

The Comfort of Home™ November 2011

Caregiver Assistance Newsletter

Alzheimer's Disease & Difficult Behavior

Hoarding and Clutter

In caring for someone with Alzheimer's disease (AD), some behaviors are more difficult to deal with than others. You must learn to cope with the behavior and to keep yourself from burnout.

Your reaction depends on how you interpret the behavior. If you think of these behaviors as a way for the person with AD to communicate what she needs and feels, or what is upsetting her, you'll be better able to respond calmly. Always take a moment to consider if the person in your care is ill, in pain, tired, or otherwise uncomfortable. Then, ask yourself if you are asking too much of him or *her*.

Hoarding

Individuals with dementia are continuously losing parts of their lives—work, friends, family, and memories.

November Is National AD Awareness Month

65% of AD patients are women.

One-third of all female caregivers care for somebody with AD 24/7.

Source: The Shriver Report (Maria Shriver & The Alzheimer's Association)

This can make them hoard to “keep things safe.” Hoarding can also be triggered by a fear of being robbed.

An uncluttered home is the ideal environment. But remember that safety and security are more important than perfection.

Build trust. Any changes you make to the home may cause a person with dementia to become very anxious.

Safety first. Check for fire hazards, fall hazards, and poisoning hazards. Keep things like cleaning fluids, plant soil, lotions, and medicines out of reach. Regularly check the refrigerator to make sure that old food is tossed. Because some frail adults hold onto furniture while moving through the home, make sure that these supports are stable.



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Taking Care of Yourself—Caregiver Burnout Checklist

Ask yourself the following questions and seek professional help if you answer Yes to most questions.

1. What are your expectations? Are they realistic? Are you expecting the person with AD to get better or to always be pleasant because of all the time and concern you put into his care Yes or No
2. Do you wish he would show gratitude? Yes or No
3. When expected help does not come through, do you get disappointed and try to do everything yourself? Yes or No
4. Are you feeling tired, isolated, helpless, angry, resentful, or guilty? Yes or No
5. Are you physically ill yourself and not going to the doctor or following the doctor's instructions about how to care for yourself? Yes or No
6. Have you stopped making time for yourself, to refuel and nourish your own interests and friendships? Yes or No
7. Are you using destructive ways of coping, such as alcohol, overeating, or misusing drugs? Yes or No
8. Have you caught yourself calling him bad names? Yes or No
9. Do you want to scream at him? Yes or No
10. Are you afraid you may hurt him? Yes or No

LIVE LIFE LAUGHING

We are so grateful for the many things that did *not* happen today.



Don't Fall – Be Safe

Be sure to have the proper snow shoes or boots when walking outside .

Good Manners - Visits

During the holidays, you might wonder if it really matters whether or not you visit someone with AD, since the person will forget you were even there. While the visit may be forgotten almost immediately, the warm emotions created by the visit may linger long after you've left.