

7 Signs of Caregiver Burnout

Taking care of someone twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week is demanding, stressful and difficult. It is no wonder, therefore, that caregivers suffer a high rate of burnout. How do you recognize caregiver burnout in yourself? Experts have determined that there are seven signs of caregiver burnout. If you are experiencing one or more of these, you may be at risk for burnout.

1

Loss of appetite or other eating disorders

Are you eating less? Eating more? Losing or gaining weight? Eating junk foods? Skipping meals?

2

Overly emotional

Do you begin to cry unexpectedly or at inopportune times? Do you laugh at things that aren't funny? Are you overly sensitive to the comments of others?

3

Feeling overwhelmed

Do you wake up in the morning wondering how you are going to get through the day? Do you feel like tasks are accumulating, and you will never be able to catch up?

4

Withdrawal

Are you beginning to withdraw into yourself, and away from the world? Are you tending to bottle emotions up inside of yourself? Are you avoiding confronting people—either your care recipient or others?

5

Isolation from peers

Have you stopped participating in activities that you once enjoyed? Are you avoiding the phone calls or other friendly social advances of others? Are you making excuses for not seeing people?

6

Losing focus at work

Are you unable to concentrate on your job? Do you find yourself taking excessive time worrying about non-job-related things? Do you take excessive time off from work to attend to the needs of your care recipient? Has your boss mentioned that you don't seem as focused as you once did?

7

Lack of interest in appearance

Have you stopped buying clothes for yourself? Stopped getting regular haircuts? Lost interest in looking your best?



Everyone in a caregiving role is likely to experience some of these things at one time or another. Ask yourself if the warning signs are debilitating, making your life seem impossible. If so, you may very well be experiencing caregiver burnout, and you may want to seek professional help. A doctor, therapist or social worker will help you recognize what you can do to make yourself feel better, to take better care of yourself, and to meet the challenges of caregiving once again with an open heart and mind.