If you notice some of these warning signs, you are probably reaching caregiving burnout. It’s time to take a break and get support from others.

Seek Respite Care

Respite care is an opportunity for the caregiver to get away from caregiving duties for a few hours or a few days. Persons can come into the home, or the care receiver can be taken to another location to receive care.

Often you can find respite programs in hospitals, nursing homes, home health care agencies, adult day-care centers, religious organizations, and other agencies. To find out which program might be available in your area contact:

- The Illinois Department on Aging Senior Helpline at 1-800-252-8966
- Your local Area Agency on Aging
- Your local senior center

Warning Signs

- No matter what you do, it doesn’t seem like enough.
- You no longer have any time to be alone for even a little while.
- Your caregiving duties interfere with your work and personal life.
- You find yourself overeating or undereating, abusing drugs or alcohol, or your taking your frustrations out on your care receiver.
- You feel exhausted, resentful, frustrated, and angry all the time.
When friends and family offer assistance, let them do something. Also, don’t be afraid to request their help when you need to take a break. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness. Your well-being is important. Even a 20-minute break each day will help reduce stress and prevent burnout.

Caregiving takes a lot of time and dedication. Remember that taking care of yourself benefits not only you, but also your family, your friends, and the care receiver. Meeting your own needs will give you additional strength and energy to complete your caregiving tasks.

List options for respite that you can identify in your community.

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When I need respite, I will:

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For more information, read:

- Caring for Yourself While Caring for Your Aging Parents- 3rd Edition by Claire Berman, Holt Paperbacks, 2005
- Taking Care of Aging Family Members by Wendy Lustbader and Nancy Hooyman, the Free Press, 1993.

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This tip sheet is part of a series:

Caregiving Relationships: For People Who Care for Adults

University of Illinois Extension, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

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