



CATHI

Caregiver's Answers, Topics, and Helpful Information

In an endeavor to continually assist caregivers in their search for pertinent information regarding eldercare, our Information and Referral Specialists address topics most frequently asked questions via Caregiver's Answers, Topics, and Helpful Information (CATHI). Additionally, caregivers are invited to e-mail individual questions caregiver2@senior-resources-guilford.org and an Information and Referral Specialist will reply.

Dear CATHI, what is caregiver burnout?

Caregiving is a tough job. Often caregivers find themselves so busy taking care of their loved ones, they neglect their needs causing them to feel burnout. Burnout is mental, physical, and emotional exhaustion. Burnout can cause people to feel fatigue, depression, anxiety, and even adverse effects to their physical health.

Tips to Avoid Burnout:

- **Learn about your loved one's illness or condition:** Educate yourself as much as you can about their health and how that may change over time. It's important to know what to expect, so you can be realistic about your loved one's needs. Understanding your loved one's condition can help you determine why they behave or feel the way they do. This will also allow you to learn about skills you may need to develop as their condition progresses. Acknowledge that your loved one's disease may require nursing services or assisted living outside of the home.
- **Take care of your health:** To be the best caregiver you can be, you must take care of yourself. Be sure you are keeping up with regular health and dental check-ups. If you have an illness or condition, recognize your physical limitations as well. Do your best to maintain a normal sleep pattern, as well as healthy eating patterns. Exercise is just as important to your physical health as your mental health, as exercise has been proven to lower stress, increase your energy, and keep your heart healthy.
- **Talk to someone:** Talking about your fears and frustrations is critical. Find someone you can trust to talk to. Friends and family are great to turn to but joining a caregiver support group or seeking therapy can provide individual support for you as a caregiver. Turning to others may help you process your feelings as well as develop new and healthy ways to cope.
- **Ask for help:** Caregiving can be overwhelming. Receiving help with even the smallest task can make a difference. Look to the people around you for help. This can be asking a neighbor to pick-up items from the store or asking a family member to help with chores. Look to local agencies for assistance with meal delivery, transportation, or even respite care.

- **Take breaks:** Find time to step away and breathe. It is important you establish some time for yourself. Going for a walk, reading a book, or chatting with a friend every day can provide you time to destress. You may also need to take advantage of respite services! These services can allow you longer breaks. Locate these services by contacting your local Agency on Aging.

The information in this article was adapted from the brochure *5 Tips to Avoid Caregiver Burnout* created by Kristie Holt, 2009 (rev 11/16) and “Caregiver Burnout” written by The Cleveland Clinic located at <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/9225-caregiver-burnout>.

Note: This is for informational purposes only.

For referrals to community organizations in Guilford County that assist older adults and caregivers with these documents, contact Senior Resources of Guilford’s SeniorLine at (336) 884-6981 in High Point, all other areas (336) 333-6981 or the Caregiver Support Coordinator, at (336) 373-4816 or (336) 883-3586 in High Point.



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