



CATHI

Caregiver's Answers, Topics, and Helpful Information

In an endeavor to continually assist caregivers in their search for pertinent information regarding eldercare, our Information and Referral Specialists address topics most frequently asked questions via Caregiver's Answers, Topics, and Helpful Information (CATHI). Additionally, caregivers are invited to e-mail individual questions caregiver2@senior-resources-guilford.org and an Information and Referral Specialist will reply.

Dear CATHI,

Question: How Can I Get Relief from the Stress of Caregiving During the Holidays?

Answer: Who doesn't feel overwhelmed sometimes by the bustle of the holiday season? Add to that the responsibility of caring for a frail or elderly loved one, and burnout is simply a concept waiting to become reality. But wait, if you're one of the millions of households providing care for a family member or friend, there is hope. Stress doesn't have to take the starring role in your family activities this year. You are probably like so many Americans who are trying to offer a sense of dignity to your parents by including them in the seasons events and help them stay in their own home. Safety is your number one priority.

Most accidents happen at home in an unsupervised environment. This season solicit the help of a spouse or older children. Have them play games with Grandpa or Grandma while you do chores around the house. Instead of decorating to the hilt, keep holiday décor simple. Eliminate the need for extension cords and declutter your notion of decorating: use paper garland instead of breakable items placed within reach. Remove anything a child or frail elderly person may stumble over. Replace candles with bright centerpieces of fruit or flowers.

With the emphasis on "good cheer" during the month of December, the options are many. Don't wear yourself out trying to make the holidays "happen" for everyone. You'll be more alert to hazards if you aren't overdoing it.

Holidays bring emotions to the surface because they hold the most intense memories for your loved ones. Sometimes tears fall for no apparent reason, or the frail elderly person seems gruff or annoyed just when you think all is well. These emotional swings can be difficult, but the caregiver must keep their emotional balance.

Set a few guidelines as to what you expect from yourself. From the beginning, determine to be positive and respond with calmness during upsetting situations. Things may come to a boiling point, but don't respond in the same manner. People don't intend to be grumpy or give you a hard time. These behaviors may simply be a way of asking for help. The best response is to remain patient and offer consistent encouragement, setting safe boundaries

The holidays are great time to slow down instead of speed up. Think about all the things that can remain undone instead of all the things you need to do. Challenge yourself to match the tempo of your frail elderly relatives or friends and see if you don't enjoy the season mor. After all isn't that what the holiday season is all about?

Note: This is for informational purposes only.
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For referrals to community organizations in Guilford County that assist older adults and caregivers, contact Senior Resources of Guilford's SeniorLine at (336) 333-6981 in Greensboro and Guilford Co., in High Point/Jamestown (336) 884-6981 or the Caregiver Support Specialist, at (336) 373-4816 or (336) 883-3586 in High Point.



North Carolina Family Caregiver Support Program
Completing the Care