

Who Cares for the Caregiver?

Learning to Take Care of Yourself While Caring for Others

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NOTICE TO THE READER

Though the guidelines contained in this text are based on consultations with health care professionals, they should not be considered absolute recommendations. The instructor and readers should follow local, state and federal guidelines concerning occupational safety guidelines. These guidelines change and it is the reader's responsibility to be aware of these changes and of the policies and procedures of her or his health care facility/agency.

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Health care providers, including nursing assistants and home health aides, tend to have nurturing personalities. Often, these are people who derive great satisfaction from helping others. While this desire to help others is a wonderful quality, it can be a problem when the concern for others' needs overshadows one's own needs. The purpose of this in-service program is to help health care providers learn to take care of themselves as effectively as they take care of others. We use the term caregiver in this in-service to refer to anyone who takes care of others—whether a family member or a paid health care worker.

The lesson plan is organized by learning objectives. Each objective is followed by several learning activities. Along with the lesson plan, we provide teaching tools, including transparency masters, handouts, and assessments. These teaching tools are referenced in the lesson plan. You may choose to use none or all of these tools in your presentation.

The learning objectives of this in-service can be separated into four categories:

- Identifying our stressors and learning to handle them (Objectives 3–5)
 - Learning to set limits in all areas of our lives (Objectives 6–8)
 - Practicing simple stress management techniques (Objectives 9–11)
- Understanding ourselves (Objectives 1–2)

Depending on your group and the amount of time you have with them, you may want to present only a portion of this program. Though the program includes many tools to use in your presentation, the majority of the learning objectives are accomplished through discussion. You may be able to get your points across with mostly open-ended questions or you may need to guide your group quite a bit. If participants are reluctant to answer from their personal experiences, it may be helpful to use yourself as an example. For instance, say “I have a hard time leaving work on time if someone approaches me with a problem. Does anyone else have a problem knowing when to say no?” Often discussion questions are suggested in the lesson plan. These appear in *italic type*.

Happy Teaching!

Who Cares for the Caregiver?

Learning Objectives

At the end of this presentation, the participant will be able to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Describe the nurturing personality by listing two of its strengths and two of its weaknesses.
2. Identify three personal changes that constitute taking better care of the caregiver.
3. Identify five on-the-job stressors.
4. Describe techniques to manage stressful client/resident situations.
5. List three strategies for improving communication.
6. Define what it means to set limits.
7. Identify ways to set limits at home and at work.
8. Describe how responsibility and blame impact how we set limits.
9. List two times to take a break and two ways to take one.
10. Demonstrate how to use “self talk” to cope with stress.
11. Demonstrate the “body scan” and one other relaxation exercise.

Introduction & Self-Care ✓-Up

Estimated Time:

15 minutes

Tools:

Handout Intro-1 Pre-Test: Self Care ✓-Up
Transparency Intro-1 Caring for the Caregiver
Handout Intro-2 Note-taking Worksheet
Handout Intro-3 Key Terms

**Distribute the
Pre-Test:
Self-Care ✓-Up**

Allow participants to complete. When they have finished, ask participants if the ✓-Up revealed anything about themselves that they would like to work on. If they are reluctant to speak up, try asking the following questions:

How many of you devote more time and energy to other people's needs than to your own?

How many of you have trouble saying no?

How many of you have more stress in your life than you can or want to handle?

Explain that this in-service presentation is designed to help health care providers take care of themselves as effectively as they take care of others. "Caregiver" in this in-service means anyone who takes care of someone, including the nursing assistant, home health aide, or other health care provider.

**Display
Transparency Intro-1
Caring for the
Caregiver**

Review the topics.

**Distribute
Handout Intro-2
Note-taking
Worksheet**

Tell participants to take notes during the lecture and discussion.

**Distribute
Handout Intro-3
Key Terms**

Participants can use these as a preview or a review of the terms used in the in-service.