

The Forgotten Patient

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Learning Objectives

The Learner Will Be Able To:

- Accurately identify the caregiver
- Define and identify caregiver stress
 - Symptoms
 - Signs
- Recommend interventions and support for caregivers



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Definitions

- **Caregiver burnout** is a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion that may be accompanied by a change in attitude -- from positive and caring to negative and unconcerned.
- **Compassion fatigue**-also known as secondary traumatic stress (STS), is a condition characterized by a gradual lessening of **compassion** over time.



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All Encompassing Job

- Caregiving is a marathon, not a sprint
- It is a long term investment with an inevitable end but no definite timeline
- The caregiver gives assistance with activities of daily living (ADL's), medical services coordination, medical supervision, administration of medications and assistance with financial, legal, spiritual and emotional concerns.



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Who are the Caregivers?

- Boomers
- Millennials
- **The sandwich generation**
a generation of people, typically in their thirties or forties, responsible for bringing up their own children and for the care of their aging parents.



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Some Statistics

- Research from the National Family Caregiver Support Center reports
- 45-65 million people provide care for a chronically ill, disabled or aged family member or friend during any given year
- Caregivers spend an average of 25 hours per week providing care for their loved one.
- 87 percent of them are not getting enough sleep



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It Costs Money!



- At an estimated \$470 billion annually, family caregivers deliver twice the amount of care as is delivered by paid care for nursing home and home care services.



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Special Note: The Rural Caregiver

- Removed from readily available and professionally organized supportive services and care networks
- Faced with challenges such as geographic barriers to resources and isolation from other caregivers, family members or informal supports.
- This lack of service availability, care networks, and isolation from other caregivers and family members can add to and magnify caregiver stress, burnout, and depression.



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Concerns for the Caregiver

- ❑ LACK OF TIME
- ❑ Isolation
- ❑ Grief



The Signs of Caregiver Burnout

- ❑ Denial
- ❑ Anger
- ❑ Social withdrawal
- ❑ Anxiety
- ❑ Depression
- ❑ Exhaustion
- ❑ Sleeplessness
- ❑ Emotional reactions
- ❑ Lack of concentration
- ❑ Health problems



Denial

- **Denial** about the disease and its effect on the person with the disease.
- Unrealistic hope for the future



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Anger

- **Anger** is directed at the patient
- Caregivers can become impatient with the patient
- Having unrealistic expectations from the patient demonstrated by over estimation of their abilities
- Lack of recognition regarding condition and the patient's limitations



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Social Withdrawal

- **Caregivers find that they** no longer want to stay in touch with friends or participate in activities once enjoyed.
- Everyone needs a break from time to time
- Caregivers — motivated by a mix of love, loyalty and a dash of guilt — rarely take a break



Anxiety

- **The caregiver may not feel up to** facing another day and what the future holds.
- Feeling overwhelmed



Depression

- **Feeling** sad and hopeless much of the time.



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Exhaustion

- **Difficulty with their own ADLS**
- **Mental**
- **Physical**
- **Spiritual**



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Sleeplessness

- ❑ **Difficulty falling asleep**
- ❑ **Nightmares**
- ❑ **Stressful or vivid dreaming**
- ❑ **Difficulty staying asleep or frequent awakening**
- ❑ **The bewitching hour**



Emotional Reactions

- ❑ **Crying** at minor upsets; you are often irritable.
- ❑ **Feeling furious one minute, sad and helpless the next**
- ❑ **Emotional rollercoaster**
- ❑ **Over reacting**
- ❑ **Under reacting**



Lack of Concentration

- **Trouble** focusing
- Difficulty completing complex tasks
- When distracted, trouble returning to task at the point where the task was interrupted



Health Problems



- **The caregiver** may lose or gain weight, get sick more often (colds, flu), or develop chronic health problems (backaches, high blood pressure)
- Stress takes a toll on the immune system



Why Do We Care About Caregivers?

- **Double Win** when we take care of our unpaid family caregivers they in turn take better care of their loved ones.
- Doctor days go **DOWN** significantly when caregivers are healthy and prepared to give their best care to their loved one.



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Tips For the Caregiver

- **Seek support** from other caregivers. You are not alone!
- **Take care of your own health** so that you can be strong enough to take care of your loved one.
- **Accept offers of help** and suggest specific things people can do to help you.
- Learn how to **communicate effectively** with doctors.
- Caregiving is hard work so **take respite breaks** often.



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Tips For the Caregiver

- **Watch out** for signs of depression and don't delay getting professional help when you need it.
- **Be open** to new technologies that can help you care for your loved one.
- **Organize** medical information so it's up to date and easy to find.
- **Make sure** legal documents are in order.
- **Give yourself credit for doing the best you can in one of the toughest jobs there is!**



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Questions?



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References: Resouces

- www.webmd.com/women/caregiver-recognizing-burnout
- <http://www.aarp.org/relationships/caregiving-resource-center/info>
- www.caregiveraction.org/



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