

ATTENDANT AND CAREGIVING WELLNESS AND RESOURCES

Your role as a personal attendant is critical to the success of the participant being able to live in the community of choice and live the life of choice. However, it is a fact that providing on-going supports each day can be exhausting. There are many resources to assist you to make some time for your own Rest and Relaxation (R& R). Here are some ideas to check yourself for burnout and some resources to assist you with supporting yourself.

Caregiver burnout is a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion that may be accompanied by a change in attitude -- from positive and caring to negative and unconcerned. Burnout can occur when caregivers don't get the help they need, or if they try to do more than they are able -- either physically or financially. Many caregivers also feel guilty if they spend time on themselves rather than on their ill or elderly loved ones. Caregivers who are "burned out" may experience fatigue, stress, anxiety, and depression. According to the CDC, 53% of caregivers report that their own health has gotten worse due to caregiving.

Check to see if you exhibit any of these symptoms. Symptoms of caregiver burnout are similar to the symptoms of stress and depression. They include:

- *Withdrawal from friends, family, and other loved ones*
- *Loss of interest in activities previously enjoyed*
- *Feeling blue, irritable, hopeless, and helpless*
- *Changes in appetite, weight, or both*
- *Changes in sleep patterns*
- *Getting sick more often*
- *Feelings of wanting to hurt yourself or the person for whom you are caring for*
- *Emotional and physical exhaustion*
- *Irritability*

Be aware that you, too, may benefit from some supports. Remember to laugh, play upbeat music, take a cat nap, eat some chocolate and write your thoughts down, etc. The following sites provide a large number of supports and ideas to assist you with your own care.

Resources:

- **AARP (www.aarp.org):** Provides advocacy, information, services & support. Provides online support groups for caregivers.
- **TraumaticbraininjuryAtoZ.org**
- **Brainline.org**
- **Lapublishing.com**
- **WVCD Traumatic Brain Injury Program - 877-724-8244** Email: TBI@hsc.wvu.edu
- **Alzheimer's Association (www.alz.org) - 1-800-272-3900.** Information & support for people with Alzheimer's disease and their caregivers. Operates a 24/7 help line & care navigator tools.
- **Alzheimers.gov (www.alzheimers.gov):** The governments free information resource about Alzheimer's disease & related dementias.
- **ARCH Respite Network (www.archrespite.org):** Find programs & services that allow for caregivers to get a break from caring for a loved one. Provides online support groups for caregivers.
- **Eldercare Locator (www.eldercare.gov) - 1-800-677-1116.** Connects caregivers to local services & resources for older adults & adults with disabilities across the United States.
- **Family Caregiver Alliance (www.caregiver.org) - 1-800-445-8106.** Information, education and services for family caregivers. Provides a state by state list of services & support.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Acquire Training Solutions – online staff and caregiver training

http://acquiretraining.com/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1

WV Traumatic Brain Injury Services Waiver Training Modules

Compensatory Strategies, Direct Care Roles and Responsibilities, TBI Overview

<http://tbi.cedwvu.org/>

Each training module meets one hour of the four hours annual training focusing on enhancing direct care service delivery knowledge and skills for people with traumatic brain injuries

Michigan Traumatic Brain Injury Online Training

Cognitive & Behavioral Consequences of Traumatic Brain Injury in Adults

<http://www.mitbitraining.org/Default.aspx>

Center for Neuro Skills

Online continuing education modules

<http://www.neuroskills.com/education/continuing-education-courses.php>

Currently there is a \$60/course processing and certification fee/person

Traumatic Brain Injury and Public Services in North Carolina

Online continuing education modules (while there is some North Carolina specific information the primary focus of the modules is appropriate to anyone wanting brain injury information)

<http://www.nctbitraining.org/main.aspx>

Ohio Valley Center for Brain Injury Prevention and Rehabilitation

Online webcourse on accommodation – free

Also a good brain injury and substance abuse resource

When entering information for certificate – unlicensed employees should enter N/A for license number and click Not Applicable button

<http://ohiovalley.org/informationeducation/accommodatingtbi/>

Pennsylvania Homecare Association Learning Center

The following online course titles are approved to be used for TBI-specific training:

- Consumer Choice and Independent Living Philosophy
- Understanding IADLs
- Assistive Devices to Helps Seniors and People with Disabilities
- Maintaining Boundaries with a Consumer

<http://learningcenter.pahomecare.org/dashboard/>