

## **THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES FOR CAREGIVERS**

### **PRINCIPLE # 1: SHARING RESPONSIBILITY IS THE KEY TO NOT “BURNING OUT.”**

No One person has to be in charge all the time.

No One person has to deal with every crisis.

No One person has to be “on call” every single day.

No One person has to make all the decisions, all the time.

No One person has to try to run his own life, plus the entire, complex life of his loved one.

Let the others do their share. They want to. They need to.

### **PRINCIPLE #2**

#### **IT WON'T WORK UNLESS EVERYONE GAINS SOMETHING PERSONALLY.**

Recognize the importance of personal rewards.

The patient will feel too guilty unless you gain something too.

### **PRINCIPLE # 3**

#### **KNOW YOUR LIMITS AND STICK TO THEM.**

Whatever you can do to help is enough.

If you can't or don't want to do something, don't. (Someone else is probably good at it, or loves to do it.)

### **PRINCIPLE #4**

**THERE'S NO ONE RIGHT WAY TO DO IT.**

If there are ten members, there will be ten ways to do it.

It is okay to disagree.

Agree on basics, then follow the rules. You may learn some amazing things.

***PRINCIPLE #5***  
**ANYONE WHO WANTS TO HELP SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED.**

A group needs eight, but ten is better.

If main caregivers are “real” family, they must be willing to broaden the circle.

“Free-floaters”, (people who can help only occasionally) are very important.

***PRINCIPLE #6***  
**TRUST THE GROUP; SUPPORT EACH OTHER.**

The group has power.

Someone has the talent or the answer.

Go on vacation. The others are there.

Share your feelings; share the goal.

Spend time together; acknowledge each other.

***PRINCIPLE #7***  
**KEEP YOUR OWN LIFE IN GOOD WORKING ORDER.**

Take care of yourself, or you won't be able to take care of the patient.

Exercise, rest, stay in “life.”

Lighten the rest of your load.

Don't forget about your own family and friends.

Let your friends, your boss and your own family know what you are doing.