



Appreciating Alzheimer's Caregivers

by NEWLIFEOUTLOOK TEAM

Caring for Someone with Alzheimer's

Caring for someone with Alzheimer's can be physically and emotionally draining. Physical exhaustion paired with the heartbreak of seeing your loved one slowly forget who you are is a recipe for caregiver burnout.

In addition to the tips listed below for avoiding burnout, remember that feelings of frustration, anger, inadequacy, being trapped, resentment, and as a result of these, guilt, are all normal emotions to experience as a caregiver.

Talk about these feelings with someone who will understand, whether that person is a therapist, a fellow Alzheimer's caregiver or someone at a support organization. Stifling these emotions isn't good for your mental health, and can make you a less effective caregiver.

Also remember that taking a break is healthy – not selfish. Consider regular respite care for your loved one, which will give you the opportunity to rest and come back to your caregiver role refreshed.

Read on to learn more about caregiving and avoiding burnout.



90 MILLION
Americans are caregivers for loved ones who are sick or disabled in some way.

1 MILLION AMERICANS
are also caring for veterans from the IRAQ+AFGHANISTAN wars who have visible injuries and invisible battles.

True Dedication
A caregiver may help their loved one with washing, dressing, eating, or other daily activities, as well as taking medications, getting to doctor's appointments, and so much more.

Handle with CARE
Caregivers often assist care recipients with a variety of tasks, often several throughout the day. Not every caregiver has the same skills, but most have a special talent or two.

- Multiple sclerosis
- Lupus
- Fibromyalgia
- COPD
- Down's syndrome
- Muscular dystrophy
- Autism
- Cancer
- ALS
- Dementia
- Parkinson's

For young and
YOUNG AT HEART
Because of America's aging population, the number of people needing care has been rising, and is expected to keep going up. By age 65, people age and older are expected to make up around 36% of the American population, up from 23% in 1990.

However, parents caring for children with disabilities are also in the family caregiver ranks. Children with conditions like autism, muscular dystrophy, and down's syndrome all require a caregiver, often through into adulthood.

CAREGIVER BURNOUT
Caregiver burnout is when a caregiver becomes emotionally and physically exhausted under the strain of caring for another person. This can manifest as:

- Irritability and feeling blue
- Fatigue and changes in sleep patterns
- Withdrawing from friends and other loved ones
- Abandoning activities you used to enjoy
- Changes in appetite and/or weight
- Depression and/or anxiety

Six tips to **AVOID BURNOUT**SM

- Stay HEALTHY**
It's easy to spend so much time thinking about your loved one's health that you completely forget about your own. Make sure you take care of yourself: eat well, exercise and get enough sleep.
- Pursue your INTERESTS**
Sticking up on your hobbies and interests because of your caregiving duties can take a toll on your mental health and overall well-being. Make time to do things you enjoy.
- Take time to DE-STRESS**
Consider taking up a stress-reducing activity like yoga, meditation or deep breathing techniques that will help you let go of the stress of being a caregiver.
- Take A BREAK**
Being a caregiver, although a labor of love, can be emotionally and physically draining. Get time to rest, being a caregiver every day and learn to rest and recharge.
- Connect with other CAREGIVERS**
Finding a support group or an online forum for caregivers can help you to feel less alone in your struggles and provide a sense of community.
- Seek and ACCEPT HELP**
There is no shame in admitting you need help, asking for help, or accepting it when it's offered. Caregivers who ask for help are more likely to be able to cope.

