



Transitioning Roles from Parent to Adult Child *Adapting to a Reversed Way of Life*

Aging is a part of life and something that most individuals will experience. Reversing the role between parent and child is one of the most difficult challenges within the aging process. As a child, you want to respect the wishes and independence of your weakening parent and help them to avoid being a victim of their failing competence but doing so can be a tough transition. As challenging as it can be, parents need to learn how to adapt to this intricate and frightening shift of life.

Parenting your parent will take patience, this holds especially true if mom and dad become difficult. But keep in mind that your elders are now adapting to not only a life of dependency but to a reversed role in life where their own child is now in charge of the decision-making. Adult children must sympathetically understand how this changing role can lead to anger, frustration, fear, stubbornness and resistance in their aging parent. Recognizing these feelings and accepting them will only help managing their care a much smoother transition.

For the adult child, adjusting to the role of parenting mom and dad can be uncomfortable and frustrating. These new, and at times unexpected, responsibilities not only add a great deal of stress but can be a large burden on your life. Getting support from others is imperative but one may not always know who to turn to. Consider reaching out to:

- Family Members
- Friends
- Professional Counselors
- Caregiver Support Groups
- Clergy

To better assist you, your clients and their loved ones, the Society of Certified Senior Advisors created this handout to include excerpts from individuals who have experienced this changing role in life.

- “Countless hours of working with seniors, and my experiences with my own aging parents, have taught me that as parents age, the dynamics of the parent-child relationship change dramatically. It can result in compromised care and can threaten the very core of the family unit.”
- “As long as the boundaries and responsibilities remain unchallenged, the dynamics of the parent-child/child-parent relationship continue to work smoothly; but when aging

parents begin to need assistance, an interesting transition occurs: the adult children assume the caregiving role of parents.”

- “A person’s life cycle is one great circle. We had caregivers in the beginning and many of us will need caregivers in the end. If we are lucky, the people whom we love most will be present to assist us in the completion of our life’s journey. Acceptance of this cycle can improve the quality of all our lives. It also completes the circle of love.’

When utilizing this informative material, it will help you to nurture your clients and their loved ones and sympathize with them as they begin the process of a reversed role. Allow yourself to be not only their professional expert but their trusted source when needed.

References:

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