



August 2022: Helping Aging Parents



“To care for those that once cared for us is one of the highest of honors.” – Tia Walker

Welcome to the **August 2022 edition of TotalWellbeing**, your guide to the **8 dimensions of wellbeing**. This month we take a look at tips and support around caregiver issues and taking care of aging parents.

Whether we plan for it or not, taking care of our parents as they get older is a role that many of us find ourselves filling. Doctor’s appointments, housing, nursing care, financial planning, and more are tasks that many caregivers must fulfill but may not have the prior experience or skills to do so effectively. This can be a major source of stress and we encourage anyone in a caregiver role to take time to find support, like MINES EAP resources, to help them along the way. Use the tips below to get started!

Please remember that your EAP is here for you if you need to address caregiver issues, healthy aging, as well as get financial and legal instruction around caregiver topics. You have access to free and confidential counseling, legal and financial tools and coaching, trainings, unlimited work/life referrals to help find eldercare resources, and more. Plus, an online resource library full of proactive self-help tools! Visit [PersonalAdvantage](#) for helpful articles, personal and professional development tools, and more!

To your total wellbeing,

The MINES Team

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7 Ways Caregivers Can Reduce Their Financial Stress

As your parents age, they often require more help from family. Whether they can live on their own with occasional support or they need to move into your home full-time, they often increasingly rely on others to provide assistance with bathing, dressing, transportation, and food preparation. In addition, they may need help taking care of legal and financial matters such as making medical decisions and handling bills and budgets. Your new role as a caregiver can cause considerable stress and the feeling of being overwhelmed.

Fortunately, there are workplace and community resources available to help reduce the financial and emotional stress of caregiving.

1. **Utilize MINES' Employee Assistance Program (EAP) financial counseling benefits for free help.** Your EAP can provide you with the help of a financial counselor to assist with issues that accompany caregiving. A financial coach can help you to manage caregiving costs and to navigate eligible benefits and programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, pensions, and federal and local resources. Financial coaching can also provide personalized education regarding long-term care insurance, assisted living options, retirement account distributions, reverse mortgages, annuities, and gifting options.
2. **Consider the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).** Eligible employees are entitled to twelve workweeks of leave in a 12-month period to care for the employee's parent who has a serious health condition. If you are eligible to take intermittent FMLA, you can use leave time to take your parent to medical appointments and to provide other care.
3. **Simplify finances as much as possible.** Organize their finances in a way that you can provide assistance as they become less able to manage their money. If they have pension income or retirement plan distributions, switch those incoming payments from checks to direct deposits if possible. This will ensure your parents' money will make it into their accounts. If they are beginning to pay bills late, you might consider setting up online bill pay so that payments will be made on time each month.
4. **Have the important conversations early.** Discuss your parents' wishes on matters such as a Do Not Resuscitate Order, power of attorney, healthcare proxy, living will, HIPAA authorization, end-of-life wishes, aging in place, covering funeral and other final expenses, estate concerns, nursing home considerations, etc.

Finances often play an important part in these decisions and a financial counselor from MINES can help facilitate these discussions.

5. **Be vigilant about elder fraud.** The elderly are a favorite target for scammers. Keep an eye on your parents' accounts and be aware of phishing emails requesting financial account numbers, scam telephone calls, and texts involving Medicaid, reverse mortgages, sweepstakes, lotteries, and even fake checks. If your parent has been a victim of fraud, file a police report or report it to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC).
6. **Borrow rather than buy.** Before you buy mobility equipment such as a shower chair, walker, wheelchair, or even a wheelchair ramp, check for a service in your area that collects and loans mobility equipment to those in need.
7. **Contact local resources.** Knowing that your parent gets a hot meal delivered can provide peace of mind for you. For delivered meals at reduced prices, contact your local Meals on Wheels. Also consider delegating some of your caregiving responsibilities by budgeting for local resources that provide elderly companions and certified nursing assistants (CNAs), and even centers that offer adult day care.

As a caregiver, it is vital that you take care of yourself and use all available resources to help reduce your stress.

Michelle Vullo, is an Accredited Financial Counselor with Enrich Finances. She provides free financial counseling sessions for employees eligible for MINES and Associates' EAP services. Call MINES at (800) 873-7138 or visit [online](#) and request sessions with Michelle at Enrich.

Remember, if you or a household member need help around caregiver concerns and healthy aging, your employee assistance program is here for you. Resources include free and confidential counseling, wellness coaching, work/life referrals, and more. **If you need additional information or to access services, please call MINES and Associates at 1-800-873-7138 today.** Also, [PersonalAdvantage](#) has a ton of great resources and FREE [webinars](#).

Effectively Caring for Aging Parents

As more Americans live longer, millions of middle-aged adults find themselves caring for their aging parents. It's not an easy task, especially for those with children still living at home.

"Caregiving can be so overwhelming, it's almost impossible," says Donna Cohen, Ph.D., a professor in the department of aging and mental health at the Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute at the University of South Florida. "But it can be done if you develop specific skills and tailor them according to your parents' needs and your family's circumstances."

The following is a framework designed to help you provide care more effectively.

- **Don't Parent Your Parents** - As your parents age and become frail or ill, resist the urge to regard them as children. Instead, think of caregiving as a family business and yourself as an executive with problems to solve.
- **Kinds of Care** - The kind of care your parents need depends on their level of dependence. This is something you can determine in conjunction with your parents and their health care provider: Do they need to be in a nursing facility? An assisted living arrangement? Can they continue to live on their own, but with some outside help?
- **Don't Do It Alone** - Because every family is different, there's no one right way of caring for aging parents. "But there are wrong ways, and the worst one is to do it alone," Dr. Cohen says. The demands of caregiving can become so immense that they can affect your health, leading to illness and depression.
- **Stay Optimistic** - Unlike caring for children, caring for aging parents, particularly ill ones, involves the reality that their deaths are approaching.

Read the full article [here](#).

If you or a member of your household needs assistance or guidance on any of these wellbeing topics, please call MINES & Associates, your EAP, today for free, confidential, 24/7 assistance at 800.873.7138.

To access past issues of *TotalWellbeing* please visit our [newsletters page](#). This newsletter is aimed at providing helpful information about various aspects of your wellbeing and then connecting it all back to important and relevant parts of everyday life. If you have any thoughts, questions, or content you would like to see covered here please get in contact with us. You can email us directly by clicking [here](#).

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