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Admit It. Family Caregiving Is A Job. Caregiver Health Guides Available

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Caregiving for a loved one can be challenging and exhausting, yet gratifying and rewarding. But in order to be emotionally, physically, and mentally healthy in may be necessary to seek out support and help from others.

In honor of National Family Caregiver Month this November, the Orange County Office on Aging now has free Caregiver Health Guides available. These pocket-sized books allow caregivers to record all their loved ones' medical history and information.

Here are some tips adapted from the National Family Caregiver Association:

1. **Reward yourself.** Use respite often as a break from this time-consuming job.
2. **Depression is common** among caregivers. Be aware of the signs and get help if you need it.
3. **Say yes to help.** If someone offers to help, suggest specific things they can do and let them do it.
4. **Know the illness.** Educate yourself about the disease and how to speak with the doctors about the disease.
5. **Technology is not bad.** Embrace new technology that creates independence for your loved one and gives you some relief.
6. **Trust your instincts.** You often know what is best for you and your loved one.
7. **Your health is important too.** Pay attention to YOUR health, not just that of your loved one. If you get sick, who will be the caregiver?
8. **Seek support.** Whether through formal support groups or speaking with another caregiver, knowing that you are not alone is a tremendous help.

As a caregiver, it is important to take time for yourself in addition to the needs of your loved one. The Office on Aging can assist with your caregiver needs. The Information Specialists at **1-800-510-2020** or **1-714-567-7500** can send you the health guide as well as discuss any caregiver issues and provide you with caregiver resources available in Orange County.