

# July is designated as "Sandwich Generation" Month

## *A midlife tug of war phenomenon*

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The month of July has been designated as Sandwich Generation Month, an annual national observance.

The purpose is to recognize the thousands of Americans who are part of the Sandwich Generation, those sandwiched between raising children and caring for aging family members.

The Pew Research Center has reported that approximately one of every eight Americans from age 40 to 60 is raising a child and caring for a parent at the same time. Plus, seven to 10 million adults are caring for their aging parents from a long distance.

In a Feb. 20, 2007 Money Magazine article, Walecia Konrad described this phenomenon as the "midlife tug of war." She offered the following suggestions for dealing with these difficult situations.

- Talk to parents about their finances and about what plans they've made if they become ill or incapacitated.

- Make sure that parents have a durable power of attorney who can sign checks, pay bills, and make financial decisions for them if they become unable to do so. They should also have a living will outlining their wishes regarding healthcare if life-sustaining medical care is required.

- Take care of yourself. Make plans for your own retirement and for future college costs.

- Find out about benefits for which parents may qualify. Visit [eldercare.org](http://eldercare.org) which can link you to the elder care agency closest to your parents' home.

In central Maine, Peg Soucy, owner of Elder Care Planning and Solutions, assists local residents in finding resources to meet the needs of aging family members. Soucy has reported an increase in sandwich generation members seeking her services to find out what is covered by insurance, which resources are available in their area, and how to plan for aging parents.

Soucy said that sandwich generation members must juggle the responsibilities involved in maintaining two households — getting groceries, preparing meals, doing laundry, managing medications and appointments, paying bills and splitting time between their spouse, children and aging family members. She commented that the increased demands on time, energy, health, and finances involved in caring for aging family members can place a strain on the caregiver's marriage and relationships with their own children. She explained that, members of the sandwich generation feel torn between the needs of their own family and the needs of their aging parents and "are often left with feelings

of inadequacy."

Soucy said that professional geriatric care managers, like herself, are trained to assess family situations, identify problems, develop a plan, recommend services and arrange for and monitor services, as well as act as a liaison for family members who live at a distance or out of state.

"Sometimes they are called in with families, physicians, attorneys and guardians to help assess, plan and coordinate care while maintaining the dignity and respect of the person needing assistance."

Soucy travels throughout central Maine visiting homes, conducting assessments and assisting families in developing a plan of care.

Her website is [ecpsme.com](http://ecpsme.com). She can be contacted by emailing [psoucy@ecpsme.com](mailto:psoucy@ecpsme.com).

[CBSNews.com](http://CBSNews.com) has reported that by 2024 there will be 60 million Americans between the ages of 66 and 84 years, many of whom may need part or full-time care.

The website for the National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers is [caremanager.org](http://caremanager.org). Included on that website are frequently asked questions, information regarding how to find a care manager in a particular geographic area and articles related to specific topics of interest to caregivers.