

Behavioural Resource Sheet: Prevention and Signs of Burnout

Caregiver Burnout occurs when a caregiver is mentally, physically, and/or emotionally exhausted from providing care for another person. * Caregiver burnout is viewed as an unintentional negative side effect for those who provide care for individuals with responsive behaviours. This includes staff teams and family caregivers.

Who does this happen to?

- Burnout can happen to anyone (e.g., staff, family)
- Caregivers who are not able to access services they require to care for the person
- Caregivers with limited ability to face additional challenges (e.g., physical, emotional demands)

Common Signs of Burnout:

- Isolation and feelings of abandonment in caring for the individual on your own
- Feeling of helplessness, hopelessness, irritability, anger, and resentment
- Depression, anxiety, stress, fatigue

In the moment...

- It's okay to ask for help. Some options may include: your local Home Care Office, family, friends, spiritual organizations, day programs, respite care, private care, and caregiver support groups.
- Remove yourself from the situation, if safe to do so, and take 10 slow deep breaths focusing on relaxing the muscles in your body, one area at a time.
- Recognize and normalize feelings of guilt and anger: remember that it's the person's condition that is causing the behaviour, not the person.

What can you do to prevent caregiver burnout?

- Practice self-care when you can (e.g., take breaks, watch television, take a relaxing bath, go for a walk with a friend, continue things you did before you became a "full time caregiver").
- Educate yourself on the person's condition and recognize the progression, symptoms, and signs so that you can prepare for what may occur in the future.
- Know your own limits and set realistic boundaries around what is possible for you at this time.
- Stay connected with friends, activities, and your interests. Isolated caregivers may become less involved their social groups, and communities as they struggle to deal with their feelings and provide care. Caregiver groups for families (e.g., Alzheimer's Society) can help.

Resources to help:

- Local Home Care Office/Client Patient Access Services
- Saskatoon Council on Aging Inc. (306-652-2255)
- First Link: Alzheimer's Society (1-800-263-3367)

*Almberg, Grafstrom, & Winblad. 1997

*This form is intended to be used as a tool for teams that work with individuals who express responsive behaviour. If the need for behaviour consultation is required, you may indicate consideration of the above information to the appropriate behavioural management team in your area.