



Tips for Sandwich Generation Caregivers In the Era of COVID-19

COVID-19 is a wakeup call to better prepare for an aging population, and for the kinds of solutions that would benefit us all. They are not just solutions for older people; it's actually about the public health of American families, and the public health of our country. COVID-19 is a community care issue, and a powerful reminder that *we are all fundamentally connected*. What we want is a culture of care - and that must be one of caring across generations. Here are some practical tips for caregivers responsible for both young and old.

1. Stay informed - and take a break from the news if you need it.

It's important to stay updated. There is a lot of information out there, and it can get overwhelming. Check to see if your city has an alert system so you can set it and forget it, or stick to trusted resources like the Center for Disease Control (CDC) or the World Health Organization (WHO) for up-to-date information. Know that some information on social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube may not be backed by science or fact - so take what you read and learn outside of trusted resources with a grain of salt.

2. Talk with your kids about community care.

Most children will have already heard about the virus from other kids at school, or will have seen people wearing face masks. As parents, you can encourage our children to ask questions, and reassure and tell them what you are doing to keep the family extra safe. Remind them about the importance of washing hands using a favorite song or rhyme. And let them know that by staying safe, they are keeping others safe, too - we all have a role to play. Set aside family time to call or videoconference with older relatives and others who may be at risk. Connection and community are key to managing uncertainty during the outbreak.

3. Organize your "care squad" and make contingency plans.

Just as in normal times, create a web of support - and recognize the skills and personalities in it. Consider various aspects of care that may need to be covered, including additional medications, clean water, personal hygiene, and nutrition. Try to avoid buying masks so that health professionals don't run out. Instead, identify ways that each person in the care squad can provide some help, such as bringing groceries to an older loved one or helping to set up remote workspaces for a friend with

disabilities. Come up with backup care plans for different scenarios and keep everyone updated, so that if an emergency situation arises, you don't have to scramble to get the help you need.

4. Talk to your boss or HR.

Employers are generally aware of the risks of coronavirus to individuals, but not necessarily those for families who have multiple care needs across generations. Many large employers have already announced contingency plans and are encouraging their employees to work from home if it is possible. Reach out to a manager in advance how coronavirus could affect you as a caregiver, and what additional supports you might need. Identify what type of work you can do safely and effectively at home, and come with a brief plan of what you will accomplish remotely if that's possible. If your job does not lend itself to remote work, ask what type of accommodation might be possible. In some cases, the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Family and Medical Leave Act may offer some protection for your job should you need to take time off for care.

5. Use this to take action for a strong care infrastructure.

It shouldn't take a crisis for our lawmakers to do the right thing by our families. Most immediately, you can urge your members of Congress to pass Emergency Paid Sick Days. The truth is we need a robust and strong care infrastructure as a baseline so that all of us are prepared, protected and supported when it matters most. Another thing you can do toward that end is to share your story of sandwich generation caregiving with [Caring Across Generations](#), a national campaign working to create the flexibility and diversity of caregiving supports and options that sandwich caregivers - and ALL of us need - during times of crisis, and day to day.

About Caring Across Generations

Caring Across Generations is an intersectional campaign working to make care more affordable and accessible at every stage of life, while making sure caregivers are treated with respect and dignity. Founded in 2011 by workers' rights activists Sarita Gupta and Ai-jen Poo, we're focused on creating change in three ways: organizing a powerful movement of the Caring Majority, fighting for groundbreaking policy at the state level and federal level, and changing hearts and minds through storytelling and leveraging pop culture. For more information, please visit caringacross.org.

About National Alliance for Caregiving

Established in 1996, the National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit coalition dedicated to improving quality of life for friend and family caregivers and those in their care, by advancing research, advocacy, and innovation. In advancing our mission, NAC conducts research, does policy analysis, develops national best-practice programs, and works to increase public awareness of family caregiving issues. We recognize that family caregivers provide important societal and financial contributions toward maintaining the well-being of those in their care. For more information, please visit caregiving.org.