



TIPS FOR THE SANDWICHED GENERATION

People in the “sandwiched generation” face unique challenges. They are “sandwiched” between caring for children and for aging parents. Many of these people also work. So, this generation must find ways to cope with the stress of juggling multiple responsibilities.

CHANGING LEVELS OF INVOLVEMENT

This can entail either reducing your involvement in activities or increasing other people’s involvement to help meet family demands. At home, becoming less involved might mean cutting back on some activities, such as missing soccer games or piano recitals. But research has shown that withdrawing generally does not improve a person’s ability to manage multiple demands. It actually may make matters worse. A person’s well-being may suffer due to decreasing family activities.

On the other hand, increasing others’ involvement has been shown to help balance multiple family demands. Some examples of coping this way include enlisting the help of friends and family, hiring someone to clean the house or asking grandparents to watch the kids occasionally.

FOCUS ON EMOTIONAL HEALTH

This may involve decreasing expectations of yourself: taking one day at a time, not feeling guilty and knowing that it’s OK if you can’t do everything. You may seek emotional support from family members, friends or support groups. Using humor and maintaining a positive attitude also can help you cope. This can help improve your ability to manage multiple family demands and increase your sense of well-being.

PRIORITIZING AND PLANNING

Prioritizing short-term and long-term activities can help you deal with multiple roles. Prioritization helps you figure out not only what is really important, but also what you must take care of immediately and what you can postpone. Planning based on priorities, such as coordinating the work and school schedules and scheduling family events in advance, also can be very helpful. People who prioritize and plan have an easier time juggling family demands and feel happier.

WHAT’S THE BEST METHOD?

Remember that people in the sandwiched generation have many different ways to deal with multiple demands. The most effective ways of dealing with stress often include taking care of your emotional needs and prioritizing and planning your activities. So seek out the support that you need from family, friends or support groups. Remember that you probably can’t do everything that you’d like to. Figure out what’s most important to you and what you must do immediately. Put off things that can wait.

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