

Coping Strategies

For baby boomers caring for their aging parents

For the “sandwich” generation – baby boomers responsible for caring for their children and parents – the day to day pressures can be overwhelming. With summer holiday time now here, these individuals are becoming increasingly inundated with busy schedules while tending to their children and being caretakers for their parents.

“Coping skills and a little planning can greatly assist this over taxed group” states Kelley Keehn, author of *The Woman’s Guide to Money* and a faculty member with the Canadian Initiative for Elder Planning Studies (EPC). Keehn states that the first step is awareness.

“A boomer with children and parental responsibilities has a great deal on their plate this summer, not to mention juggling a work schedule. It’s often the parents of the boomers that are left behind or forgotten. In the end, this group of boomers faces potential burn out and often feel an enormous sense of guilt.”

Keehn suggests three simple strategies for boomers to consider when including their parents into their summer plans:

First, choose a date to plan an outing and stick to it. Arranging a time each week or bi-weekly gives their parents a date to look forward to, as many retired individuals have less mobility, friends and social activities to fill their days. Knowing when to expect a visit from their children and grandchildren can be a great comfort.

Second, plan activities in advance while involving their parents. Implement a detailed

social calendar for them that may include attending their grandchildren’s camp, concerts, a family vacation or a day trip to the parents’ hometown. Giving the parents a number of pursuits to focus on in the future will encourage them to remain positive and hopeful during the summer months ahead.

Third, consider hiring extra help. Summer chores such as raking the leaves, driving parents to doctors and assisting in grocery shopping can eat up precious hours. If income allows, hire a driver to escort parents to complete errands throughout the daytime.

Introduced in 2003, the Elder Planning Counselor program was Canada’s first designation program

for professionals working in the 50-plus market. EPC graduates include lawyers, stockbrokers, doctors, financial advisors, nurses, insurance agents, funeral directors and social workers.

The EPC designation helps these professionals provide the best possible service to their aging clientele. **OW**

Kelley Keehn’s website, www.KelleyKeehn.com, lists a plethora of facts about elder issues and coping skills for baby boomers caught in a sandwich lifestyle.

Keehn is also a faculty member with the Canadian Initiative of Elder Planning Studies and will be facilitating a number of their courses across Canada in the fall.

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