

Signs a Caregiver may need some help

Caregivers who are having the problems discussed below, or other issues, can contact their local Family Caregiver Support Program to learn more about the kinds of help available.

Signs may may include:

- Withdrawal from friends, family and other loved ones
- Loss of interest in activities once enjoyed
- Feeling blue, irritable, hopeless and helpless
- Changes in appetite, weight, or both
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Getting sick more often
- Feelings of wanting to hurt yourself or the person for whom you are caring
- Emotional and physical exhaustion
- Irritability

Causes

Caregivers often are so busy caring for others that they tend to neglect their own emotional, physical, and spiritual health. The demands on a caregiver's body, mind, and emotions can easily seem overwhelming, leading to fatigue and hopelessness - and, ultimately, burnout.

Other factors that can lead to caregiver burnout include:

Role confusion - Many people are confused when thrust into the role of caregiver. It can be difficult for a person to separate her role as caregiver from her role as spouse, lover, child, friend, etc.

Unrealistic expectations - Many caregivers expect their involvement to have a positive effect on the health and happiness of the patient. This may be unrealistic for patients suffering from a progressive disease, such as Parkinson's or Alzheimer's.

Lack of control - Many caregivers become frustrated by a lack of money, resources, and skills to effectively plan, manage, and organize their loved one's care.

Unreasonable demands - Some caregivers place unreasonable burdens upon themselves, in part because they see providing care as their exclusive responsibility.

Many caregivers cannot recognize when they are suffering caregiver burnout and eventually get to the point where they cannot function effectively. They may even become sick themselves.

Where to Get Help

Call your county Aging and Disability Resource (ADRC), they have experts and can connect you to, often free, programs, organizations and resources in your local community.

FIND YOUR COUNTY ADRC: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/adrc/index.htm>

Information is also available at <http://wisconsincaregiver.org>

Information on caregiver burnout, sources: <http://wisconsincaregiver.org> and http://www.youradrcresource.org/services/family_caregivers.html



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