



# Care Partner Information

## *Tips for Providing Older Adult Care*

### Caregiver Stress

#### Care Giving Causes Stress

Taking care of an older adult can be stressful. Adults can live many years with a chronic disease. Over time, these diseases can make it hard for older adults to do things for themselves. It is a lot of work to help someone with basic care and disease care when they are not able to take care of them self.

Caregivers can feel frustrated. They can get angry with the person they take care of, then feel guilty. It is normal to have different feelings about care giving at different times. But, some of these feelings can be signs of stress. Stress can lower health, and make it harder to care for another person.

Below is a list of several feelings that can be signs of stress.

10 Common Signs of Caregiver Stress	
Denial	Feeling stressed, but not saying it or getting help for it.
Anger	Getting angry at anyone or anything.
Isolation	Feeling alone. Not seeing friends or family.
Anxiety	Worrying all the time, even when there is nothing to worry about.
Depression	Feeling sad or hopeless, or crying often.
Exhaustion	Feeling so tired that it seems hard to go on.
Sleep problems	Trouble falling asleep or staying asleep.
Irritability	Feeling bothered by everything or everyone.
Concentration	Finding it hard to pay attention.
Health problems	New medical problems, or problems that get worse.

This Care Partner Information page is part of a series on older adult caregiving tips. They are written to help family and community caregivers, direct care workers and community health representatives care for older adults. Available in English and Spanish at [www.aging.arizona.edu](http://www.aging.arizona.edu)

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Many caregivers think it is selfish to take time for themselves. Many do not take care of their own health and well being. Everyone needs time to take care and reduce stress. It is easier to be a good caregiver when stress is lower.

Below are tips to help lower stress.

### Tips for Managing Stress

- **Take care.**

Get some rest. Find time to exercise. Eat healthy. Take time alone. Make and keep health care appointments.

- **Ask for help.**

It is good to ask others for help. Care giving is too hard to do alone.

- **Use local resources.**

Find out about adult day care, in-home help, respite care, and other local resources.

- **Learn care giving skills.**

Local classes can teach skills that will make care giving easier.

- **Find ways to connect with others**

Look for caregiver support groups. Participate in a faith community or social clubs.

- **Try relaxation methods.**

Deep breathing, meditation, massage, yoga and other practices can reduce the signs of stress.

- **Positive thinking.**

Every day, think of at least one good thing that happened. Use humor when things are hard. Try to enjoy being with the person.

- **Self kindness.**

Take time to notice small wins. Feel good about providing help and care to the older adult. It is okay if it is not perfect.

### **Useful Websites About Caregiver Stress**

American Association of Retired Persons: <http://www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving/>  
Medicare: <https://www.medicare.gov/campaigns/caregiver/caregiver.html>

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