A member of the Office of Well-being

Wellness Weekly, Issue Thirty Eight

Are You a Manager?
Ten minutes … that’s all it takes! Learn how to enhance well-being within your team through our new Ten-Minute Well-Being Tips for Managers program. Click here to register for the series.

“ Sticking with your family is what makes it a family. ” - Mitch Albom

Caring for aging parents is a phase of life most of us don’t think much about until we’re forced to. When you find yourself in the role of caregiver, you may discover that situations and needs can change overnight. Questions about availability of resources, confusion about who in the family will take on certain responsibilities and resentment surrounding those responsibilities and finances can quickly lead to feeling overwhelmed and exhausted. The good news is that many people have gone before you on this journey and help is available. Read on for some suggestions on how to navigate being a caregiver with greater ease.

Assess needs. This includes assessing your parents’ needs in areas like home safety, medical needs, cognitive health, personal hygiene, meal preparation, transportation and social support. Determine how much help they already have in each category and how much help they realistically need to stay safe and healthy.

Assess your own situation. Take your own needs and abilities into account. Though you may want to help take care of all of your parents’ needs, is that realistic when you consider your geographic location, your relationship with your parents, your employment status and your own health? Your health and happiness are just as important as your parents’, so remember it’s not selfish to decide you may not be the best person to provide care.

Include your parents in the process. None of us want to lose our independence, which is why it’s so important to include your parents in their care planning. Open communication, when possible given potential cognitive and health challenges, allows your parents to see you as a partner instead of someone who is trying to take over and control.

Get help. This can include asking for help from siblings, other family members and friends. Take advantage of informal support networks that may be available. Also, explore the website of the local department on aging for additional resources, and have a conversation with your parents’ health care providers about resources they may be aware of.

One of the most important things to keep in mind is that you are not alone and help is available. Contact mySupport if you are in need of counseling or referral services. Remember to take care of yourself too!

Ask the Expert
Every Thursday, noon–12:30 p.m.
Join a 30-minute Ask the Expert session with Peter Rabins, MD, MPH, Richman Family Professor of Alzheimer’s and Related Dementias, Emeritus, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, to get information about how to care for a loved one who has Alzheimer’s disease.
Join from the meeting link: lcah.webex.com/lcah/j.php?MTID=mc8a55c9f35ded27ee06de626880ebae
Meeting number (access code): 180 215 1915
Meeting Password: wDv5uwuRk32
Join by phone: 404-410-4502

Follow us on Twitter, @HealthyHopkins, to share how you stay #HealthyatHopkins.

Johns Hopkins Employee Highlight
Stephanie B, Occupational Therapist
Johns Hopkins All Children’s Hospital
I take time to practice gratitude, and am grateful for the people I care about. I prioritize my family to continue working on the relationships that mean the most to me. I also practice yoga and focus on limiting my screen time.

Yoga is a great way for me to practice self-care. The breathing and movement allows me to turn off the stress of the world and tune into my own body. I also practice CrossFit, which gives me the escape I need and the movement I crave.

Share your story. Click here to submit.

Visit the Healthy at Hopkins portal (via my.jh.edu and select the Healthy at Hopkins logo).
Click here for more resources from the Office of Well-being.

Invite a Healthy at Hopkins team member to your next staff meeting to lead a progressive muscle relaxation exercise or guided meditation. Click here to see offerings and to request an event.