

## Ten Signs of Caregiver Stress:

1. Denial about the disease and it's effect on the person who's been diagnosed.
2. Anger because no effective treatments or cures currently exist and people do not understand what is going on.
3. Social withdrawal from friends and activities that once brought pleasure.
4. Anxiety about facing another day and what the future holds.
5. Depression begins to affect ability to cope and break the caregiver's spirit.
6. Exhaustion makes it nearly impossible to complete necessary daily tasks.
7. Sleeplessness caused by a never-ending list of concerns.
8. Irritability leads to moodiness and triggers negative responses and reactions.
9. Lack of concentration makes it difficult to perform familiar tasks.
10. Health problems begin to take their toll, both mentally and physically.

## Ten Steps to Reduce Caregiver Stress:

1. **Get a diagnosis as early as possible** – Symptoms of memory loss may appear gradually. See a physician when Alzheimer's disease warning signs are present. Some Dementia symptoms are treatable.
2. **Know what resources are available** – Become familiar with resources available in your community. Your local Alzheimer's Association chapter is a good place to start.

3. **Become an educated caregiver** – As Alzheimer’s disease progresses, different caregiving skills are necessary. The Alzheimer’s Association can suggest care techniques to help you better understand and cope with challenging behaviors.
4. **Get help** – Trying to do everything will leave you exhausted. The support of family, friends and community resources can help. Don’t be afraid to seek professional help or to attend support group meetings.
5. **Take care of yourself** – Caregivers frequently devote themselves totally to those they care for, and in the process, neglect their own needs. Watch your diet, exercise, get plenty of rest and take time for yourself.
6. **Manage your level of stress** – Stress can cause physical problems such as high blood pressure and changes in behavior like a loss of appetite. Use relaxation techniques and consult a physician if needed.
7. **Accept changes as they occur** – People with Alzheimer’s disease change and so do their needs. A thorough investigation of available care options should make transitions easier.
8. **Do legal and financial planning** - Consult an attorney to discuss issues Power of attorney, living wills and trusts, future medical care and housing. Planning now will help alleviate stress later.
9. **Be realistic** – Neither you nor the person with Alzheimer’s disease can control many of the circumstances or behaviors. But your care does make a difference. Give yourself permission to grieve, but also focus on the positive moments and memories.
10. **Give yourself credit, not guilt** – Sometimes you may lose patience or be unable to provide all of the care you’d like. Remember, you’re doing the best you can. Your loved one needs you and you are there. That’s something to be proud of.

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