

# CAREGIVING, *No Greater Gift*



## financial fitness

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If you're a woman of the Sandwich Generation, ages 35–54, then you're possibly facing the challenge of managing your family, career, and the needs of your aging parents. First coined in 1981, the label "Sandwich Generation" describes caregivers who are responsible for both children and elderly parents. About 60% of sandwich generation caregivers are women. This may be one reason why women of the sandwich generation exhibit the highest levels of stress among all demographics. If you're in this situation, then you're adjusting your goals, schedules, and finances to care for your kids and parents, and possibly, your spouse in the future. As Mother's Day approaches, it's a good time for moms and their families to recognize the importance of addressing stress and managing it in healthy ways.

Katherine Nordal, Ph.D., Executive Director for professional practice, American Psychological Association, says, "It's not surprising that so many people in that age group are experiencing stress. The worry of your parents' health and your children's well-being, as well as the financial concern of putting kids through college and saving for your own retirement, is a lot to handle."

Here are some tips as you manage all your responsibilities:

- **Gather and organize financial documents.**

Just as it's important to have just your own documents in order, you also want to make sure your parents have theirs in order, too. Have they named a general and health care power of attorney so that you or other loved ones can make decisions on their behalf if they are unable to do so on their own? If so, are these documents up to date? It's a good idea to have them updated every seven to 10 years to be sure they adhere to updated provisions in the law. Are the beneficiaries listed on their accounts up to date? Spend time now getting everything in order so that they have plans in place for the future.

- **Look into adult health centers close to home or work** that offer daytime programs for the elderly. These popular programs will allow you to go to work or meet other daily obligations knowing that your loved one is being cared for in a safe environment.

- **Cultivate your support network.** Now, more than ever, it's important to explore options in your community or near your parents' home. Ask friends and neighbors for recommendations. Join a local caregiver support group — start by contacting your local Area Agency on Aging. You'll meet people in similar situations who understand exactly what you're going through.
- **Ask for help and delegate.** You don't have to do everything yourself. Enlist your kids' help with age-appropriate tasks.
- **Take care of yourself.** Eat right, get enough sleep, drink plenty of water, and engage in regular physical activity like walking or yoga or your weekly softball game. Keep in

contact with your friends and family members. No matter how hectic life gets, you need to take care of yourself — which includes making time for yourself — so you have the mental and physical energy to care for your parents and children.

Wagner Wealth Management has offices in Greenville, Anderson, and Oconee counties. Call us at 864-236-4706 or visit [www.wagnerwealthmanagement.com](http://www.wagnerwealthmanagement.com) to learn more about our firm.

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Sources:  
Bamboo  
American Psychological Association

