

# Caregiver Stress



Caregiver stress: respect your well-being

### 10 symptoms of caregiver stress

If you experience some of these signs of stress on a regular basis, make time to consult a physician.

- 1- Denial about the disease and its effect on the person who's been diagnosed  
I know Mom is going to get better.
- 2- Anger at the person with Alzheimer's or others, anger that no cure exists and anger that people don't understand what's going on  
If he asks me that question one more time, I'll scream!
- 3- Social withdrawal from friends and activities that once brought pleasure  
I don't care about getting together with the neighbors anymore.
- 4- Anxiety about facing another day and what the future holds  
What happens when he needs more care than I can provide?
- 5- Depression that begins to break your spirit and affects your ability to cope  
I don't care anymore.
- 6- Exhaustion that makes it nearly impossible to complete necessary daily tasks  
I'm too tired for this.
- 7- Sleeplessness caused by a never-ending list of concerns  
What if she wanders out of the house or falls and hurts herself?
- 8- Irritability that leads to moodiness and triggers negative responses and reactions  
Leave me alone!
- 9- Lack of concentration that makes it difficult to perform familiar tasks  
I was so busy, I forgot we had an appointment.
- 10- Health problems that begin to take their toll, both mentally and physically  
I can't remember the last time I felt good.

### 10 ways to be a healthy caregiver

#### 1- Get a diagnosis as early as possible

Symptoms of Alzheimer's may appear gradually. It can be easy to explain away unusual behavior when your loved one seems physically healthy. Instead, consult a physician when you see signs of the disease. Don't delay; some symptoms are treatable.

#### 2- Know what resources are available

### **3- Become an educated caregiver**

As the disease progresses, new caregiving skills are necessary. MIND clinics can help you better understand and cope with the behaviors and personality changes that often accompany Alzheimer's.

### **4- Get help**

Doing everything by yourself will leave you exhausted. Seek the support of family and friends.

### **5- Take care of yourself**

Watch your diet, exercise and get plenty of rest. Make time for shopping, a movie or an uninterrupted visit with a friend by taking advantage of family.

### **6- Manage your level of stress**

Stress can cause physical problems (blurred vision, stomach irritation, high blood pressure) and changes in behavior (irritability, lack of concentration, loss of appetite). Note your symptoms. Use relaxation techniques that work for you, and consult a physician.

### **7- Accept changes as they occur**

People with Alzheimer's change and so do their needs. They often require care beyond what you can provide on your own.

### **8- Do legal and financial planning**

Plan ahead. Consult an attorney to discuss legal and financial issues. If possible and appropriate, involve the person with Alzheimer's and other family members.

### **9- Be realistic**

Know that the care you provide does make a difference. Also know that, until a cure is found, the progression of Alzheimer's disease is inevitable. Many of the behaviors that occur are beyond your control and the control of the person with Alzheimer's. Give yourself permission to grieve your losses, but also focus on the positive moments as they arise, and enjoy your good memories.

### **10- Give yourself credit, not guilt:**

At times, you may lose patience and find yourself unable to provide all of the care the way you'd like. Remember, you're doing the best you can. Don't feel guilty because you can't do more. Your loved one needs you, and you are there – that should make you feel proud.