

## Signs of Stress

There is no denying that as a caregiver or respite care provider you are hardworking, but is there a chance that you are working *too* hard? Providing permanent or respite care can be a demanding position; whether you care for someone all day everyday or for only a few hours each week, you are exhausting mass amounts of energy to care for your care recipient. While using much of your time and energy demonstrates dedication toward your position and recipient, it is vital to recognize when you may be overly committed.

Succumbing to the demands of your position as a caregiver or respite care provider can result in severe stress or feelings of exhaustion and burnout. To determine the severity of stress it is important to pay attention to your emotions and mental and physical health. Take note of your patience and contentment during regular activities in your everyday life. Do you feel exhausted or frustrated after completing everyday tasks? Are you constantly overcome by anxiety toward your care recipient? Also pay attention to your personal health. Are you getting enough sleep and avoiding excessive eating? Are you falling ill more often than normal? By recognizing irregular behaviors, it will be easier to help weaken and even terminate your feelings of stress and burnout.

The best things you can do to diminish your tension are to speak out about your stress, enlist help from others whether it be from family members or professional respite care providers, and schedule check-ins to ensure you remain relatively stress-free. Do not try to hide your feelings of stress, and do not let it overpower your position as a caregiver or your relationships with your family and care recipient. Be vocal with your stress-related problems and ask for help when you need it. By evaluating your wellbeing and following these steps you will be on your way to ensuring better relationships, better attitudes, and a better you.

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## Exercise for Stress

Working as a full-time or nearly full-time caregiver can use up a lot of energy, and sometimes even sharing the responsibility is not enough to keep you relaxed. Exercise can be the key to relieving or managing the stress in your life. Consider how you currently cope with stress from the following suggestions to determine which type of exercise is the best fit for you.



If you become angry in response to stress or irritated, it is best to participate in exercises that evoke silence and calmness, such as meditation or deep breathing.

If you respond to stress feeling depressed or aloof, use exercise techniques that energize you, such as running or dance-related workouts.

If you slow down or stop functioning externally due to stress, you need to “reboot” with exercises such as walking or yoga, to evoke mindfulness and stimulation.

*For further explanations or more information please refer to [helpguide.org](http://helpguide.org).*

## De-Stress Recipe Blueberry Oatmeal

You will need: milk, quick-cooking oats, salt, brown sugar, ground cinnamon, blueberries

- 1) In a small saucepan, bring 1-3/4 cups of milk to a boil, and then stir in 1 cup of oats and 1/8 teaspoon of salt.
- 2) Cook on medium heat for 1-2 minutes while stirring occasionally, and stir in 1/3 cup of brown sugar and 1/2 teaspoon of ground cinnamon.
- 3) Add 3/4 cup of blueberries



*Recipe retrieved from [tasteofhome.com](http://tasteofhome.com)*

## Take Care of Yourself

As someone who cares for someone else the majority of the time, it would seem that you should be an expert in taking care of yourself, but oftentimes this is not the case. When you become so attached to your duty as a caregiver or committed to the recipient of your care, you can neglect your *own* care. When you constantly ignore your needs you can become stressed or burnt out, resulting in repercussions harmful toward others and yourself. Caring for another may or may not be your primary job, but it is important to tend to your needs and to understand why you may not be keen on doing so.

The largest factor resulting in self-care neglect is guilt. Being someone who has dedicated their lives to helping others, you can often feel guilty or selfish for prioritizing your own needs over another's. What you need to realize, however, is that when you don't care for yourself you are also impacting those close to you, including your care recipient. You need to be healthy and well if you are to be capable of caring for someone else. If you are not at your best, how can you expect those around you to be? Fortunately, there are several ways in which you can be on the right track to a better you.

Participate in everyday activities. Go through a morning routine, go to work if you have a second job, exercise daily. Doing similar routines everyday can remove the feeling of responsibility that is weighing you down. This is because your daily activity benefits *you* and gives you a sense of purpose and belonging.

Similar to fulfilling everyday obligations, do something you enjoy and something that you can use to express your feelings. Writing, blogging, practicing music, making art, and cooking are all enjoyable ways to work out your emotions without lashing out towards others.

Sometimes placing your energy and emotions into creative outlets does not provide you with the closure or satisfaction you need, in which case it may be best to find a support group or someone close whom you can talk with, to help work out those stressful struggles that come with being a caregiver. This method can be especially helpful if you are constantly stressed from your caregiving position.

You may not always feel you have the time to take care of yourself, but it is vital that you make time to ensure sufficient care for your recipient and better relationships with those close to you. Getting into the habits of participating in daily routines, expressing your feelings creatively, and talking about your job's difficulties are all great ways to focus on a healthier and happier you.

# NEBRASKA RESPITE NETWORK



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eliminating racism  
empowering women **ywca**

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The National Respite Network has funding available for those who qualify that helps pay for a respite care provider to come in and take the place of the caregiver, so that the caregiver can receive temporary relief from their position.

The use of respite care services diminishes hospital costs or alternative care center expenses.

Anyone can provide respite care; caregivers can select a friend, neighbor, family member, or anyone they trust to care for the recipient temporarily as long as the individual appointed does not live in the same household. While there are minimal requirements to becoming a respite care provider, it is recommended that those who volunteer have a positive and caring attitude, and are willing to help others.

To apply for a respite subsidy or to find a provider, visit [nrrs.ne.gov](http://nrrs.ne.gov). To receive a mailed subsidy application or access more information, contact our Southeast Nebraska Respite Coordinator Mary Shada at [mary@ywcalincoln.org](mailto:mary@ywcalincoln.org) or 402-434-3494.

## Upcoming Respite Training Sessions

There is a free 8-hour respite care worker-training course where lunch is provided. Mary Shada is a certified REST respite trainer and will be conducting sessions on the following dates:

Tuesday, June 30 in Beatrice, NE  
Saturday, July 18 in Lincoln, NE

To sign up for a training session, or for more information contact Mary Shada through email or phone using the contact information provided above.