

Ten warning signs of caregiver stress

1. **Denial** about the disease and its effects on the person who is being diagnosed. *I know mum's going to get better.*
2. **Anger** at the person with Alzheimer's 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 neighbours 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 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 we had an appointment.*
10. **Health problems** begin to take their toll, both mentally and physically. *I can't remember the last time I felt good.*





<http://www.mstrust.org.uk/information/opendoor/images/warning.gif>

Extract from: When someone you love has Alzheimer's:

The Caregiver's Journey by Earl A. Grollman and Dr Kenneth S Kosick. Souvenir Press

Professional counseling and support is a recommended option if you:

- Feel the agony is just too hard to bear.
- Find yourself playing the role of martyr, feeling that only you can provide the right kind of care giving.
- Find that you are taking out your feelings of rage and frustration on the Alzheimer's patient.
- Feel abandoned by doctors, family and friends.
- Feel increased hostility towards people you once cared for a great deal.
- Feel humiliated by your loved one's bizarre behaviour and don't know how to handle this feeling.
- Find that you are avoiding all outside contact and activities, preferring to be by yourself or alone with the Alzheimer's patient.
- Know that your physical health is suffering from the stress and demands of care giving.
- Are relying more and more on alcohol, drugs or both.
- Feel trapped in emotions of hostility, recrimination and melancholy that increase, rather than diminish over time.
- Have constant feelings of depression, hopelessness or helplessness; an inability to eat, sleep or work; overwhelming feelings of failure; guilt, rage and insecurity; thoughts of suicide!

IN GENERAL:

If you feel stuck in a care giving situation that is not working and feel unable to find alternatives, if you are alarmed or unhappy or dissatisfied with the ways you are behaving and reacting, it is wise and responsible to seek professional advice and assistance.

Please contact the DEMENTIA SA Office

Support | Awareness | Education | Counseling | Training | Resource centre | Advocacy
info@dementiasa.org or support@dementiasa.org www.dementiasa.org

National Helpline 0860 MEMORY / 0860 636 679

Notes:

Contact us:

3rd Floor,
State House,
3 Rose Street,
Cape Town

P.O. Box 16421
Vlaeberg
8018

Tel: (021) 421 0077/78
Email: info@dementiasa.org
Or support@dementiasa.org



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