

Caring for the Caregiver

AARP conducted a survey among caregivers and care recipients to examine the emotions they experience and how their relationship with their loved one may have changed as a result of caregiving. The results found:

- Four in 10 caregivers weren't prepare to take on the role of family caregiver.
- Caregivers experience a wide variety of emotions, and positive emotions outweighed negative emotions.
- More than half the caregivers say they've experienced an unexpected joy in caregiving.
- A quarter of respondents say they have regrets.

Being a caregiver can be very stressful, and many caregivers find themselves getting burned out. Signs of caregiver burnout include:

- Emotional and physical exhaustion
- Feeling pulled in two directions
- Withdrawal from friends, family and other loved ones
- Loss of interest in activities the caregiver previously enjoyed
- Changes in appetite, weight or both
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Getting sick more often
- Feelings of alienation, helplessness or hopelessness
- Lack of energy to do new things
- Feelings of wanting to hurt himself or herself, or the person he or she is caring for
- Excessive use of alcohol, medications or sleeping pills
- Losing control physically or emotionally
- Feeling stressed in the patient's presence
- Difficulty concentrating
- Missing appointments



If you're a caregiver, here are some ways you can avoid burnout:

- Remind yourself that your work has value.
- Find ways to communicate.
- Join a support group.
- Get organized.
- Nurture the positive relationships in your life.
- Give yourself a break.
- Don't forget to take care of your own health.

Sources: caregiver.org*, aarp.org*

*Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network don't own or control these websites.