



Caregiver Stress

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Caregiver Stress

- “Suffering of mind or body; severe physical or mental strain”
- “There is no stress until you feel a strain” - Al Siebert, The Survivor Personality
- Stress is subjective and unique to each individual, it is difficult to define objectively.
- Difficult to quantify: men vs. women; cultural/ race; education

Warning Signs of Stress/Strain

- Loss of energy
- Exhausted much of the time
- Feeling out of control
- Feeling tense, nervous
- Lack interest in things you liked to do in past
- Becoming isolated

Continued...

Warning Signs of Stress/Strain

- Increasing health issues
- Sleep problems
- Appetite changes
- Problems with memory
- Irritable
- Abusing or neglecting care receiver
- Thoughts of suicide

Affects of Caregiver Stress

- Positive correlation between workload demands and increased psychological distress
 - » Anxiety
 - » Depression
 - » Fatigue

Some studies have shown that caregivers (current and former) have a decrease in immune system

Identify Source of Caregiver Stress

- Too many demands-time, energy, money
- Conflicting responsibilities
- Differing expectations-family, boss, friends
- Others don't understand how compromised the care receiver is

Continued...

Identify Source of Caregiver Stress

- Difficulty meeting the care receivers need-mental or physical
- Pressured by finances, lack of resources
- Loss of freedom-trapped
- Disagreement with family members
- Family not doing their share

Continued...

Identify Source of Caregiver Stress

- Care receiver expect too much of you
- Family members are negative
- Painful to watch loved-one decline

Coping strategies

- Education of disease and related behaviors
- Join a support group
- Conduct a practical family assessment
- Develop a plan
- Practice positive stress reduction techniques

Education

- Disease process
- Disease course
- Symptoms or behaviors

Support Groups

- Shared Experiences
- Coping strategies for situations and specific behaviors
- Educational
- Community resources

Family Assessment

- Description of identified person's need
- Major problems
- Primary caregivers
- Secondary caregivers
- Social support
- Community Resources
- Financial picture

Develop a Plan

- Not perfect, but the best with resources available
- Set a date to reconvene and evaluate changes
- Make it an option to call group together to help problem solve when the plan is not adequate

Stress Reduction

- Eat healthy
- Exercise
- Get regular check-ups
- Take a break from caregiving

Continued...

Stress Reduction

- Get a flu shot
- Watch for signs of depression
- Stay involved in hobbies
- Laugh with a friend

The Serenity Prayer

-grant me **Serenity** to accept the things I cannot change, **Courage** to change the things I can and **Wisdom** to know the difference.

» *Reinold Niebuhr, 1934*