



## Avoiding Burnout

### Burnout

Caregivers work hard to maintain the health and well-being of their loved one, often without the luxury of considering the state of their own health. Burnout is the term given to a constellation of symptoms resulting from prolonged stress.

Signs of burnout may vary from person to person, with how intense it is depending upon many factors, such as personality, age, and health. Symptoms can include:

- Feeling continually exhausted and sleep-deprived
- Becoming more susceptible to illness
- Increased impatience, irritability or forgetfulness
- Withdrawal from social interactions

### Preventing Burnout

The best prevention is to become aware of the symptoms and take steps to minimize the risk of burnout.

- **Awareness.** Acknowledge the particular aspect of caregiving that you find the most stressful. Can it be eliminated from the care routine? If not, try to find other ways to accomplish your goal.
- **Support.** Do you have someone who can be your sounding board when you've reached your limit?
- **Time out.** Taking time off from caregiving is critical for recharging your physical and emotional bodies.
- **Exercise.** Regular physical activity is an important way to release tension. It is important to be in the best physical condition for yourself and your loved one.
- **Take care of yourself.** To maintain optimal health, eat well, get enough rest, and don't be afraid to ask for help. There is no shame in getting some help when it's needed.