

CAREGIVER STRESS Warning Signs

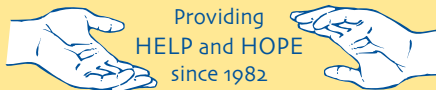
Caregiving can be one of the most stressful situations faced in a lifetime. Common signs that stress may be affecting your health include:

Physical Signs:

- Disturbed Sleep
- Back, Shoulder or neck pain, muscle tension
- Headaches
- Stomach/ Digestive problems
- Loss of hair
- High blood pressure, irregular heart beat, palpitations
- Weight fluctuations
- Chest pain
- Fatigue
- Perspiration
- Skin disorders
- Periodontal disease, jaw pain
- Reproductive problems/ infertility
- Weak immune system: more colds, flu, infections
- Sexual dysfunction/ lack of libido

Emotional Signs:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Mood swings
- Crying
- Butterflies
- Feeling out of control
- Irritability
- Easily frustrated
- Memory problems and lack of concentration
- Increased substance abuse
- Phobias
- Argumentative
- Feeling of isolation
- Job dissatisfaction



Tips for Caregivers

- Take care of your life. Do not let your loved one's brain injury take center stage. Love, honor and value yourself.
- Eat properly, and get enough sleep to maintain your health.
- Get professional help for depression.
- If you have signs of physical distress, seek medical attention immediately.
- Express your emotions. Cry, grieve and release your feelings. You can't always "be strong" or hold it together.
- When people offer to help, ACCEPT THE OFFER, suggesting specific things that take up your valuable time, i.e. grocery shopping, laundry, home repairs, cleaning the house, child care, emergency assistance, taking in the mail, help preparing meals, helping sort through bills, etc.
- Be as informed as possible. Write down questions prior to seeing your loved one's doctors or therapists. Write down the answers.
- Assist your loved one in being as independent as possible. Be open to new technologies and ideas that promote your loved one's independence.
- Grieve for your losses, then allow yourself to dream new dreams.
- Seek support from other caregivers. Join a support group. There is great strength in knowing you are not alone. Call the BIANYS office for information about support groups in your area.



Brain Injury Association of New York State

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