



Lack of Sleep

Caregiving does not cause depression, but in an effort to answer the needs of the care receiver, caregivers often sacrifice their own physical and emotional health which can then strain even the most capable person. The resulting feelings are often anger, anxiety, sadness, isolation, exhaustion—and then guilt for having these feelings. All this can be a heavy toll.

Lack of sleep is one of the most common problems of long-term caregivers. Poor sleep can exaggerate negative feelings and drain energy, which in turn can contribute to crying frequently or being easily angered by small incidents.

Lack of sleep can certainly contribute to feelings of depression which unfortunately are often seen as a sign of weakness rather than a sign that something is out of balance. Comments such as “snap out of it” or “it’s all in your head” are not helpful. Ignoring or denying your feelings will not make them go away. It is best to deal with the root problem.

If getting good sound uninterrupted rest is an issue in your caregiving routine, try to counter balance the effects with enough exercise, a healthy diet, positive support of family and friends, or consultation with a trained health or mental health professional may help to prevent the development of a more serious and prolonged depression over time.

Loss of sleep as a result of caring for a seriously ill loved one is a pervasive problem and contributes to many bad situations, such as safety, and the quality of care you are providing. Hiring a private duty respite worker, arranging a brief stay in a care facility, or scheduling a stay with another family member can help you get needed rest.