

# MAPLEWOOD

*Senior Living*

## OVERCOMING GUILT AS A CAREGIVER

First and foremost, we'd like to let you know that you are not alone. Anyone who has cared for an individual at any point in their lives – from an infant to an elder suffering from dementia – realizes that it is hard work. We know that many caregivers experience guilt for a variety of reasons, including feeling overwhelmed by the responsibility or resenting siblings or spouses that don't help, etc. Whatever the reason may be, we understand and are here for you. You should know:



### IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT

It is not your fault that this happened. It is not your fault that the disease progressed. It is easy to overwhelm ourselves when caring for someone else. We start thinking – what if I would have called the doctor sooner, realized it quicker, etc. You must remind yourself that you did not cause this nor can you change it. You are doing your best and that is all you can do. Take a deep breath.

### IT IS OKAY TO FEEL...

Angry, frustrated or disappointed about this new reality. We encourage you to communicate with your friends, family or someone who has been through a similar situation. It is important to allow yourself to have an emotional reaction to what you are facing but not let those feelings consume you. Attend educational seminars or support groups that will help you to develop new strategies for coping.

### CELEBRATE LIFE AND ITS JOYS

Enjoy the little moments that make you feel alive: a smile when you play their favorite song, a warm breeze on a sunny day, savoring a delicious meal with your family, the smell of clean laundry or whatever makes you happy. Keep a gratitude journal and every night write down things that you are grateful for that have happened during the day.

### YOU CAN'T DO IT ALL

It is important to remember to establish boundaries and learn when to accept help or ask for it. We know it might not be the same for someone else to step in and help out, but if their intentions are pure, accept the help and enjoy a much deserved break. Also, there will come a time when you will need to ask for professional help and that's okay. Their needs may change beyond what we are all capable of doing on our own, so it is important to remember that this doesn't make you a failure. Envision yourself as an advocate and part of your loved one's care team.

### FIND A SUPPORT GROUP – AND JOIN IT

Support groups can help you communicate your concerns and provide much needed comfort and reassurance when you need it most. Participating in support groups often leads to gaining new perspectives and valuable resources. In addition, it offers you an opportunity to help others by sharing your own experiences. Most of all, it is a reminder that you are not alone. You may even make a new friend in the process.

If you would like more information, please contact a **Maplewood Senior Living** community. Our knowledgeable staff of professionals understands and is here for you and your loved ones throughout the journey.

203.557.4777 | [MaplewoodSeniorLiving.com](http://MaplewoodSeniorLiving.com)

**Connecticut:** Bethel, Danbury, Darien, East Norwalk, Newtown, Orange, Southport

**Massachusetts:** Brewster, Weston, West Yarmouth

**New Jersey:** Plainsboro | **Ohio:** Chardon, Cuyahoga Falls, Twinsburg

