

The Alzheimer's Association:

The Midlands Chapter is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to providing support and assistance to individuals with Alzheimer disease (AD), their families and caregivers. A call to the Chapter's information & referral line is your first step to obtaining referral information and assistance.

Information on AD, current research, individual care and assistance for caregivers is available from the Chapter. For more information, please call:

402.502.4300 or 800.272.3900

**Help is always only
a phone call away!**

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Main Office

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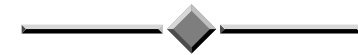
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www.alz.org/midlands

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Caregiver Stress



Signs to Watch For Steps to Take



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10 Signs of Caregiver Stress

1. **Denial** about the disease and its effect on the individual who's been diagnosed.
"I know mom's going to get better."
2. **Anger** at the person with AD or others; that no effective treatments or cures currently exist; and that people don't understand what's going on.
"If he asks me that question one more time I'll scream!"
3. **Social withdrawal** from friends and activities that once brought pleasure.
"I don't care about getting together with the neighbors anymore."
4. **Anxiety** about facing another day and what the future holds.
"What happens when he needs more care than I can provide?"
5. **Depression** begins to break your spirit and affects your ability to cope.
"I don't care anymore."
6. **Exhaustion** makes it nearly impossible to complete necessary daily tasks.
"I'm too tired for this."
7. **Sleeplessness** caused by a never-ending list of concerns.
"What if she wanders out of the house or falls and hurts herself?"
8. **Irritability** leads to moodiness and triggers negative responses and reactions.
"Leave me alone!"
9. **Lack of concentration** makes it difficult to perform familiar tasks.
"I was so busy, I forgot about our appointment."
10. **Health problems** begin to take their toll, both mentally and physically.
"I can't remember the last time I felt good."

10 Ways to Help Reduce Caregiver Stress

1. **Get a diagnosis as early as possible.**
Symptoms of Alzheimer's disease (AD) may appear gradually, and if a person seems physically healthy, it's easy to ignore unusual behavior, or attributed it to something else.
2. **Know what resources are available.**
For your own well-being and that of the individual you are caring for, become familiar with AD care resources available in your community.
3. **Become an educated caregiver.**
As AD progresses, different caregiving skills and capabilities are necessary. Care techniques and suggestions are available from the Chapter office.
4. **Get help.**
Trying to do everything by yourself will leave you exhausted. Ask for help.



5. **Take care of yourself.**
Caregivers frequently devote themselves totally to those they care for, and, in the process, neglect their own needs. Pay attention to yourself.

6. **Manage your level of stress.** Stress can cause physical problems and changes in behavior. Note your symptoms. Use relaxation techniques that work for you and consult a physician.
7. **Accept changes as they occur.** Individuals with AD change, and so do their needs. Investigate available care options to make transitions easier.
8. **Do legal and financial planning.** Consult an elder law attorney and discuss issues related to **durable** power of attorney, living wills, trusts, future medical care, and other key considerations.
9. **Be realistic.** Until a cure is found, the progression of AD is inevitable. The care you provide does make a difference. Give yourself permission to grieve for the losses you experience, but also focus on the positive moments as they occur and enjoy your good memories.
10. **Give yourself credit, not guilt.** You're only human. Remember, you're doing the best you can, so give yourself credit.

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