

Revised 9/19/2006

Questions & Sample Answers

ECHO-TV Show #24 “Helping Families Care For Older Adults”

(Taping Date: Tuesday, September 26th, 2006 / 3:00-8:00 pm at TPT - TV)

Educational Objective: To inform people about the important work and positive contributions of care-giving and to provide recommendations for care-givers so they have support and resources to care for themselves and individuals dependent on them (family, friends, etc.) for daily health care and household activities.

NOTE: *These are suggested (not required) answers for ECHO-TV hosts and guests to consider as a resource guide to compliment interview discussions.*

1. Why is it important to talk about family care-giving?

Answer:

- More people are becoming care-givers for relatives or friends who can't take care of themselves. This is rewarding work but it can be challenging to handle without help.
- For some cultures there is an expectation that certain family members will provide care-giving. This can be challenging for individuals already trying to establish himself or herself in a new culture or community.
- Some immigrants and refugees may be afraid or ashamed to ask for help because they are “afraid of the system” or simply don't know what kinds of services (like interpreters) are available to them.

2. Who are family care-givers and for whom do they provide care?

Answer:

- Family care-givers could be a family member, a friend, or a neighbor who takes care of someone who is too old or too sick to take care of their own needs.
- Family care-givers often provide care at no cost and may live with the person being cared for or live separately.
- When someone is sick with a serious illness, doctors might suggest that relatives provide or find health care for that sick person.
- Care-givers might also be working a job in addition to taking care of someone who is elderly, disabled, mentally ill or very sick.

3. What types of care do care-givers provide and why is it important work?

Answer:

- Being a care-giver in your family is an opportunity to give love and care back to your parents or others who took care of you as a child.
- There is a sense of pride in teaching the next generation how to care for the family and experience rewarding work by volunteering your care and time to others who need help in your community.
- Care-givers may provide help with shopping, cooking, cleaning or drive patients to see the doctor and pick up prescriptions (medication).
- As older adults become weak, care-givers may help with bathing and getting dressed.
- Sometimes female care-givers help women, and male care-givers help men if needed.

4. What are some of the challenges of care-giving and why is it important for care-givers to seek help if they need it?

Answer:

- It is important that care-givers take care of themselves so they can help the people depending on care-givers.
- It can be challenging providing care for someone who might have a disease that may affect how he or she reacts to care-givers [Ex. Alzheimer's].
- It can be challenging to care for parents or in-laws who aren't used to being care for by relatives, friends or volunteers.
- There are agencies and organizations that can help you address your needs as care-giver, and the needs of the person you care for. Examples include the local Alzheimer's Association or local human service agencies.

5. What can care-givers do if they experience physical or emotional symptoms and need to take care of their own needs?

Answer:

- Over time the physical, mental and emotional demands of caregiving can be stressful causing physical symptoms such as headaches, muscle aches, sleeping and eating problems.
- Care-givers might also be experiencing feelings of guilt, anger, loneliness, depression and anxiety. You are not alone in feeling this way.
- If care-givers are feeling sick, they should see a doctor.
- By talking about feelings of sadness or guilt can help care-givers handle stress. Consider talking with someone you trust such as a spiritual leader, counselor or health care provider.

6. What specific things can family care-givers do to take care of themselves?

ECHO #24 (Helping Families Care For Older Adults)

Q & A: September 2006 by ECHO Minnesota (Emergency and Community Health Outreach as (finalized by sponsors)

Page 3 of 5

Answer:

- Ask for help---it's OK. And, accept help from others when they offer and suggest specific things they can do.
- Eat nutritious foods like fruits and vegetables because they have vitamins, minerals, and fiber needed for a healthy diet.
- It's also important to exercise. A 30-minute walk or bike ride every day helps keep your body in shape.
- Take time for yourself. You can do your best when you feel your best.
- Talk to the doctor of the person for whom you are providing care. Learning about the illness of individuals can help care-givers understand how to help themselves and the person for whom they are giving care.
- Look for positive experiences in caregiving. Take pride in the valuable efforts you make for the person you are helping.
- Talk to other care-givers or support groups that can understand exactly how you feel and provide resources to help.

7. Where can we learn more about help that is available for care-givers?

Answer:

- The Senior LinkAge Line is a free confidential phone service that connects care-givers and the people they care for to help. [Senior Linkage Line # 1-800-333-2433]
- You can also call your local or state human services agency.
- If you do not speak English, there are interpreters available. When you call, say "interpreter [language]" [Hmong interpreter, Spanish interpreter, Somali interpreter, etc.]

8. (Optional if Time Permits):

What kinds of support services can the Senior Linkage Line provide for care-givers and their families?

ECHO #24 (Helping Families Care For Older Adults)

Q & A: September 2006 by ECHO Minnesota (Emergency and Community Health Outreach as (finalized by sponsors)

Page 4 of 5

- Services to help care-givers include respite services, care-giver education and training, support groups, care-giver counseling and coach services.
- Services to help elders include health insurance counseling, personal care, meals, chores, home modifications and adult day services.