

Circle Of Life: Cancer Education and Wellness

for American Indian and Alaska Native Communities

Appendix E: Coping Checklist for Caregivers and Bereaved

Caring for someone who is sick or dying involves taking on new responsibilities, and can be exhausting. Added to the stress and worry about the person who is ill and all the changes that happen, it can quickly lead to burnout.

So take a moment to look at the statements below, which describe some healthy situations and ways of coping. They'll give you an idea of how well you are holding up. They may offer some thoughts about where you need to make a few changes to care for yourself. The more of these strategies you can use, the better. **If you don't already use all of these ideas, look at ways you can start adding them that appeal to you. They can help you expand your coping skills.**

1. I have a supportive family around me.
2. I pursue a hobby or project for work, church, or my community, etc.
3. I take part in a social or activity group more than once a month.
4. I am within 10 pounds of my ideal body weight for my height and bone structure.
5. I use relaxation methods such as meditation, yoga, or progressive muscle relaxation at least five times a week.
6. During an average week I exercise for at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity.
7. I eat a well-balanced, wholesome meal two or three times during an average day. A balanced meal is low in fat and high in vegetables, fruits, and whole-grain foods.
8. I do something enjoyable just for me at least once during an average week.
9. I have a place where I can go to relax or be by myself.
10. I set priorities and manage my time every day (such as deciding what tasks are most important, how much I can and can't do, and by getting help when needed).

Although it can be hard to find the time to do all these things, they can help a lot in keeping some balance in your life during this very stressful time. If your schedule is too crowded, see who you can find to ask for help. If there is no one to

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help you, talk to your loved one's cancer care team to find out what resources may be available in your area.

Some coping methods aren't as healthy, though. If you use any of these four strategies to help you get by, you may find that over the long term they actually make you less able to deal with important issues in your life. They can also make you less healthy and lead to serious problems. If you need help quitting tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs, talk with your health care provider.

I smoke cigarettes or use tobacco several times a week.

At least once or twice during an average week I use medicines, alcohol, or other substances to help me sleep.

At least once or twice during an average week I use alcohol, medicines, or other substances to reduce anxiety or help me calm down.

I bring work home at least once or twice during an average week.