

7/31/13

At this year's Dystroglycanopathies Patient and Family Conference, we had a good discussion on Caregiver Burnout/Compassion Fatigue. I wanted to share some thoughts from our discussion.

Please remember that compassion fatigue is not a disease but a "normal" display of chronic stress, resulting from giving care to others. If you are experiencing compassion fatigue it simply means that you are a deeply caring individual. However in order to effectively provide care to others you need to be able to take care of yourself as well.

Here is a list of strategies that came out of our discussion to avoid compassion fatigue:

- Go to a movie 2X/year
- Buy a People Magazine and sit in my car to read
- Use Friends and Family to help out
- Talk to others
- Having a set time during the day for me
- Meditation
- Outdoor activities; hiking in woods with friend, bike riding
- Prayer-talking with God about courage and letting go
- I have recently hired a home health agency to send a home health aide to shower/dress my daughter a few mornings each week.
- I take a week off for vacation the same week my daughter does to MDA camp. My husband does the same
- I find that an antidepressant really helps
- Counseling
- TV; Sleep; Drink-Energy drinks-not booze
- Call a friend
- Watch a Movie
- Weekend trips away with spouse
- Weekly date nights
- Pursue individual hobbies
- Find interests that you can do, when you have extra time to allow a sense of accomplishment
- Humor
- Continuing to do activities I enjoy-often late at night or early am when person I am caring for doesn't need assistance, so I am not unbalanced/anxious
- Lots of prayer and really try to go with "Let Go: Let God" as much as possible
- Allow our son to be as independent as possible
- Exercise daily-at gym
- Meditate daily
- Make time to spend with spouse
- Walks-Vacation
- Sadly the only example that comes to mind is our work. It seems to serve as an escapism from the world of Muscular Dystrophy
- Girls night-Good Friendships

- Involvement in group therapy
- Learning to ask for help when needed
- Being with Friends
- Listening to Music
- Play or do a hobby
- Go out and visit with neighbors