

## **The FIT/UCE EAP Program**

### **Tips for Coping with the Illness of a Loved One**

1. Make sure that you take care of yourself! Develop your own stress management plan. Include proper nutrition, diet and exercise. Add to that something fun or that you enjoy doing.
2. Take some deep breaths when feeling anxious or stressed in the moment. Remember 4/6/8—take in breath to the count of 4, hold to the count of 6 and then breathe out to the count of 8. This is a technique of self-hypnosis and can calm and relax you.
3. Ask for help from others—you don't have to do everything! Learn to designate some tasks and be aware of how you feel about asking for help.
4. Be aware of your feelings and try not to judge yourself for having them. It is normal for caregivers to experience a multitude of feelings; some may make you more uncomfortable to have than others- like anger or resentment. Having a thought or feeling is different than acting on them.
5. Write all questions down in advance of doctor appointments or phone calls. It is easy to forget when stressed or hearing difficult information.
6. If possible, make sure that you or a designated person accompany your loved one to appointments for support and also to ensure that information is heard correctly. The person who is sick is not in the best frame of mind to hear and process what is being said.
7. When in doubt, get a second opinion. Don't worry about "hurting the doctors' feelings" or them being angry at you. Your life is more important than the doctor's feelings.
8. Make sure that loved one has a health care proxy, living will and power of attorney. Keep copies and make sure treating physician also has copy of health care proxy and living will.
9. Keep a record of all medical appointments, dates, co-pays, what insurance will cover. If there is question call the insurance company, ask to speak to a supervisor if not satisfied with answer. Make sure you ask for representative or supervisor's name and phone number so you have for proper documentation to include in any appeal you might file.
10. If you need some help advocating with insurance company and are full time or CCE employee, you can call the Health Advocate at 866-695-8622 or HR Benefits Department.
11. Recognize what you can and cannot control.
12. Learn ways to effectively communicate with your loved one about the illness and each of your feelings about the "new normal."
13. Don't make assumptions about how they feel or what they want or need. Ask them specifically. Tell them specifically what you want, need, can, and cannot do. This can be done in a kind and gentle manner but is often hard to do. EAP can help.
14. Join a support group.
15. Find out what services you and loved one are entitled to.
16. Remember EAP is available to you and loved ones. Please feel free to call us at 212-217-5600.