

## The Dilemma Of The Sandwich Generation – How Technology Can Help

### Description

Man and Caregiver 4

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**Too many are caught in the middle — stressed.** Want mustard on that ham and cheese? Unfortunately, the sandwich generation is not about food. It is the phrase which has been coined for the growing number of Americans who are taking care of their aging parents and their children at the same time. The result — the Sandwich Generation often finds that taking care of themselves moves to the back burner. But as we well know, the more you neglect yourself, the more you put the quality of care you provide at risk. The modern conveniences we created were meant to provide us with more time to relax, be with loved ones, take care of ourselves and reduce stress. Instead, many of those conveniences have only placed more burden on our shoulders. We now need more time to work longer hours to earn less money to grab time to relax for a few minutes each day.

**That's where assistive technology (AT) can help.** The term has been generally used to refer to devices which help the disabled directly; motorized wheel chairs, hearing aids and far more sophisticated devices which help in every day life. However, in today's world, AT can also be devices or solutions which not only help those in need of care, but aid those who are part of the caregiving community. Many times caregivers need some 'down time' — but perceived demands keep them from having it. There are far too many stories of spouses and/or children who literally give up their lives to care for their loved ones, but it doesn't have to be that way. AT solutions can provide an effective way to allow "time off" while not sacrificing safety. One category of assistive technology is remote monitoring — but that doesn't do justice to the capability — we call it **Intelligent Monitoring**.

**Intelligent monitoring technology can be our eyes and ears.** Today it is perfectly feasible to keep an eye on your loved one without having to physically be in the same location. Even when you are living in the same home, you generally are not in the same room all of the time. So if something would need your attention, you would be alerted by a sound, your family member calling out, and you respond quickly to attend to the situation. Advances in technology have made it possible to provide tools which literally **call out to you**, wherever you are, when a situation occurs that needs your attention or response. When someone leaves a door open you can be alerted and respond to it by making that loving phone call to see if "everything is all right." If the faucet or stove is accidentally left on, you can be quickly alerted and you can respond in many ways to keep the simple problems from escalating into crisis. Intelligent monitoring technologies that alert you when you're not there are available and — just as important — are affordable. It's much less expensive to install intelligent monitoring than to have an in-home care person. Plus, it provides you with some tools to be able to "look in" without compromising the independence of your loved one. No button has to be pushed, no pendant worn, just the reassurance that in the event of a problem in your loved one's home, you are alerted and can respond.

Jay Wasack, President

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