

Alzheimer's Association

Miami Valley Chapter

Helpline 800-272-3900 * www.alz.org/dayton

Dealing with Anger

Caregivers are often faced with increasing demands on their time and energy, while the emotions of watching a loved one slowly slip away due to Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia adds to the difficulty. The stress of this role and the difficulty of accepting the stages of dementia can result in strong feelings of anger. Then the caregiver is confronted with guilt for feeling so angry.

Experiencing anger with your siblings, your situation and even with the person you are caring for is very common - you are not alone. Over time, caregivers can find ways to cope with the anger. Though anger is common to caregivers, the reasons for anger can differ from situation to situation.

Causes of Anger in Caregivers

- *Emotions of slowly losing a loved one*
- *Behaviors (i.e., constant wandering, accusing one of stealing money, anger about losing driving, repeating self, etc.)*
- *Losing your social support network*
- *Family/sibling issues*
- *Person acts OK for other family/friends, but difficult at home*
- *Lack of sleep, leading to fatigue*
- *Many other issues...*

Identifying the causes of the anger can help a caregiver isolate the issues and begin to find help. Reaching out to others is a crucial step in dealing with anger!

Reaching out for Help

Many caregivers feel this anger, yet are plagued with guilt for being angry when it comes out on the people they love. Embarrassed to tell others how angry they feel, the caregiver becomes more isolated. This can lead to further emotional and physical ailments like depression, anxiety, hypertension, etc. Reaching out to others for help is a difficult step. But it is necessary to begin the help needed to better cope with the overwhelming stress related to dementia care, especially if you are a 24/7 caregiver.

(See reverse side for coping strategies)

Learning to Cope

- Learn more about the disease and how to better handle the difficulties that accompany dementia care.
- Find a social support system. Attend a support group. Find a friend who will listen without giving too much advice,
- Speak to a spiritual leader, or seek counseling.
- Ask a professional to lead a family meeting to work through issues and disagreements regarding the caregiver situation with all the members involved (or not involved) in care.
- Try journaling. Some caregivers find this a great way to express feelings and frustration.
- Laugh a little - many support group attendees find a comforting mixture of tears and laughter as they share their stories together. Humor does good things for a weary, tired soul.

Solutions for Your Unique Situation

Let us help you develop a plan for your situation. Please call our Help*line at (937) 291-3332 or (800) 272-3900.