

**BLT or PBJ:  
A Sandwich Generation Experience  
Beverly L. Alexander, Ph.D.  
Remarkable Women's Conference  
May 11, 2007**

**Helpful Tips That I Learned Along the Way**

- **Complete Important Forms:**
  - Will
  - Power of Attorney
  - Medical Power of Attorney
  - Living Will
  - Life insurance policies
  - Banking information
  - Funeral arrangements
  - Keep copies of them easy to access and notify others of where they are
  
- **Keep Copies with You:**
  - Insurance card
  - Drivers License
  - Social Security card
  - List of current medications with dose and frequency
  - List of current doctors and their numbers
  
- **Place on their Refrigerator:**
  - A card with all relevant medical information in case of emergencies
  - Their full name, address and phone number
  - Social Security number
  - Current medications, with doses and frequency
  - Current medical conditions
  - Insurance information
  - Emergency contact information
  
- **Post in their Home:**
  - For their use as well as for caregivers
  - In large print
  - In full view (poster board)
  - Names and numbers of their physicians
  - Names and numbers of family members frequently called
  - Emergency contact(s)
  - Emergency numbers
  
- **Establish them with a Primary Physician:**
  - Use the same physician for both, and yourself (and family) if possible (“Family Doctor”)
  - Sit in on visits once your parent is unable to retain and/or understand information, or is not a good historian, or just feels more secure with you there
  - Take notes with more complicated issues
  - Allow your parent to speak up, but clarify or inform if they don't
  - Translate doctor's explanations if necessary

- Monitor follow through with orders
  - Communicate medical conditions/needs to other care takers and interested family members
  - Act as your parents' ADVOCATE
  - Get the family MD's cell phone number during hospice care
- **Other Doctor Visits:**
- Fill out the intake information if parent is unable or unwilling
  - Have the forms faxed to you in advance to speed up the visit
  - Keep a copy of an intake form so you don't have to recall pertinent history and information every time
  - Use the wait time to visit and enjoy each other
  - Accompany into the exam room
  - Communicate as with primary MD
- **In the Hospital:**
- Post on the white board: Name and contact numbers of primary care person(s); thank you to the nurses
  - Meet with the physicians to gather information and advocate on behalf of your parent
  - Talk with the nurses to communicate your parent's needs if they can't; be kind, they work very hard
  - Help out with nursing care when it is necessary and appropriate
  - Stay out of the way of the nurses as they do their caring
  - Spend the night with the parent if necessary and appropriate and take care of your own needs in this process
  - Get to know the resource personnel: Social Worker, Clergy, Patient Advocate, Charge Nurse
- **Caregivers in the Home:**
- Get to know them and be kind to them
  - Communicate with them regularly
  - Familiarize them with the contact numbers posted
  - Help them understand your parent and his or her condition, needs and personality
- **Financial Advisor:**
- Someone who is familiar with the elder's current and future financial needs
  - Familiar with financial options and insurance laws
  - Is committed to being a resource and support
- **Elderly Legal Advisor:**
- Someone who knows the laws pertaining to the elderly
  - Is familiar with current or potential legal situations
  - Is committed to being a resource and support during and after your parents' lives
- **Work together with Family:**
- Support person(s) during emergencies
  - Family phone tree to spread information
  - Financial sharing

➤ **Take care of yourself:**

It's an old adage, but it is so very true: "You have to take care of yourself or you won't be able to take care of others." I say, if you DON'T take care of yourself, you will not be as effective taking care of others and EVERYONE will loose out, especially YOU.

- Keep communicating with your partner and friends about how you are feeling.
- Spend those precious few moments being totally engaged in each other . . . your partner and your children
- Set up a phone tree not only to spread important information, but to get support for yourself
- Join a support group for caregivers or enter into individual therapy to get time to focus only on yourself
- Exercise, or do whatever helps you to feed yourself, distract you from care of others and relieve your stress
- Talk to friends or others that are going, or have gone through the same situation, there are many
- Remind yourself that you CAN'T DO IT ALL YOURSELF; others need to get involved as well
- See yourself as a "Coordinator of resources, a Case Manager" vs a "Sole Caregiver"