



Caring for someone with dementia can be rewarding and challenging. It is normal to feel overwhelmed at times. Taking care of your own health is extremely important. It is when you are healthy that you can best help the person you are caring for. You may be wondering how to balance your own needs with those of others. Below are tips to help you strike this balance:

## RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS OF STRESS:

To make caregiving more manageable, know the 10 warning signs of stress:

- **Denial** about the dementia and its impact on the person.
- **Anger** at the person with dementia, yourself, and/or others.
- **Withdrawing** from friends or activities you once enjoyed.
- **Anxiety** about what the future holds.
- **Depression**, sadness, or hopelessness much of the time.
- **Exhaustion** or lack of energy.
- **Sleeplessness**, waking up in the night, nightmares, or stressful dreams.
- **Emotional** reactions such as crying easily or irritability.
- **Lack of concentration.**
- **Health problems** such as weight change or frequent illness.

## MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES:

- **Identify the sources of stress** (e.g., too many tasks, family disagreements, feelings of guilt or inadequacy).
- **Identify what you can and cannot control.** Trying to change things you have no control over will only increase frustration.
- **Focus on your strengths.** Identify the skills you are using now to prevent burnout.
- **Respect your boundaries.** Taking a step back does not mean you are giving up.
- **Make time for meaningful activities.** This could be walking, gardening, yoga, etc.

## Share the care: No one should face dementia alone.

- **Tell friends and family** what you are going through.
  - Ask what they would like to do off your to-do list.
- **Find local community support services:**
  - Check out the Dementia Society's Take a Break Program: [Click Here](#)
  - Ask your LHIN care coordinator about Home Care services and Adult Day Programs: [Click Here](#)
- **Take a break:** Arrange for days or weeks of care if needed.
  - Contact retirement homes in your area to see if they offer short stays.
  - Check out the Guest House in Ottawa: [Click Here](#)
  - Check out the Marianhill Dementia Respite Unit in Renfrew County: [Click Here](#)
  - If the person lives in a care setting, take a break from visiting if needed.
- **Use services** like housekeeping or home delivered meals: [Click Here](#)

## Take care of your physical and mental health:

- Tell your doctor that you are a caregiver. Plan to monitor for symptoms of depression, sickness, and burnout.
- Join a support group to meet others facing similar situations: [Click Here](#)
- Talk to a Dementia Care Coach about your unique caregiving situation: [Click Here](#)
- Seek mental health support: [Click Here](#)
  - Call the distress centre for crisis support, information and resources: 613-238-3311

## More information and resources:

- A guide to taking care of you: <https://www.caregiver.org/guide-taking-care-yourself>
- Respite tips for caregivers: <https://www.caregiver.org/respit-tips-taking-break-giving-care-someone-need>
- Caregiver resiliency webinar and other on-demand resources: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ys55HhyrWZO&list=PLqiA3A3X-xLlqa8QwqUFCxgLTLr1hLG53>

**Ottawa:** 613-523-4004 **Renfrew-County:** 1-888-411-2067 | [info@dsorc.org](mailto:info@dsorc.org) | [DementiaHelp.ca](http://DementiaHelp.ca)  
Charitable Registration 11878 5013 RR0001