



Long-Distance Caregiving



Overview

If you care for a loved one who lives an hour or more away, you're a long-distance caregiver. Caring from a distance can be hard for you and for your loved one. But you can do it successfully. These tips will help.

Get informed

First, get informed. Learn everything you can about your loved one's medical needs. Learn about their conditions and the medications they take. Find out what other resources are available to help them.

Get organized

Next, get organized. At least one family member should have written permission to access medical records and financial information. Then, gather this information. Write down important contact numbers. Put all of this in a folder or in a secure document you can share online. And keep it up to date. Finally, it's best if only one family member with medical record access acts as your loved one's point person for talking with doctors.

Make visits count

You may not be able to visit your loved one as often as you would like. So when you do, make it count. Before you go, list what you need to do while you're there. You may need to do some shopping for your loved one, or fix something around the house. A little planning can help make sure you don't forget something important.

Stay in touch

And finally, stay in touch. Make sure your loved one can contact you and other family members. Get them a cell phone if they don't have one, and program important numbers into it for them. This will give everyone peace of mind. With a little effort and planning, you can make long-distance care successful.