretched beyond your limits. Use the tips provided below to help you cope.

Signs and symptoms

- If you believe your parents are in need of a caregiver, then the next step is to talk with them about their care needs in such a way that they themselves identify the problem and come up with the solutions.
- Determine what kind of help your loved one needs. Long term elder care? Or, help for only a short time to recover after a hospital stay?
- To avoid an unexpected event to trigger this conversation, start monitoring your parents' physical and mental abilities today, and research your care options should your parent begin to show signs of needing assistance.

Assess

- Talk to your supervisor at work about your caregiving responsibilities, so he or she knows what difficulties you may experience. Offer to make up any work time you take off for caregiving.
- Consider a flexible working option.
- Reach out to local organisations to find in-home adult care and elder care resources.
- Ensure parent's will and medical directives are documented according to local requirements.
- Monitor quality of care / care giver.
- Allow parent / elder to be in charge as much as possible.

Reach out

- Be organised. Make a list of things that need to be done, and set realistic priorities and goals. Have a backup plan in place.
- Stay healthy. Get enough sleep, eat a healthful diet and exercise regularly. Most people tend to overlook their own health when taking care of others.
- Make a little time to do things you enjoy. Relax with family and friends. Having fun, laughing and focusing on things other than your own problems helps you keep your emotional balance and makes you a much better caregiver.
- Feeling stressed, angry or depressed? Step away from the situation for a while. Leave the room for a minute or take a walk.
- Contact the [Employee Assistance Program](#) for free, confidential counseling services.

Need more information?

- Stress Tip Sheet.
- [BHP global Flex Principles](#).
- BeyondBlue: <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/who-does-it-affect/older-people>.