

# Avoiding Carer Burnout

1st November 2020

If you are caring for a loved one, after a while you may find yourself feeling stretched to the limit with all of your responsibilities. Research suggests that people caring for older loved ones spend more time looking after them than they do caring for their own children. So it's important to set aside time for yourself and avoid carer burnout. This article has ideas on how to make sure that your responsibilities as a carer are sustainable in the long-term.

Take time out for you. With so much energy going to other people, it's easy to forget about yourself. Many carers feel guilty for enjoying themselves, but interests, hobbies, and anything fun can actually help you relax and recharge so that you can provide the best care for your loved one. Make sure that you establish boundaries and hold firm on them so that when you're taking some "me" time no one interrupts.

Get support. Need a break? Ask a relative to take over for a day, or look into community respite services that can help lighten your load. Connect with others in a similar situation by joining a local carers' support group or online forum. You don't have to go it alone. Support is out there.

Bear in mind that good health equals good care. To give the best care, you need the best you. Stay emotionally and physically healthy by getting enough rest and eating a well-balanced diet. Squeeze in exercise whenever possible to boost your energy, mood and to shed stress.

Plan it out. Shave time off running errands and daily tasks by getting organised. See if your local convenience store or chemist delivers, and pay bills online or through direct debit. Hold a family meeting and create a chart that assigns housework to every member. If you feel that you never have enough time then simplifying a hectic schedule will help to ease your anxiety.

Being a carer is challenging and, at times, taxing. However, the rewards of caring for someone you love can often outweigh these demands. Make sure you look after your own emotional and physical wellbeing so you're able to invest the strength needed to provide the best care to your loved one. After all, this might be one of the most rewarding experiences of your life.

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