

Center for Successful Aging

Tips for Caregiver Coping

Caring for a loved one can be a challenging task but very rewarding. It's important to also take care of yourself so follow these 13 insights from The Alzheimer Association for your own health:

1. Feelings are neither right nor wrong. Acknowledge them. There will be good and bad days but eventually the sharp pain will diminish.
2. If possible, don't make any major decisions while grieving. If you must make a decision, be sure to obtain support and advice from trusted friends or a counselor.
3. Don't try to suppress your feelings with alcohol or drugs.
4. Recognize that certain times (holidays, anniversaries, significant days during the disease like care placement or the day someone dies) can be stressful. Take time for your own needs and simplify your life during these times.
5. Since everyone grieves differently, do what is comfortable for you. Don't feel you have to go through the process like someone else.
6. Get plenty of rest, as emotional expenditures drain us of energy.
7. Allow for times of reflection. Many find solace in their spiritual life.
8. Find people who will let you talk without judging. Often, those who have experienced a similar loss (like members of a support group) can relate especially well.

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9. Learn to accept help. Obtain practical and emotional help. Let others know what is happening and how they can help. Don't just expect them to just know what to do.

10. Alzheimer's is a hard disease. Appreciate the little moments and seek the beautiful things in life to help keep things in balance.

11. Be kind to yourself. Don't expect perfection. We all make mistakes so practice forgiveness and try to be realistic about what you can do.

12. A routine often helps us get back some structure and sense of normalcy.

13. Take things one day at a time. The pain will lessen if you have processed it, and hope will return.

Source: <http://www.homewatchcaregivers.com/dementia-care-tips/the-long-goodbye.aspx>

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