



Our Mission Statement

The mission of the OEDA Area Agency on Aging is to provide services that make it possible for older persons to remain in their home, maintaining their way of life with independence and dignity as long as possible.

Established under the Older Americans Act, the Family Caregiver Support program provides a system of support services to help informal caregivers of older adults and grandparents raising grandchildren.

Caregivers who do not have access to a support system often experience burnout, which leads to increased stress and stress related problems. The TLC caregiver program helps to address these and other Caregiver challenges.

The OEDA does not discriminate in its programs or activities on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, age, ancestry, national origin, religion or disability.



Caregiver News

Senior Respite Vacations

If you speak with any caregiver you will quickly learn how hard it can be to care for a senior loved one full time. Whether you're caring for a spirited 90-year-old parent or a spouse with Alzheimer's disease, the role is consistently difficult. According to the Center for Disease Control, caregivers often pay a high toll for their labor of love:

- 35% of caregivers have difficulty finding time for themselves
- 29% experience emotional and physical stress from their role
- 54% said their health has gotten worse due to caregiving, and has affected their ability to give care
- 29% have difficulty balancing work and family responsibilities

Is it any wonder that sometimes caregivers just need a break?

Many caregivers aren't aware that OEDA offers Respite Vouchers. This program, called OEDA TLC, allows family caregivers to hire a replacement caregiver in order for them to travel, run errands or just have some much needed alone-time without worrying about their older loved ones' well-being.

Caregivers often use the time that respite care gives them to take a "caregiver vacation" that helps them avoid becoming burned out. Whether it's a resort getaway or a "stay-cation," these breaks can be immensely refreshing. The National Respite Network recommends that caregivers consider respite before they become overly stressed or tired:

"To be most effective, you should use respite services much earlier than you think you will need them. Respite will be most helpful if you

use it before you become exhausted, isolated or overwhelmed by your responsibilities."

According to a study by the National Alliance of Caregiving and AARP, only 12% of family caregivers ever take advantage of respite care services. This is an unfortunate statistic considering the strain of caregiving.

One factor may be that some family caregivers are reluctant to admit that they could use a break. Consider helping family caregivers assess their needs for respite care.

Arranging respite care for a loved one does takes some preparation, but when you find yourself ready to ask for help OEDA may be able to help with your respite needs. Contact Kelsey Short, OEDA AAA Caregiver Specialist, at 580-625-4531.

Respite Available for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Most grandparents raising grandchildren are between 55 and 64. Almost 25 percent are over 65. Also, a growing number are far more likely to be persons of color who are living in poverty. For these and other reasons, parenting a second time can be even harder.

Many caregivers may have health needs of their own prior to taking the responsibility of caring for their grandchildren and thus caring for a grandchild who may have health problems, developmental challenges, or an increased need for care creates more stress for these grandparents.

The age of the grandchildren can be a factor, too. Younger children are more physically demanding, but older children are

often more emotionally and mentally demanding.

You may be willing, and even eager, to raise your grandchildren. But no matter how much you love them, your life will change. Keep these ideas in mind:

- Always put your physical and emotional health first. Keeping physically active, relaxing, eating healthy, well-balanced meals, limiting alcohol, making time for fun, and humor are all important.
- Don't be embarrassed to ask for help. If you need support, find a local support group, religious community, or good friends who understand.
- Find out what services are available for you and your

grandchild in your community, including financial, legal, educational, and free or low-cost counseling.

OEDA has a Respite Care Program that serves individuals 55 years of age or older who care for grandchildren, step-grandchildren, or children related by blood or marriage and who live with the child, serve as primary caregiver, and have a legal relationship with the child (custody, guardianship, or raising child informally). The child must be no older than eighteen years.

If you or someone you know would benefit from this program please contact Kelsey Short at the OEDA office by phone 580-625-4531 or by e-mail kshort@oeda.org.

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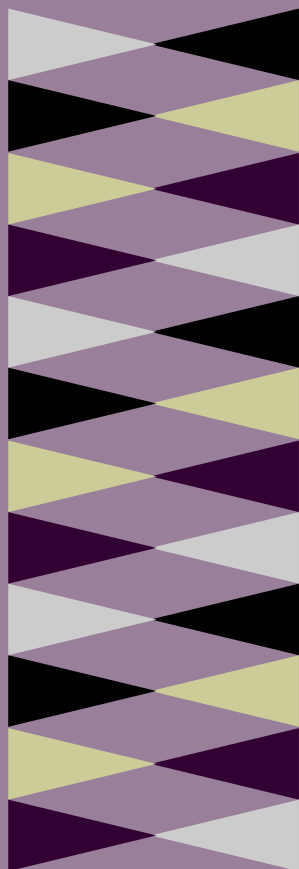
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Energy Boosters for Sleepy Caregivers

Make it through the day — and keep doing all you do — with these helpful strategies

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If you're a caregiver experiencing sleepless nights, then you know that "no sleep" means you may feel physically and mentally drained in the morning. As a result, it can be challenging to face and deal with your loved one's needs, not to mention your own. Your first thought may be to get a quick energy boost with a cup of coffee, tea or another caffeinated beverage — but the caffeine won't keep you going all day.

Here are some healthy ways to help you get through your sleep-deprived day and still feel good as you care for your loved one.

1. Avoid quick-fix snacks

When your body is sleep-deprived, it craves carbohydrates and foods high in glucose or sodium. Steer clear of snack foods like cookies, doughnuts, candies, crackers and chips. These foods are just a quick, short-term energy fix. Instead, eat an apple, orange, banana or a handful of nuts to satisfy your hunger and provide energy in a healthy way.

2. Eat small, healthy meals

Try eating several smaller meals throughout the day. Consider enjoying one of these smaller, lighter meals:

- Low-fat peanut butter spread on celery and apples
- Scrambled egg whites served with a side dish of fresh fruit and whole-wheat toast
- Tuna salad topped with lettuce and tomato on whole-wheat bread or pita
- A cup or smoothie of low-fat yogurt mixed with blueberries or strawberries

3. Don't overdo caffeine

When you're tired and know you have many daily chores to do for your loved one, it may be tempting to double or triple your daily amount of caffeine. Unfortunately, it's likely this increase will keep you awake when it's time to

go to sleep. Instead of upping your caffeine quotient, stick with the amount of caffeine you normally drink during the day, followed by a good night's rest.

4. Grab a nap

Napping is healthy. Studies show that an occasional short snooze may decrease a person's risk of coronary heart disease. If you can, make time for a nap. But be sure another person is present in your home to care for your loved one, particularly if he or she has special needs that require constant attention.

5. Refresh with a cold shower

While a soothing, hot shower may sound good, it can leave you sleepy. Instead, take a quick, cold shower or wash your face with cool water. This refreshing and revitalizing break can make you feel better all over and ready to take on your next caregiving task.

6. Walk for 30 minutes

A brisk walk can physically and mentally recharge you. It brings fresh, oxygenated blood to your muscles and organs, boosts your metabolism and lifts your spirits. This added energy can help sustain you throughout the day.

7. Drink water

Drinking water throughout the day protects you from dehydration. Mild dehydration (as little as a 1 to 2 percent loss of body water) can reduce your energy and cause weariness, making caregiving

responsibilities even more challenging.

8. Stay safe

After a sleepless night, you should also recognize that you may have some limitations. Avoid activities that could compromise your safety and that of your loved one.

- Driving — especially for long distances. Driving is dangerous when you're tired. So if you need to take your loved one to a doctor's appointment or pick up a prescription at the pharmacy, you may want to reschedule or ask a friend for a ride.
- Drinking alcohol — it can make you even sleepier and compromise your caregiving duties.
- Smoking — many household fires are caused when someone falls asleep while smoking.

9. Plan ahead

Keep these survival tips in mind when you know you'll have to pull an all-nighter.

- If you work outside the home, ask your boss if you can come in late the next day.
- If you have children, ask if a neighbor can watch them. This can give you a few hours of relief before you have to stay up all night.
- Arrange for another person to provide caregiving services to your loved one the next morning.
- Try to get a good night's rest the night before.

