

Six Ways to Care for Yourself When Caring for Someone with Dementia

Caregiving for someone with dementia can be overwhelming. It involves not only strenuous physical tasks but also managing financial matters, organizing care, and so much more. If you are in this situation, you may be feeling frustrated, isolated, stressed, overwhelmed, or all of the above. These feelings are perfectly normal! But when ignored, they can be harmful to both yourself and others. Caregiver risk factors - such as being subject to high stress, isolation, and lacking social support – increase the likelihood of abuse for older adults with dementia. We all deserve the ability to participate fully in our daily life and in our society. Here are six ways to ensure both of your well-being:

☐ #1 TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

- Take breaks when you can.
- Call a loved one or sit quietly outside.
- Join a support group in your area.
- Know when you've reached your limit.

☐ #2 ASK FOR HELP

- Seek help from family members.
- Make use of support services such as respite care, home delivered meals, adult day care, and case management.
- Hire a personal care attendant or homemaker.

☐ #3 LEARN TO RESPOND APPROPRIATELY TO DIFFICULT BEHAVIORS

- Observe behaviors of the person you are caring for and discuss problems with a professional.
- Learn more about dementia and ways to respond to difficult behaviors.

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#4 IDENTIFY “STRESS TRIGGERS”

- Know the aspects of caregiving that are particularly stressful.
- Stay in tune with your body and pick up on physical and behavioral symptoms of stress.

#5 LEARN ABOUT ELDER ABUSE

- Learn about the different types of elder abuse, warning signs of abuse, and tips on preventing abuse from happening.
- To learn more, visit the National Center on Elder Abuse website at:
<https://ncea.acl.gov/FAQ.aspx>

#6 SPEAK UP! IT IS UP TO ALL OF US TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS ABUSE

- Inform your family members, friends about elder abuse risk factors and solutions so we can all do our part to prevent and address abuse.
- Report suspected abuse of an older person to the local Adult Protective Services Agency or Long-term Care Ombudsman Program.

WHO TO CONTACT FOR HELP?

Adult Protective Services:

Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program:

Community Based Organization:

Aging and Disability Resource Center:

Alzheimer’s Association 24 Hour HELPLINE: 800-272-3900

This project was supported in part by grants from the Robert Chinn Foundation and the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Administration for Community Living policy.



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