

# CARING FOR YOURSELF

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# SENIOR SAFETY & WELL-BEING CHECKLIST

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## *Visiting Older Loved Ones Who Live Alone*

If you're visiting an older adult who lives alone, you can use this checklist to evaluate their level of home safety and gauge their general well-being.

### *Food, Nutrition & Kitchen Safety*

- YES**  **NO** Does she keep a well-stocked pantry and a variety of fresh fruit and vegetables on hand?
- YES**  **NO** Is he aware of foods that may interact adversely with his medications?
- YES**  **NO** Is she able to buy groceries independently, or, if not, is she using a grocery delivery or a meal delivery service?
- YES**  **NO** Is there expired or rotten food in the refrigerator?
- YES**  **NO** Can he prepare a meal without assistance?
- YES**  **NO** Can she easily operate a microwave?
- YES**  **NO** Does he have a healthy appetite?

### *Notes*

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## Communication & Cognitive Function

- YES  NO Does she recognize family and friends?
- YES  NO Can he hold a coherent conversation?
- YES  NO Does she show any atypical signs of memory loss?
- YES  NO Has he ever gotten lost in the community or experienced an episode of confusion?
- YES  NO Can she clearly communicate needs?

## Medications & Health Status

- YES  NO Has he visited a dentist, optometrist or physician in the past year?
- YES  NO If she wears glasses, are the glasses in good shape?
- YES  NO Does he show any signs of poor vision, such as squinting or sitting too close to the TV?
- YES  NO Is she maintaining a healthy, consistent weight? Have you noticed any weight loss?
- YES  NO Are you aware of what medications and supplements he is taking?
- YES  NO Is she taking medications as directed?
- YES  NO If he is self-administering medical treatment such as oxygen, injections or wound-care, is it being monitored and managed effectively?

## Notes

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### Mobility & Functioning

- YES  NO Is she able to walk independently indoors and outdoors? Does she have a steady gait and appear stable when walking?
- YES  NO Are any canes, walkers, scooters or other aids in good shape and being used effectively?
- YES  NO Is he free of signs that may indicate a recent fall such as bruising or scratches?
- YES  NO If she is still driving, does she have a current driver’s license? Is she driving safely?
- YES  NO If she is not driving, is she able easily arrange for transportation as needed?
- YES  NO If there are stairs in the home, is he able to walk up and down safely?
- YES  NO Is she able to retrieve mail and newspapers safely?
- YES  NO Is he able to get in and out of bed safely?

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## House & Home Safety

- YES**  **NO** Is the home well-lit, easy to navigate and free of fall risks, such as open extension cords and loose rugs?
- YES**  **NO** Are working night lights placed appropriately throughout the house?
- YES**  **NO** Are the electrical systems -- fans, space heaters and central heating and cooling -- functioning properly and safely?
- YES**  **NO** Is the house reasonably clean and tidy? Is the house stocked with dish soap, laundry soap and other cleaning supplies?
- YES**  **NO** Are the fire extinguishers, carbon monoxide detectors and smoke detectors functioning?
- YES**  **NO** Is there a phone or emergency call system easily accessible in all rooms?
- YES**  **NO** Are his pets being cared for adequately?
- YES**  **NO** Do interior stairs have railings on both sides?
- YES**  **NO** Are the trash bins picked up and managed properly?

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## Bathroom Safety

- YES  NO Is she able to use the toilet independently and safely?
- YES  NO Are incontinence supplies being disposed of properly?
- YES  NO Is he able to transfer into the bath or shower safely?
- YES  NO Does the bathroom have stable and secure grab bars?
- YES  NO Does the bath or shower have a no-skid mat or strips?
- YES  NO Is the bathroom clean?

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## CAREGIVER WELL-BEING CHART



Caregivers spend most of their time giving to others and usually put themselves at the bottom of their “to-do” list. Many caregivers are so in tune with the emotions of those they are caring for that they forget to notice their own. Journaling is a great way to sort out your feelings, track trends and develop ideas for coping with stress.

This Well-being Chart guides you through getting those thoughts down in writing. It is designed to be flexible, so do not feel like you have to make an entry every day! The chart is divided into 5 sections:

- *Date – Dating your journal entry helps you to be able to track changes over time*
- *Today I feel – How would you describe your feelings or mood right now?*
- *What happened today – Is there a single event that has led to what you are feeling?*
- *Peaks and pits – What was the best thing (peak) about today? What was the worst thing about today (pit)?*
- *Tomorrow I will – How can you positively deal with stressful feelings? What would make you feel better?*

We have also provided a sample chart to get you started.

# CAREGIVER WELL-BEING CHART

DATE	TODAY I FEEL...	WHAT HAPPENED TODAY...	HIGHS AND LOWS	TOMORROW I WILL...
8/18/2014	Unappreciated	Went over to Mom's and tried to help her down-size. Did not go as smoothly as I wanted.	Peak: Spending time with Mom going through old memorabilia. Pit: Mom got really impatient with me and rejected all of my help.	Rest and recharge. Spend some "me" time.
8/18/2014	Scared	Mom ended up in the ER last night.	Peak: Mom will be OK, it's just a UTI. Pit: I couldn't get anyone to tell me what was going on when I arrived at the ER.	Take mom home. Relax and enjoy her company.
8/23/2014	Overwhelmed	Mom had two different doctor appointments today, daughter has a school project due tomorrow that she wants help with.	Peak: None. Pit: Daughter yelling that I loved Mom more than her which lead to a big arguement.	Not let a teenagers moodiness throw off my whole day. Get up early and go for a walk.
8/30/2014	Impatient	Mom keeps telling me the same story over and over while I am trying to finish a report for work.	Peak: I was chosend to work on this special assignment for work. Pit: I don't have enough alone time to organize the project.	Ask my sister to take mom out for lunch and shopping so that I can put the final touches on the report I'm writing.
9/1/2014	Content	The wholw family went on a picnic and the kids paid attention to an enjoyed listening to Mom telling about her childhood.	Peak: Noticing how much alike my daughter and her grandmother are, hearing the kids laugh at Mom's stories.	Ask Mom to help me out the pictures from today into albums so that she can have one and the kids can each have one.





## CAREGIVER BILL OF RIGHTS

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*I have the right...* to take care of myself. This is not an act of selfishness. Meeting my own needs will help me take better care of others.

*I have the right...* to seek help from others. Even though my relatives may object, I recognize the limits of my own endurance and strength.

*I have the right...* to maintain my own interests. I deserve to nurture the facets of my own life that do 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 for this person, and it's okay to do some things just for myself.

*I have the right...* to have negative feelings. I'm human, and it's okay for me to occasionally express frustration, exhaustion, depression and other difficult feelings.

*I have the right...* to not be manipulated. I will reject any attempts by my relative (either conscious or unconscious) to guilt or shame me into doing things.

*I have the right...* to compassion from others. I deserve to receive consideration, affection, forgiveness and acceptance from my loved one for as long as I offer these qualities in return.

*I have the right...* to be proud of my work. I can take pride in what I am accomplishing and applaud the courage it sometimes takes to meet the needs of my relative.

*I have the right...* to protect my individuality. I need to make a life for myself that will sustain me in the time when my relative no longer needs my full-time help.

*I have the right...* to demand societal progress. I expect that new strides to be made in finding resources to aid physically and mentally impaired persons in our country, and that similar strides will be made towards aiding and supporting caregivers.

## MY CAREGIVER COVENANT

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THE THING I STRUGGLE MOST TO ACCEPT THAT I CAN'T CONTROL IS:

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THE THINGS AS A CAREGIVER I CAN CONTROL ARE:

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I SOMETIMES AM NEGATIVE ABOUT:

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I CAN THINK ABOUT THAT MORE POSITIVELY BY:

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MY PERSONAL SERENITY PRAYER IS:

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## EMPATHY IS...

*seeing with the eyes of another,  
listening with the ears of another,  
and feeling with the heart of another.*

“  
BE KIND TO  
YOURSELF.

-WENDY M.

“  
WE DON'T  
GROW  
OLDER,  
*we grow  
riper.*

-PABLO PICASSO



*“The best classroom in  
the world is at the feet  
of an elderly person.”*

*-Andy Rooney*





**“DON'T JUDGE PEOPLE.**

*You never know what kind of battle they are fighting.”*

*-Unknown*

“

*THERE COMES A DAY*  
WHEN YOU REALIZE  
TURNING THE PAGE IS  
THE BEST FEELING IN  
THE WORLD, BECAUSE  
YOU REALIZE THERE IS  
SO MUCH MORE TO THE  
BOOK THAN THE PAGE  
YOU WERE STUCK ON.

*-TARYN MALIK*

“

AGING IS NOT  
LOST YOUTH  
*but a new stage  
of opportunity  
and strength.*

*-Betty Friedan*



*“You make a living by what you get;  
you make a life by what you give.”*

*-Winston Churchill*