Nearly 65 million Americans provide care for a loved one, but many do not identify themselves as caregivers or seek help. Many are part of the sandwich generation – they work and are raising children in addition to caring for aging parents. Caregiving is stressful, but it can also be rewarding, if you know where to turn for help.

Do you frequently help an older or disabled adult with housekeeping, shopping, meal preparation, transportation, paperwork, or personal care? If so, you are a caregiver.

Many caregivers do not identify themselves as such. In their mind, they are simply doing what needs to be done as a friend, spouse, or child. However, they are more inclined to seek help and become more skilled if they identify themselves as a caregiver.

Caregivers often describe their lives as a roller coaster ride. They rise to heights of love, selflessness, and sense of purpose and then slide to depths of frustration, resentment, and burn-out.

They find themselves in a new world for which they are unprepared. The stress is compounded when caregivers have other responsibilities, such as children and work.

Experienced caregivers eventually learn two vital lessons:

1. Help is available. Seek it out and use it.
2. Take care of yourself, or you will be unable to take care of anyone else.

Council on Aging’s (COA) Caregiver Education and Support Program can help. The program provides free support and connection to resources for family or volunteer caregivers.

The program works to:
- reduce caregiver stress, burden, and injuries
- increase caregiver confidence and knowledge
- improve the quality of care
- help caregivers balance their lives and caregiving responsibilities

Who qualifies for this program? To qualify, the caregiver or care recipient must be at least 60 years old and live in Butler, Clermont, Clinton, Hamilton, or Warren counties.

There is no age requirement for family caregivers who provide care for individuals with Alzheimer’s disease or related disorders with neurological and organic brain dysfunction.

Call (513) 721-1025 for information.
Caregiver Education and Support
FACT SHEET (Cont.)

“Words can’t express what [this program] has instilled in me. [The caregiver consultant] made me feel so comfortable, so at ease. She is somebody I could talk to and I didn’t have to worry about how they would take it. She has given me strength and courage and she has encouraged me to do what I do.”  

Clavilia, caregiver

How does this program help?
COA’s Caregiver Education and Support Program is tailored to meet individual needs. The program is for:
• new caregivers
• caregivers who are feeling overwhelmed or stressed
• caregivers whose care recipient’s needs are changing

During a phone consultation, our caregiver consultant will assess the caregiver and the care recipient. She provides referral information, educational materials and resources, caregiving instruction, and emotional support.

The caregiver consultant shares information to help the caregiver:
• create an organized plan and plan for the future
• balance personal needs and caregiving
• address financial concerns
• meet the physical and mental health needs of the caregiver
• understand essential tasks such as giving medications, personal care (bathing and grooming), using medical equipment, and patient transfer techniques

Caregivers also receive a copy of COA’s Caregiver Training Manual. The manual includes topics and links to additional resources ranging from nutrition and homemaking to medications and personal care.

Research has shown that caregivers are more likely to experience symptoms of depression and anxiety (American Journal of Public Health). COA’s caregiver consultants are registered nurses who provide caregivers with much needed emotional support. They offer caregivers an understanding ear and provide an outlet for venting frustrations, fears and other feelings.

An award-winning service of Council on Aging
Council on Aging’s Caregiver Education and Support Program received the 2006 Aging Innovations and Achievement Award from the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging. The award recognizes creativity, innovation, and good management practices that can serve as models for the aging network.

How to get help:
Contact Council on Aging’s Caregiver Education and Support program at:
• (513) 721-1025
• www.help4seniors.org

Clavilia’s husband, Forrest, has Alzheimer’s. She is his caregiver.

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