

Dear Dr. Gleason,

Help!

My partner and I have two children under five and I just found out my parents need around-the-clock care. I have a full-time job which I love and cannot afford to quit. My siblings live out of state and are unaware of our parents' decline. What can I do? I'm feeling sick with the stress!

Signed,
Losing It

Dear Losing It,

Wow, allow me to acknowledge your attempt to care for your parents while having so many other responsibilities at home. Studies show there are many positive impacts when adults care for aging parents.

First: Write down everything you are doing for your parents. Next, list and acknowledge your children's needs. Ask for some focused time with your partner, and make sure you two are each calm, fed, and have the space to talk. Look at these lists together and see if there are tasks that your partner is willing to assume for the time being.

Second: With the list of parental caretaking tasks, have a video meeting with your siblings. Brainstorm with them about ways to get your parents' needs handled while involving everyone in the process. I know a family who traded board (housing) to a young couple while they were attending college. Most of the tasks and errands were handled by the couple, and costs for extras were shared by sibs. Another client put in an ADU and used the sale of the family home for 2 part-time caregivers! If we start thinking outside the box, many creative solutions are possible. In my area, Meals on Wheels and Peace of Mind are two organizations that help the elderly get one nutritional meal a day and help with walking the dog when owners are sometimes unable.

Lastly, I'd be looking to set boundaries with parents, siblings and children. When you care for yourself, unapologetically - your children learn to care for themselves too!

[Come see me](#) if you'd like a thinking partner for any of this. I'd love to talk it over.

- Dr Gleason



Ask Dr. Gleason

*A new advice column from
your MIIS EAP counselor*