

SELF-CARE AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

FAMILY CAREGIVERS



Self-Care

Managing your Care when Caring for Others

Caregivers who care for individuals with Alzheimer's or dementia should manage their stress to prevent burnout and keep their caregiving optimism high

What is Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease?

Dementia is an umbrella term for memory loss and other mental abilities that are severe enough to interfere with daily life. It is caused by physical changes in the brain. (alz.org)

Alzheimer's Disease is the most common type of dementia, where individuals have difficulty remembering recent events, names and conversations. It is an irreversible and progressive disease and eventually affects an individual's memory, thought process, judgment and behavior.



Dementia & Alzheimer's Disease

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Challenges involved in caring for someone with these and other conditions

Caring for individuals with Alzheimer's or dementia can cause special challenges for the caregiver

COMMUNICATION

Communication can be especially challenging between the caregiver and patient. Because an individual with Alzheimer's or dementia may not remember names, conversations or events, they may repeat questions, have difficulty finding the right words, easily lose their train of thought and speak less frequently.

BEHAVIORS

Individuals with Alzheimer's or dementia can exhibit behavior changes including depression, agitation, aggression, confusion and suspicion. Caregivers can remain calm and patient and accept behaviors as a part of the disease in order to better work through it.

MEMORY LOSS

Memory loss may be mild in the early stages, but as the disease progresses, so will the level of memory loss. Caregivers can be called the wrong name, not be recognized, and more as individuals lose their memory.

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Managing caregiver stress

Providing care for individuals in these and other conditions can be extremely fulfilling and challenging at the same time. It's important that caregivers take care of themselves so they can remain hopeful, energetic and optimistic to provide proper care.

Signs of caregiver stress (womenshealth.gov)

- Feeling overwhelmed, frustrated and angry
- Making mistakes when giving care
- Feeling alone, isolated, or deserted
- Not getting enough sleep
- Getting too much sleep
- Gaining or losing a lot of weight
- Feeling tired frequently
- Losing interest in activities you used to enjoy
- Becoming easily irritated
- Feeling constantly worried or sad
- Having headaches or body aches often

Home Care Tip:

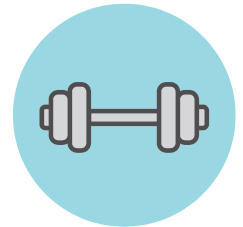
There are many community resources available for caregivers such as adult day care programs, in-home assistance, and meal delivery programs. Contact the Alzheimer's Association or use this (alz.org/CRF) Resource Finder to locate dementia care resources near you.

Self-care and stress management tips

It's important for caregivers to take care of themselves, both physically and emotionally even while they care for others. Finding the time to care for yourself with proper nutrition, exercise and sleep—as well as getting support from family and friends will help caregivers relieve stress and can prevent burnout.

Physical ways to manage stress

- Get regular exercise
- Participate in extracurricular activities
- Eat a balanced diet
- Pamper yourself
- Meditate
- Stay on track of your own health
- Get plenty of sleep
- Get regular doctor check ups



Mental/Emotional ways to manage stress

- Talk with supportive friends
- Get support from family members
- Celebrate small victories
- Applaud your own efforts
- Enjoy a good laugh
- Join a caregiver support group
- Get help when you need it
- Set routines and stay organized

