

Are you part of the sandwich generation?

If yes, you may be juggling what your children want and need, what you want and need, and what your parents want and need. Surviving the years when you are caring for both children and parents can be tough. The stress of this period is high. On top of that, you may feel some disappointment because you have postponed things you wanted to do. At the same time, you may be feeling guilty because you feel resentful and – that dreaded word – selfish.

Here are some tips for the sandwich generation that may help you plan for the future:

- Put together a financial plan. A plan and a budget will help while thinking about college or other support for older children while caring for a frail parent in need of care.
- Learn about and use community programs and resources. Look for services to help with transportation, day care, senior activities, and in-home services.
- Think about house rules. With young adults and an aging parent living at home, written rules will help clarify expectations. Consider meal schedules, housecleaning and yard work, quiet times, transportation, bathroom schedules and laundry duties. Review the rules if circumstances change.
- Respect each other's privacy. Each generation is entitled to a life separate from others in the home. Define personal space and maintain those boundaries.
- If you have a young adult living with you, schedule a date for him or her to leave home. Whether the date is next month or next year, having a deadline helps young adults focus on taking adult responsibilities.
- Ask your entire family to help care for an ailing parent. Siblings and grandchildren can be asked to help, reducing the burden on just one person.
- Communicate openly about problems. Facing a degenerative or terminal illness can be frightening. Incomplete information makes the situation more frightening.

Above all, remember that your needs and wants are important. You will have an easier time helping others if you find the structure and the resources you need at this time of life.

For help with the day-to-day stressors of life, simply call **800-624-5544** any time, day or night 7 days a week. You also have access to many online programs at the New Directions website, www.ndbh.com. Use **ECC** as your login code.