MONTANA LIFESPAN RESPITE

MAKING THE MOST OF RESPITE

You are important to your family.
Be good to yourself. Enjoy your respite time.

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR DOLLARS

Do you have limited dollars to pay for respite? Think about stretching your available dollars by taking tips from other families:

1) ***Use friends, neighbors, and family to provide care***. ***Build a "circle of support."***
   Many times these individuals are very willing to help, and are not usually doing it for the dollars. Don't forget your faith-based community or other social groups you might be part of. These groups can also be a source for additional support. Of course, having others help must be balanced with not taking advantage of their kindness.
2) ***Swap time with another family caregiver***.
   Sometimes it's possible to find another family who also is providing care to a family member. They might be willing to provide you with a break, and you in turn can provide them with a break at some other time. If you are in a support group or know another family in similar circumstances, check with them to see if they are interested in this type of arrangement.

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR RESPITE EXPERIENCE

Your time away from caregiving will not automatically be restful and relaxing. Here are some thoughts about how to make the most of the time you have.

3) ***Plan ahead***.
   Think not only of who will provide the respite care, but what you will do during the free time you have. If you don't plan, you may find yourself doing errands and other activities that are really not as refreshing as reading a book, meeting a friend, or spending time with another family member.
4) ***Try to do something you enjoy***.
   Sometimes family caregivers find themselves doing chores, or other necessary activities rather than making it a personal time for refreshment. Don't feel guilty about doing something that you like to do!!
5) ***Plan to use respite on a regular basis and with enough time so that what you do is meaningful.***
   While some caregivers use all their dollars at one time, it is often better to use them in smaller amounts – maybe every 2 weeks for 2 to 3 hours. Using respite on a regular basis helps you stay more rested and relaxed. It's like taking medicine – the doctor wants you to take it on a regular basis and in the right dosage!!
6) ***Use respite along with other services***.
   To make respite effective, you may need other services that help to support your family. These supports can include caregiver education, transportation, counseling, and direct services for the person you are caring for. Although your respite dollars cannot pay for these services, we certainly can try to help you get to agencies that can either help you find these services or provide them.

Thanks to Delaware Lifespan Respite Care Network family caregivers as well as Dale Lund,
Professor at California State U at San Bernardino for their ideas that helped create this valuable tip sheet.