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AN INTRO TO

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# Caregivers Fatigue

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An introductory guide to overcoming  
caregivers fatigue

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A Publication of



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“ Caregiver fatigue is a state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion that may be accompanied by a change in attitude from positive caring to negative and unconcerned. ”

-Web MD, Recognizing Caregiver Burnout

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## CHAPTER

# 1

## Educate Yourself

Every person involved directly in the care of a loved one or a patient should clearly know the causes and symptoms of caregivers fatigue. This modern malady is common among the healthcare industry as well as those who care for their loved ones at home. How do I know I am dealing with it? Here are a few symptoms common to the phenomenon.

### **Symptoms:**

- (1) A constant feeling of being emotionally, spiritually, and physically drained.
- (2) An overwhelming resentment about your workload or life in general, a continued state of frustration.
- (3) Fatigue, high blood pressure, and regular headaches.
- (4) A marked loss of appreciation for people.
- (5) Minor decisions become major issues.

Other symptoms may or may not include things such as a depersonalization with your job, a lasting “I don’t care attitude,” excessive indecision, inability to sleep, and excessive fatigue.

**Here are a few methods you might use to educate yourself:**

- Read books on the subject.
- Search the Internet for relevant articles.
- Talk with your co-workers or a trusted friend.
- Share your experience and story.
- Ask others how they cope with C.F.
- Attend a caregivers support group.

**Application:**

Things I need to do might include:

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## CHAPTER

# 2

## Sharpen Self-Awareness

What is self-awareness? Self-awareness is simply the ability to look inside and judge one's thoughts, feelings, and emotions. It is becoming aware of what's going on in the inner world of your life.

Psychologists use a word called *metacognition* to describe the process. It literally means to become conscious of what you are focused on, or simply to think about what you are thinking about.

When we learn to sharpen our self-awareness, we grow and develop perspective about life and ourselves. It is an absolute must when it comes to recognizing and moving beyond caregivers fatigue.

Here are a few other advantages of becoming more self-aware:

- It helps you to become aware of your natural tendencies that work against you.
- You become more aware of your strengths and weaknesses.
- It motivates you to take action to change.
- It helps you recognize triggers that set you on a downward path.
- It aids in recognizing symptoms that clue you in to what you are feeling.
- It reveals your blind spots and helps you become more amiable.
- It helps you to see what everyone else sees about you and often times motivates you to change.

**Application:**

Things I need to do might include:

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## CHAPTER

# 3

## Set Healthy Boundaries

Every person needs healthy boundaries in his or her life, especially in light of the busy day and age we are living in. This topic in and of itself could take up a whole book; however, for time's sake, here are a few pointers on how healthy boundaries can be formed in your life.

Healthy boundaries begin when one is able to acknowledge and respect his or her own limits. As much as we dislike the notion, all of us have limitations. These limits include, but are not limited to:

- Physical limitations
- Emotional issues
- Spiritual values
- Financial issues
- Many other areas of life.



Also, healthy boundaries involve honoring what some would call “stopping and starting” points. As a society, we have blurred the line between stopping and starting. We take our work home with us on our tablets, phones, and numerous ways. This constant engagement produces undue stress, wear, and tear on our lives.

Here are a few ways to set healthy boundaries in your life:

- Create daily “margin” into your life. Margin is simply time and space.
- Talk over your proposed “margins” with your loved ones.
- Re-examine your margins regularly, they can be subject to change.
- Schedule some “me time” into your life as a margin.
- Realize that what is a boundary in your family, might not be a margin in the workplace and visa versa.
- Allow yourself “guilt free” permission to honor your margins.

**Application:**

Things I might need to do include:

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## CHAPTER

# 4

## Put a Plan In Place

Nothing works without a plan. Without a written plan, you only have an idea, or possibly a good intention. It's the written plan that crystalizes the idea.

A plan also helps you to chart your progress. A lack of progress is the number one killer of good intention. As you work through step one, two, etc., motivation stays alive and things get done.

Every person should put in place a written plan with at least three healthy steps. Create a 1<sup>st</sup> step, 2<sup>nd</sup> step, and 3<sup>rd</sup> step, etc. Many never get started because they want the perfect plan in place. It doesn't work that way - start with what you have and create your plan.

## **Other Possible Steps**

- Set personal boundaries.
- Process your emotions.
- Find an outlet.
- Guard your “me time.”
- Manage your stress.
- Get more rest.

Have you got your plan in place?

## **Application:**

Things I might need to do include:

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## CHAPTER

# 5

## Take Action

Once you have your plan in place, you should know exactly what you will do when you recognize the signs of Caregiver's Fatigue popping up in your life. Take Action!

Do plans need adjusting at times? Of course, but you have to start someplace. Other actions might include things like an accountability partner to keep you encouraged, a good book related to the topic, a short respite, etc.

It is important to remember that recovery from caregivers fatigue is not automatic. It requires conscious action on your part.

**Application:**

Things I might need to do include:

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# Conclusion

## Caregivers Fatigue Is Real

About 1 in 5 Americans is a caregiver. Most have other jobs and spend numerous other hours caring for a loved one. It is also a well known fact that caregivers are more likely to have a long term health problem like depression, arthritis or diabetes. .

The good news is that you can lower your risk for health problems if you take care of yourself and get support.

Learn to ask for help. You don't need to do it all yourself. Ask family members, friends or healthcare professionals. If you are feeling overwhelmed, talk with a doctor about depression.



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# Need More Help?

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Excell Hospice offers a caregivers support group in conjunction with Sunbeam Services that meets over the lunch hour on the second Tuesday of every month. If you would like more information please contact us at:

**405-631-0521**

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