

Caregivers devote a significant amount of time and energy to the person with dementia. Too often, caregivers do not recognize their own needs, delay tending to them, or do not know where to turn for help.

## 10 Common Signs of Caregiver Stress

**1 Denial** about the disease and its effect on the person who has been diagnosed.  
"I know Mom is going to get better."

**2 Anger** at the person living with dementia or frustration that the individual can't do the things that things that once came naturally. "He knows how to get dressed. He's just being stubborn."

**3 Social withdrawal** from friends and activities.  
"I don't care about visiting neighbors anymore."

**4 Anxiety** about the future.  
"What happens when he needs more care than I can provide?"

**5 Depression** that affects your ability to cope.  
"I just don't care anymore."

**6 Exhaustion** that interferes with daily tasks.  
"I'm too tired for this."

**7 Sleeplessness** caused by worrying.  
"What if she wanders out of the house?"

**8 Irritability** that triggers negative responses.  
"Leave me alone!"

**9 Lack of concentration** that disrupts familiar tasks.  
"I was so busy, I forgot my appointment."

**10 Health problems** that begin take a mental and physical toll.  
"I can't remember the last time I felt good."



## 10 Ways to Manage Stress and Be a Healthier Caregiver

**1 Take a break.** Consider using respite care service to allow you a temporary rest from caregiving while the person living with Alzheimer's or another dementia continues to receive care in a safe environment.

**2 Seek out community resources.** Visit the Alzheimer's Association & AARP Community Resource Finder ([alz.org/CRF](http://alz.org/CRF)) to access a database of dementia and aging-related resources in your area.

**3 Become an educated caregiver.** The Association offers programs to help you better understand and cope with common behavioral and personality changes that may occur. Visit [alz.org/care](http://alz.org/care) for resources.

**4 Get help and find support.** Our 24/7 Helpline (800.272.3900), ALZConnected online networking community ([alzconnected.org](http://alzconnected.org)), and local support groups ([bit.ly/AlzSupportFL](http://bit.ly/AlzSupportFL)) are helpful resources.

**5 Take care of your own health.** Try to eat well, exercise and get plenty of rest. Making sure that you are healthy can help you be a better caregiver.

**6 Manage your stress.** Stress can cause physical problems (blurred vision, stomach irritation, high blood pressure) and changes in behavior (irritability, lack of concentration). Discuss with a doctor, as needed.

**7 Accept changes as they occur.** People living with dementia change over time and so do their needs. They may require care beyond what you can provide on your own. Become aware of community resources.

**8 Make legal and financial plans.** Putting legal and financial plans in place after the diagnosis of dementia allows the person living with the disease to participate in decision-making. Having these plans can provide comfort to the entire family. Consult a financial advisor if needed.

**9 Know you're doing your best.** Remember that the care you provide makes a difference and you're doing the best you can.

**10 Visit your doctor regularly.** Take time to get regular checkups and pay attention to any exhaustion, stress, sleeplessness or changes in appetite or behavior.

