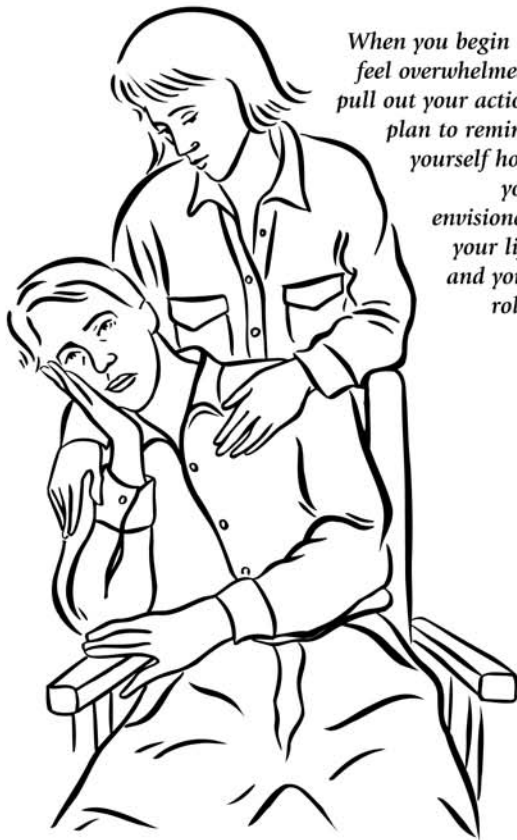


# Action Plan for Caregivers

An action plan can help you to take control of your life—making you happier with yourself and also a more effective caregiver. Everyone's action plan will be slightly different; sit down and evaluate your own needs, emotions and desires, and decide which actions you can take to alleviate some of the problems in your life.

Here are some suggestions that you might want to include in your action plan. You can choose some of these, leave out some, and add others of your own. The important thing is that you remain action-oriented and that you plan for your own health and well-being.



*When you begin to feel overwhelmed, pull out your action plan to remind yourself how you envisioned your life and your role.*

## I WILL:

- Seek help—any help that I can find
- Allow my family to help
- Involve my family in decisions
- Share the burdens of caregiving with others
- Research, investigate, and stay informed
- Be prepared for the unexpected and for the expected
- Try to understand and accept my own emotions—grief, anger, anxiety, depression, shame, guilt
- Look for others who can understand my emotions
- Join a support group
- Recognize when I am in denial
- Accept my right to be emotional
- Accept my imperfections and flaws
- Forgive myself for my slip-ups
- Stop trying to be perfect
- Take care of my physical and emotional needs
- Keep up with activities that I enjoy
- Take things one day at a time, one crisis at a time, one joyful moment at a time
- Plan for the future
- Try to communicate with my care recipient, even when communication gets difficult
- Help to find a good, caring doctor
- Set boundaries for myself and learn to say no
- Recognize when I am getting burned out, and seek help

What would you like to add to this list? \_\_\_\_\_

What specific needs do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

What circumstances would you like to see changed? \_\_\_\_\_

What kinds of plans would you like to have for the future? \_\_\_\_\_

The nice thing about having an action plan is that when you start to get overwhelmed, you can pull it out and remind yourself how you envisioned your life and your role. Above all, be kind to yourself. Being a caregiver is not an easy task, and everyone in this role is bound to make mistakes. Use your action plan as a guide to plan and make time for those things that are important to you so that you do not lose focus about your own personal and emotional needs.