



## **Finding Your Voice: Self Advocacy in Medical Settings**

Caregivers tend to put aside their own needs when caring for another. This can result in a caregiver's own health being compromised. Caregivers need to advocate not only for their loved ones, but their own needs as well.

### **Identify Self-Neglect**

- How has your caregiving role added to you not caring for yourself?
- What feelings or needs have you put on the back burner?
- What health care needs have you neglected? Have you gone without sleep, exercise or healthy eating habits? Are you taking medications as ordered by your doctor? Are you going to your medical appointments?
- What have been the negative effects of neglecting yourself?

### **Beliefs that Contribute to Neglecting Self-Care**

- What beliefs are you aware of that play a role in not focusing on caring for yourself? Have you ever thought any of these statements?
  - “It is selfish.”
  - “I’m not used to focusing on myself. I don’t know how.”
  - “It is hard to ask for my needs to be met.”
  - “I don’t deserve it.”
  - “I am the only one that can be responsible for another’s needs.”

### **Focus on Self-Care**

- What feelings, needs, or health concerns have you been neglecting that you wish to focus on?

### **Self-Advocacy with Medical Providers - Advocate for what you need!**

- Speak openly about your distress. Talk about your emotions and physical fears.
- Plan ahead. Before you go to your medical appointment, write down your fears, stresses, and symptoms. List some examples.
- Speak in an assertive, polite, respectful manner, and keep your cool. If you become distressed, take a deep breath. Be persistent and ask to clarify things.



**Identify your Team of Providers (Names and Telephone Numbers)**

Primary Care

Specialty Care Physicians

Nurse or Nurse Practitioner

PACT (Patient Aligned Care Team) Social Worker

Psychiatrist

Mental Health Therapist (Psychologist, or Social Worker)

Caregiver Support Coordinator

Case Manager

Patient Advocate

Pharmacy

**Identify Your Supports (Names and Telephone Numbers)**

Family

Friends

Neighbors

Community Agencies

Church Community or Spiritual Leaders

Caregiver Support Line 1-855-260-3274

Please contact your local Caregiver Support Coordinator or the Caregiver Support Line if you wish to explore this information further.