

## Avoid Caregiver Burnout

Taking care of an elderly person or an ill person is very stressful, causing caregivers to suffer a high rate of burnout.

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### Warning Signs of Caregiver Burnout

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- Loss of appetite or other eating disorders
- Overly emotional
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Withdrawal
- Isolation from peers
- Losing focus at work
- Lack of interest in appearance

If the caregiver is experiencing the warning signs of burnout, seek professional help with a doctor, therapist, social worker or a support group. Such professional guidance will help the caregiver learn how to take care of herself and meet the challenges of caregiving with an open mind and heart.

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### Action Plan

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An action plan helps the caregiver get life in control and become a more effective caregiver. An action oriented plan for the caregiver's health and well being will put an end to the burnout of caregiving. It is very important that the caregiver takes care of herself in order to avoid any signs of burnout. Use the suggestions below, as well as additional proactive steps, to begin the Action Plan.

- Seek help with family, friends, and professionals
- Allow the family to help and be involved in family decisions
- Share the burdens of caregiving with others
- Be prepared for the unexpected and for the expected
- Understand the emotions of life as a caregiver: grief, anger, anxiety, depression, shame, guilt

- Accept imperfections and flaws
- Do not aim for perfection
- Take care of physical and emotional needs
- Take things one day at a time, one crisis at a time, one joyful moment at a time
- Plan for the future
- Research caregiving and being a caregiver
- Set boundaries and learn to say “No”
- Recognize when burnout is beginning and seek help

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## **Community Help for the Caregiver**

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The caregiver has many options available to make life manageable.

- Friends, family and neighbors
- Transportation Services
- Telephone Reassurance Programs
- Home Maintenance and Yard Services
- Senior Centers & Adult Day Cares
- Care Managers and Social Workers
- Homemakers and Personal Care Services
- Home delivered meal programs
- Home Observation Programs(available from utility companies and the post office)
- Home Health Care
- Respite Services
- Companion Services
- Community Centers
- Places of Worship