Appreciating COPD Caregivers

by NEWLIFEOUTLOOK TEAM

Avoiding COPD Caregiver Burnout

Caring for someone with COPD isn’t easy. Physical exhaustion paired with the heartbreak of seeing your loved one struggle to take each breath is bound to lead to caregiver burnout.

As well as the tips listed below for preventing burnout, remember that talking to someone who understands about your struggles as a caregiver can be a huge help. Consider talking to a therapist or a fellow COPD caregiver to express your feelings of loss, frustration, resentment, anger or guilt. Keeping these perfectly normal feelings bottled up can be damaging to your mental health, and your ability to provide the best care you can.

Also remember that it’s not selfish to take a break — it’s healthy. Taking time to relax and recharge makes you a happier, more effective caregiver.

Read our COPD caregivers infographic below to learn more about caregiving and avoiding burnout.


Family
CARE GIVERS MONTH
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An infographic by
newlifeoutlook
90 MILLION
Americans are caregivers for loved ones who are sick or disabled in some way.[1]
1 MILLION AMERICANS
are also caring for veterans from the
IRAQ+AFGHANISTAN
wars who have various injuries and mental illnesses.
True Dedication
A caregiver may help their loved one with washing, dressing, eating and other daily activities, as well as taking medications, getting to doctors appointments, and so much more.
Healthcare
CARE
Family members who require care may be victims of have a disability or chronic condition. Some of the conditions that may cause a person to require care include:
Multiple sclerosis
Lupus
Fibromyalgia
COPD
Downs syndrome
Muscular dystrophy
Autism
Cancer
ALS
Epilepsy
HIV/AIDS
Arthritis
Osteoporosis
Parkinson's
The young and
YOUNG AT HEART
Because of America's aging population, the number of people needing care has been rising, and is expected to keep going up.
By 2030 people 65 and older are expected to make up around 19% of the American population, up from 12.9% in 2009.[3]
However, parents caring for children with disabilities are also in the family caregiver ranks. Children with conditions like autism, muscular dystrophy and down's syndrome all require a caregiver, often through into adulthood.
CAREGIVER
BURNOUT
Caregiver burnout is when a caregiver becomes emotionally and physically exhausted under the strain of caring for another person. This can manifest as:
Irritability and feeling blue
Fatigue and changes in sleep patterns
Withdrawing from friends and other loved ones
Abandoning activities you used to enjoy
Changes in appetite and/or weight
Depression and/or anxiety
Six tips to
AVOID BURNOUT[4, 5]
Stay
HEALTHY
It's easy to spend so much time thinking about your loved one's health that you completely forget about your own. Make sure you look after yourself, too – eat well, exercise, and get enough sleep.
Pursue your
INTERESTS
Giving up on your hobbies and interests because of your caregiving duties can take a toll on your mental health and could lead you to resent your loved one. Make time to do things you enjoy.
Take time to
DE-STRESS
Consider taking up a stress-reducing activity like yoga, meditation or deep-breathing techniques, that will help you let go of the stresses of being a caregiver.
Take
A BREAK
Being a caregiver, although a labor of love, can be emotionally and physically draining. Take time out from being a caregiver every now and then to rest and recharge.
Connect with other
CAREGIVERS
Joining a support group or an online forum for caregivers can help you to feel less alone in your struggles and provide a sense of community.
Seek and
ACCEPT HELP
There's no shame in admitting you need help. Asking for help, or accepting it when it's offered, can lighten your load and make you better able to cope.
newlifeoutlook
November is National Family Caregivers Month.
Share this to show your support for the many millions of dedicated Americans who selflessly provide care for their loved ones.
Resources: