

Safe Choices: How are YOU doing?

Caregivers need extra support, too!

Caring for an aging parent or loved one can seem overwhelming at times. You need to be at your best—healthy, happy, rested, relieved of stress—to do what’s best for the time being and what’s right for the future.

Take a moment to review the chart below for insight into how YOU are feeling. “Caregiver Burnout” is a common term for an all-too-common problem. Also,

take stock of yourself and your situation with the enclosed “Caregiver Self-Assessment Questionnaire.” Let us know how you scored. Review the “Caregiver Survival Strategies” and try to use them. Talk with your Safe Choices coordinator about your physical, emotional and behavioral issues. Together, we can turn your worries into positive solutions and get you and your loved one the help you need.

Symptoms of Caregiver Burnout

Physical	Emotional	Behavioral
Frequent Headaches	Impatience	Overreacting to criticism
Disrupted sleeping patterns, including nightmares	Inability to experience joy or happiness	Increased use of nicotine, alcohol, or drugs
Poor personal hygiene	Sadness or unexplained crying	Decreased productivity at work
Chronic fatigue or lack of energy	Anger, irritability, or resentment	Loss of interests in hobbies
Back or neck pain, muscle spasms	Anxiety and or guilt	No time for friends or social events
Heart palpitations	Apathy or isolation	Overeating or not eating
Diarrhea, constipation, nausea	Mood Swings	Refusing to take vacations or time off
Susceptibility to illness	Forgetfulness, inability to concentrate, inability to make decisions	Increased sleeping or not sleeping
Decreased interest in sex	Loss of sense of control	Refuses to accept the help of others
	Feeling hopeless, trapped, failure	

Caregiver Survival Strategies

- Get enough sleep.
- Exercise regularly to relieve tension, even if it's only walking around the block.
- Ask for help with specific tasks--cooking, shopping, senior-sitting, etc.
- Ask for help and learn to say yes when others offer help.
- Stay in touch with friends and schedule times for social events.
- Visit your doctor for a check-up if you are not feeling well.
- Accept your limitations.
- Give yourself permission to be angry, but practice stress relief techniques, such as deep breathing, stretching, and going outside for a break or a walk. Listen to music. Flip through a magazine.
- Find someone you trust to talk to about your feelings – friend, clergy, therapist.
- Schedule regular breaks and mini-breaks from caregiving.
- Remember it is OK not to know all the answers.
- Make a detailed list of what you do for your loved one; read over it when you feel you are not doing enough.

Caregiver Self-Assessment Questionnaire

How are you?

Caregivers are often so concerned with caring for their relative's needs that they lose sight of their own wellbeing. Please take just a moment to answer the following questions. Once you have answered the questions, turn the page to do a self-evaluation.

American Medical Association
Physicians dedicated to the health of America



During the past week or so, I have...

1. Had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing Yes No
2. Felt that I couldn't leave my relative alone..... Yes No
3. Had difficulty making decisions Yes No
4. Felt completely overwhelmed..... Yes No
5. Felt useful and needed Yes No
6. Felt lonely Yes No
7. Been upset that my relative has changed so much from his/her former self..... Yes No
8. Felt a loss of privacy and/or personal time..... Yes No
9. Been edgy or irritable Yes No
10. Had sleep disturbed because of caring for my relative Yes No
11. Had a crying spell(s) Yes No
12. Felt strained between work and family responsibilities..... Yes No
13. Had back pain Yes No
14. Felt ill (*headaches, stomach problems or common cold*) Yes No
15. Been satisfied with the support my family has given me Yes No
16. Found my relative's living situation to be inconvenient or a barrier to care Yes No
17. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being "not stressful" to 10 being "extremely stressful," please rate your current level of stress. _____
18. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being "very healthy" to 10 being "very ill," please rate your current health compared to what it was this time last year..... _____

Comments:

(Please feel free to comment or provide feedback)

Self-evaluation:

Local Resources and Contacts:

To Determine the Score:

1. Reverse score questions 5 and 15. (For example, a "No" response should be counted as "Yes" and a "Yes" response should be counted as "No")
2. Total the number of "yes" responses.

To Interpret the Score:

Chances are that you are experiencing a high degree of distress:

- If you answered "Yes" to either or both Questions 4 and 11; or
- If your total "Yes" score = 10 or more; or
- If your score on Question 17 is 6 or higher; or
- If your score on Question 18 is 6 or higher.

Next steps:

- Consider seeing a doctor for a check-up for yourself.
- Consider having some relief from caregiving. (Discuss with the doctor or a social worker the resources available in your community.)
- Consider joining a support group

Valuable Resources for Caregivers:

Eldercare Locator:
(a national directory of community services)
1-800- 677-1116
www.aoa.gov/elderpage/locator.html

Family Caregiver Alliance

1-415- 434-3388
www.caregiver.org

Medicaid Hotline

Baltimore, MD
1-800-638-6833

National Alliance for Caregiving

1-301-718-8444
www.caregiving.org

National Family Caregivers Association

1-800 896-3650
www.nfcacares.org

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities

1-800-695-0285 www.nichcy.org

Resource Guide

Telephone and Online Access to Important Support Services

Life Line Web Pages

Life Line 1-800-797-4203
www.lifelinesys.com

American Red Cross Life Line 1-800-959-6989
www.redcross.org/services/hss/lifeline

Personal Emergency Response Service of Texas
817-731-3440
www.persoftexas.com

Life Line Senior Living 1-800-451-0521 ext 3100
www.lifelineseniorliving.com/content/life-safety-products

Lifeline 1-800-LIFELINE (543-3546)

Home-delivered Meals

Dinner is Done
Chef Deb Cantrell, Certified Personal Chef
817-614-1756
www.browniepointspcs.com

www.familychef.com
1-888-612-9264

www.ediets.com/freshCuisine
1-877-Your Diet

www.homebistro.com
Telephone 1-800-628-5588

www.seattlesutton.com/home.asp
1-800-442-3438

Tarrant County Meals on Wheels
817-336-0912
www.mealsonwheels.org

Long-term Care Insurance

www.consumerreport.org
go to personal finance, long term care insurance

Care Giver Information and Support

www.caregivers.org

www.familycaregiversonline.com

Reverse Mortgage Information

Griffin Financial Mortgage
www.griffinloans.com
1701 River Run, Suite 308
Fort Worth, Texas 76107
888-415-1955

Wells-Fargo
www.wellsfargo.com

AARP Informational Information
www.aarp.org/money/revmort/revmort_basics

Calculate a Reverse Mortgage

www.rmaarp.com/

Medication Dispenser Web Sites

www.assistedlivingstore.com/medication_aids.asp
1-888-388-5862

www.safehomeproducts.com
1-877-358-0900

www.epill.com/dispenser
1-800-549-0095

Private Hired Caregivers (cooking, cleaning, bathing, errands)

A&T Moore Health Care
Personal Care, Sitter Services
817-277-8606
www.atmoorehealthcare.com

Home Instead
Mid Cities 817-282-6161
www.homeinstead.com

Comfort Keepers
817-560-8085
www.comfortkeepers.com

Certified Personal Care
817-568-8033
www.certifiedpersonalcare.com

Area Agency on Aging

www.aaatc.org

Area Agency on Aging of Tarrant County
210 East Ninth Street
Fort Worth TX 76102
voice: 817-258-8081
fax: 817-258-8092

Locating a Facility or Adult Day Care

Find and Compare Assisted Living and Nursing Homes
www.newlifestyles.com

Senior Citizen Centers

Senior Citizen Services of Greater Tarrant County

Senior services network promoting dignity and independence, health, and well-being via nutrition, health-fitness programs, community services, recreation, and information/referral on benefits and aging issues.

1000 Macon Street, Fort Worth, TX 76102
817-338-4433
Fax 817-877-5807

On-site Checklist for Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities

Nursing Home Checklist from AARP
www.aarp.org/families/housing_choices/nursing_homes/a2004-02-27-nuringchecklist.html

www.aarp.org/families/housing_choices/assisted_living/a2004-02-27-assistedlivingchecklist.html

Web Page for Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities Assisted Living and Nursing Home State of Texas Inspection Reports

www.dads.state.tx.us/

Go to Find Services Menu, Select Find and Compare Long Term Care facilities, Click on QRS (Quality Reporting Systems Search), Type in the name of the Provider (Facility Name) Or zip code, address, etc.

Nursing Home Comparisons (800) 442-2620 or web site: www.medicare.gov/NHCompare/home.asp

Nursing Home Consumer Information: (888)834-7406 or web site: www.dhs.state.tx.us/nhconsumer.html

Medicaid

www.dhs.state.tx.us

General Information: (817) 321-8207
Customer Service: 1-877-236-6500

To Qualify for State Medicaid programs
<https://www.yourtexasbenefits.com/wps/portal>

Medicaid Counseling, attorney's protected Miller's Trust
817-292-2000

Medicare

www.medicare.gov

General Information: 1-800-638-6833,
Social Security Administration 800-772-1213