

Here Comes The Sun

News for the Special Needs Community

VINCENT J. RUSSO & ASSOCIATES, P.C. Long Island's *Signature* Special Needs Law Firm



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9 Steps to Less Stressful Caregiving

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Taking care of a loved one with special needs can be exhausting and stressful. Often due to the lack of outside help, a devotion to the person needing care, or the tunnel vision that can accompany exhaustion, caretakers don't take care of themselves.

But they must. Failure to do so can lead to burnout, injury or illness. If you are the caregiver, any of these results will harm your ability to care for your loved one.

Here are some ways to take care of yourself and make sure you can take care of your loved one. The list is adapted from *New York Times* columnist Jane Brody's excellent **Nov. 17, 2008, column**, "[Caring for Family, Caring for Yourself.](#)"

1. Take a break every day
2. Take a break every week
3. Get respite
4. Get regular exercise
5. Eat well
6. Get enough sleep
7. Join a support group
8. Consult with a special needs planner
9. Lots a Helping Hands

Check out www.lotsahelpinghands.com as a resource for getting volunteer help in your community and coordinating the help your family and friends already provide.

Here are sources for finding support groups: the National Family Caregivers Association (www.nfcacares.org) and its Community Action Network (www.thefamilycaregiver.org), and the Family Caregiver Alliance and its online support group (www.caregiver.org).

For a Special Needs Planner, go to the Academy of Special Needs Planners (www.specialneedsanswers.com) and the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (www.naela.org).

In short, think of the care you are providing as a marathon, not a sprint. You need to pace yourself and conserve your energy for the long-term. Too much stress and exhaustion won't help your loved one.

For my full article on this topic, please go to our website at www.vjrussolaw.com.