



Finding Your Voice: Self Advocacy in Medical Settings

Caregivers often ignore their own needs when taking on the responsibility of caring for another. Being a Caregiver can result in a Caregiver's health being compromised. Caregivers not only need to be able to advocate appropriately for their loved one who is ill, but also to recognize and advocate for their own needs and medical concerns.

Identify Self-Neglect

- How has your Caregiving role contributed to you not caring for yourself?
- What feelings or needs have you put on the back burner?
- What health care needs have you neglected? Have you gone without sleep, exercise or healthy eating habits? Are you taking medications or vitamins as prescribed and attending medical visits?
- What have been the negative consequences of neglecting yourself?

Beliefs that Contribute to Neglecting Self-Care

- What beliefs are you aware of that contribute to not focusing on caring for yourself? Have you ever thought any of these statements?
 - “It is selfish.”
 - “I’m not used to focusing on myself. I don’t know how.”
 - “It is hard to ask for my needs to be met.”
 - “I don’t deserve it.”
 - “I am the only one that can be responsible for other’s needs.”

Focus on Self-Care

- What feelings, needs, or health concerns have you been neglecting that you wish to focus on?

Self-Advocacy with Medical Providers - Advocate for what you need!

- Speak openly about your discomfort. Talk about your emotional and physical concerns
- Plan ahead. Before your appointment write down your concerns, stresses, and symptoms. List some examples.
- Speak assertively, politely, respectfully and keep your cool. If you become distressed, take a deep breath. Be persistent and ask clarifying information.



Identify your team of providers (Names and Telephone Numbers)

Primary Care

Specialty Care Physicians

Nurse or Nurse Practitioner

PACT Social Worker

Psychiatrist

Therapist (Psychologist, Social Worker)

Caregiver Support Coordinator

Case Manager

Patient Advocate

Pharmacy

Identify Your Supports (Names and Telephone Numbers)

Family

Friends

Neighbors

Community Agencies

Church Community or Spiritual Leaders

Caregiver Support Line 1-855-260-3274

Please contact your local Caregiver Support Coordinator or the Caregiver Support Line if you wish to explore this information further.