

A Caregiver's Bill of Rights

I have the right:

- To take care of myself. This is not an act of selfishness. It will give me the capacity of taking better care of my family, friends or neighbors.
- To seek help from others even though my care recipient (family member) may object. I recognize the limits of my own endurance and strength.
- To maintain areas of my own life that does not include the person I care for, just as I would if he or she were healthy. I know that I do everything that I reasonably can do for this person, and I have the right to do some things for myself.
- To get angry, be depressed, and express other difficult feelings occasionally.
- To reject any attempt by my care recipient (either conscious or unconscious) to manipulate me through guilt, anger or depression.
- To receive consideration, affection, forgiveness, and acceptance for what I do from my loved one for as long as I offer these qualities in return.
- To take pride in what I am accomplishing and to applaud the courage it has sometimes taken me to meet the needs of my care recipient.
- To protect my individuality and my right to make a life for myself that will sustain me in the time when my care recipient no longer needs my full time help.
- To expect and demand that as new strides are made in finding resources to aid physically and mentally impaired older persons in our country, similar strides will be made toward aiding and supporting unpaid family caregivers.

Read the list to yourself everyday.