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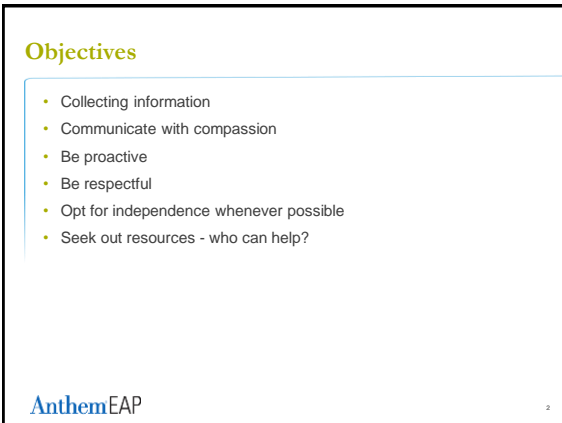
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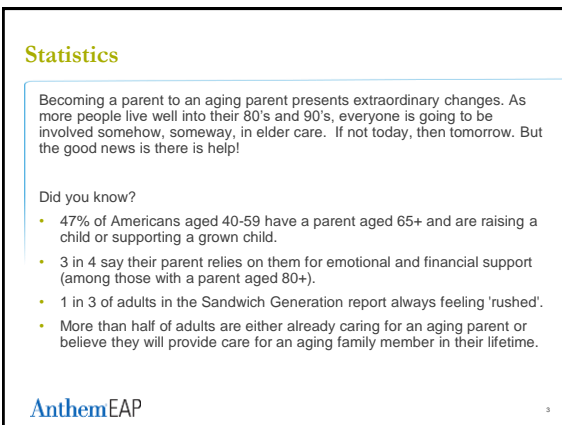
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### What is your role?

- A growing number of adult children are caring for their aging parents while balancing their careers and family life. Known as the "Sandwich Generation," these family caregivers may need more support to help care for their aging loved ones to help them stay safe living in the home of their choice.
- Traditional: those sandwiched between aging parents who need care and or help and their own children.
- Club sandwich: those in their 50's or 60's sandwiched between aging parents, adult children and grandchildren. Or those in their 30's and 40's with young children, aging parents and grandparents.
- Opened faced: anyone else who is involved in Elder care.

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### Collect Information

- Do not rely on single instances to assess where an aging parent is
- Get a professional assessment
- Consider: mental, physical, cognitive and safety issues
- Include your parent in gathering information about their situation, fears and concerns

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### Communicate

- Openly discuss your concerns
- Ask your parent(s) about their feelings and knowledge of the situation
- Use concrete examples of why you are concerned about their safety, etc. without being judgmental
- Recognize that seniors fear losing their independence

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## Self Care

In many cases, no one cares for this group of caregivers, who usually has the added burden of working a full-time job. Additionally, this group often has to juggle an unexpected hospitalization of their loved one with their career obligations. Many outsiders to this issue may think a hospitalization might give the caregiver some respite, when in fact most caregivers have an added stressor when a loved one is hospitalized and their already hectic daily routine is altered.

Self-care is typically neglected by the sandwich generation. Learning to integrate simple self-care tips into your daily routine will help caregivers to stay healthy. The healthy caregiver provides a higher level of physical and emotional care to their loved one and this is a gift that keeps on giving.

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## Doing it All

- Realistic Expectations
- Everyday Changes
- Ask for Help
- Time Management Skills/Make Every Second Count
- Take Breaks and Re-energize your Battery
- Use Technology

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## Be Kind to Yourself

Often we are kind to others while we push ourselves beyond our own limits. The first step in dealing with caregiver stress, anger, or frustration, is to care for yourself. Well-meaning friends and relatives often tell you to take care. But no one will actually tell you how to take care of yourself while supporting a loved one or sitting at his or her side at the hospital.

One of the first things to learn is to ask for and accept help. It's important to clearly identify your needs and acknowledge that you can't do it all alone. This can be hard to do. Make a list of people you know who would be willing to help. Help doesn't necessarily mean caregiving, but every task or chore that is removed from your full plate will give you a few more minutes of your time every day!

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### Be Proactive

- Anticipate what issues your parents may be facing
- Don't wait until there is an accident or injury
- Take steps to adjust to the fact your parents may need support or help in some areas of their lives

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### Unplanned Breaks

If your loved one is in the hospital and needs to have a test, give the nurse your cell number and go sit outside for ten minutes. If caring for someone at home, consider the use of a wireless doorbell system to enable your loved one to call when needed. This allows the caregiver on duty the freedom to be in another room or go outside.

A walk to the mailbox can be a mini-vacation. Sun, and even rain, can be good for the soul. Exercise of any kind can help to release some of the frustration that caregivers experience.

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### Be Prepared

Find an attractive cloth bag for essential personal items when you visit the hospital or doctors office with your loved one. Keep hand lotion, lip balm, a journal, a novel, a healthy snack or any item that is soothing for you.

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### Be Respectful

- Don't talk down to, or patronize your elders
- Treat them as adults



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### Opt for Independence

- Look for solutions and strategies that preserve the most independence for your parent.
- Look for support and assistance rather than full caretaking.
- Develop trust and acceptance that the help is because you care, not because it is a burden.

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### Seek Out Resources

- Don't go it alone
- There are many professionals and resources to help
- Take advantage of programs for elders in all areas
- Look for local support and community resources



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## Be Mindful

Every hospital has a chapel. Most have a chaplain, at least on-call. Consider utilizing available resources for prayer or reflection. Pick up a book on mindfulness meditation. Carry a book on mindfulness with you and read a passage or two when you have a few minutes. Use a journal to jot down your thoughts and feelings. Being mindful reminds us to have gratitude for even the small mundane things -- after all; they can go away in a flash. When caring for your loved one, be mindful of how he or she feels, smells, talks, laughs, etc. Appreciate the beauty of it all. The memories you make in doing so can be conjured up at a moment's notice... forever. Seize the opportunity to be present in the moment. Refuse to let stress or anger rob you of valuable time.

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## Nourish Yourself

It is all too easy to rely on junk food and vending machines. Avoid using alcohol or drugs (including caffeine) to get through the day. These will only complicate things and add to the stress, anger, and frustration. Eating healthy food will give you the physical and mental stamina to deal with whatever is thrown your way during the day. Ultimately, it will help you to deal with adversity more effectively.

Sleep whenever you can...

Many of us struggle with sleep even without a life crisis. If you have an unexpected two-hour break in the middle of an afternoon, take a nap and refuse to feel guilty about it. Sleep, like healthy food, helps all of us handle adversity better. In addition to sleep, keep up with your own health needs. Don't skip annual medical screenings or allow yourself to run out of prescription medicine. If you do not take care of yourself, you can't do a good job of caring for your loved one.

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## Laugh, Laugh, Laugh

We all know the power of a good belly laugh! Try to see the humor in life. Rent a funny movie. And also remember to just laugh at YOURSELF!



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## Avoid Hard and Fast Plans

Purchasing tickets for concerts or signing up to take a class and then being unable to attend can add to your frustration. You are often better off using any free time to take a walk, shop, read, nap or JUST SIT!! Time becomes ever so precious. Learn to use it wisely.



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## Consider a Support Group

- Many counselors specialize in anger, the stress of caregiving, and grief. If you need help in getting through a stressful time in life, you are not weak or unusual. Think about what you need or want. Do you just want to talk to someone?
- Caregivers find the most support when they are sharing with someone else in the same boat.
- Reach out to a support group. You will find resources that are available in your community.

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### How EAP Can Help ...

- Face-to-face counseling sessions
- Legal/Financial consultations
- Child/Eldercare consultation & referrals
- Daily life resources
- ID theft recovery
- Free credit monitoring
- myStrength – Health Club for Your Mind
- Let's Talk Depression – A Multi Resource Tool Kit
- Comprehensive website
  - Resources
  - Self assessments
  - Health/wellness library
  - Legal forms

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# Questions?



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