Depression and Anxiety in Family Caregivers and Older Adults

Sherri Chapell Pratt, LCSW-S

Director of Counseling

Are you depressed?

Bad days are normal! Unless they last longer than 2 weeks or if the symptoms are severe

SYMPTOMS

- Feeling empty, hopeless or rundown
- Little interest in activities you once enjoyed
- Irritable
- Trouble concentrating
- Weight loss or gain
- Changes in your sleep pattern

Caregiver Depression

Many caregivers experience depression. You are not alone. Depression is a serious condition BUT one that is treatable.

SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION IN CAREGIVERS

- Becoming easily agitated
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Thoughts of death, dying or suicide
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Disturbed sleep
- Loss of interest or pleasure in usual activities
- Difficulty thinking or concentrating
- Changes in appetite and weight
- Physical symptoms that do not respond to treatment such as pain, digestive issues or headaches

Treating Depression, Stress and Anxiety

WHAT DO I DO?

- See your doctor
- Medication
- Counseling
- Let family and friends help you
- Seek out caregiver support
- Journaling
- Meditation or yoga
- Take time for yourself
- Focus on what you can do
- Set goals you can reach
- Take breaks-respite care
- Eat healthy
- Stay active

Why Caregiving Can Lead to Depression

- Lack of sleep
- Poor diet
- Little exercise
- Less time for socializing
- Butting heads
- Work and money problems
- Smoking and drinking
- Caregiving hours

What is Caregiver Burnout?

Mental, emotional and physical exhaustion brought on by caring for a loved one.

CAUSES

- Lack of support
- Neglecting own emotional, mental and physical health needs
- Not taking adequate breaks
- Role confusion (separating caregiver role from other roles i.e. spouse or child)
- Overwhelming demands
- Unrealistic expectations of what caregiving involves and its results
- Refusing help or denying that you are experiencing caregiving
- Stress

Signs and Symptoms of Caregiver Stress

- Feelings of depression
- Feelings of anxiety
- Avoiding others
- Feeling irritable or resentful
- Neglecting personal needs
- Lack of energy
- Neglecting physical, mental and emotional health

You Are Not Alone

- Ask for help – family and friends, local resources for caregivers (such as PEARLS)
- ADRC
- AAA
- Mobile apps and web-based services (care.com, family caregiver in your app store)

QUESTIONS?