



# What about Caregivers?

A JOURNEY OF HOPE AND DISCOVERY – JUNE 2008

## CAREGIVER TIPS:

- 1. Take Care of Yourself** - Being a caregiver can be overwhelming. You can not help your loved one if you are not physically and mentally healthy
  - Ask for and accept help – family and friends
  - If it gets to be “too much” - talk to your doctor, other healthcare professional, or clergy
  - Eat smart and exercise
  - Get plenty of rest
  - Set realistic goals and expectations - set limits and let everyone know what they are
  - Join a caregiver support group or talk with other caregivers at PH support group meetings
- 2. Reduce Stress** - Learn what helps you relieve stress – keep a list and use it
  - Schedule time for yourself
  - Try walking, reading, listening to music, or a new hobby
  - Share your feelings
  - Nobody’s perfect – cut yourself some slack
  - Take a “mental” vacation
  - Remember your spiritual health
  - Be kind to yourself – give yourself credit for what you do well
- 3. Support, Don’t Hover**
  - Respect the patient’s right to make decisions about their own life (adult patients)
  - Give the patient choices – let them express themselves in what they wear, eat, etc.
- 4. Improve Efficiency and Effectiveness**
  - Encourage your loved one to do the things they can do, and do not do (for them) the things they can do for themselves – this fosters a feeling of independence and preserves dignity
  - Keep a caregiver’s log, journal, or diary – refer back to see what works well and what does not
  - Anticipate future needs – financially and logistically
  - Make sure important paperwork is in order
  - Update medications regularly
  - Re-evaluate your lifestyle
- 5. Take Advantage of Available Caregiver Resources**
  - Review the section of the PHA Patients Survival Guide called Caring For the Caregiver - It's in chapter 11, pages 200-202 in the third edition, revised in September 2007
  - National Family Caregivers Assn. – a charitable group dedicated to making life better for caregivers – <http://www.thefamilycaregiver.org>
  - Well Spouse Foundation – <http://www.wellspouse.org>
  - Half the Planet – a disability resource network – <http://www.halftheplanet.com>
  - National Caregivers Library – <http://www.caregiverslibrary.org>
  - Caregiver Support Services – <http://caregiversupportservices.org>