

Preventing Caregiver Burnout

If you let the stress of caregiving progress to burnout, it can damage both your physical and mental health. So if you're caring for a family member, it's essential that you get the support you need. The good news is that you're not alone.

Signs of Caregiver Burnout

- You're constantly exhausted, even after sleeping or taking a break
- You neglect your own needs, either because you're too busy or you don't care anymore
- Your life revolves around caregiving, but it gives you little satisfaction
- You have trouble relaxing, even when help is available
- You're increasingly impatient and irritable with the person you're caring for
- You feel overwhelmed, helpless, and hopeless

1. Get the help you need

Don't try to do it all alone. Taking on all of the responsibilities of caregiving without regular breaks or assistance is a surefire recipe for burnout.

Ask for help when you need it. Enlist friends and family who live near you to run errands, bring a hot meal, or "baby-sit" the care receiver so you can take a well-deserved break. Caregiver services in your community, caregiver support for veterans, your family member's affiliations; community transportation services, telephone check-ins, adult day care are all resources for caregiver respite.



2. Seek emotional support

Share what you're going through with at least one other person. Turn to a trusted friend or family member, join a support group, or make an appointment with a counselor or therapist. You can also draw strength from your faith. A congregation in a church or synagogue can provide the encouragement you need to feel good about your caregiving role, and may also be able to provide a break from time to time.



3. Take care of yourself

When you are a caregiver, finding time to nurture yourself might seem impossible. But you owe it to yourself to find the time. Without it, you may not have the mental or physical strength to deal with all of the stress you experience as a caregiver. Give yourself permission to rest and to do things that you enjoy on a daily basis. You will be a better caregiver for it.

