



Caring for Yourself



ODHS Safety, Oversight and Quality Unit April 2021

1

1

CARING FOR YOURSELF

An AFH provider's job is to provide care and support for residents as well as running a business.

Your work is important. You provide care for people who can no longer live in their own homes. Although the experience is rewarding, it's also demanding and can be stressful at times.

Providing care is a 24-hour job. In order to provide the best care and support to residents, it is essential you are also caring for yourself.

ODHS Safety, Oversight and Quality Unit April 2021

2

2

CARING FOR YOURSELF

- Assisting residents with ADL's such as bathing, dressing, grooming, eating, toileting and mobility
- Performing health care tasks as trained by an RN or other health care professional
- Managing medications as ordered by the physician or nurse practitioner
- Planning, preparing and serving meals
- Arranging for and/or conducting resident activities
- Laundering clothes, bedding and linens
- Changing bed linens
- Washing dishes
- Shopping for groceries and other needs
- Providing or arranging for transportation of residents

ODHS Safety, Oversight and Quality Unit April 2021

3

3

CARING FOR YOURSELF

- Setting up appointments for residents and yourself
- Meeting with families, health care professionals and case managers
- Writing individualized care plans
- Maintaining records for each resident
- Keeping track of residents' needs for prescription refills, clothing and personal items
- Supporting residents' companionship needs
- Cleaning house
- Doing bookkeeping and other business paperwork
- Staying up to date on OAR's
- Scheduling and attending training
- Scheduling and managing AFH staff

ODHS Safety, Oversight and Quality Unit April 2021

4

4

WHAT IS “BURNOUT”?

BURNOUT

Job burnout is a special type of work-related stress — a state of physical or emotional exhaustion that also involves a sense of reduced accomplishment and loss of personal identity.

Burnout is caused by energy reserves being gradually, and continuously, drained with no recharging.

Burnout can interfere with your ability to be patient, understanding and compassionate.

BURNOUT SYMPTOMS

- Changes in physical or health status such as general fatigue
- Difficulty sleeping
- Compulsive eating or not eating at all
- Dependence on drugs or alcohol
- Changes in emotional status or behavior – for example, anger, impatience, irritability
- Frustration
- Resentment
- Helplessness
- Feeling of being trapped, overburdened or overwhelmed
- Feeling all alone
- Frequent illness

BURNOUT SYMPTOMS

- Sadness or depression
- Feeling out of control
- Shouting at or hitting others
- Negative attitude
- Distancing self from residents and their families
- Procrastination
- Change in mental status – for example, disorientation
- Confusion
- Difficulty concentrating or reducing stress

ODHS Safety, Oversight and Quality Unit April 2021

7

7

BURNOUT PREVENTION

- Eat a well-balanced diet.
Eating well supplies you with the nutrients and calories you need for good health and energy to do your work
- Perform aerobic exercise – you may be physically active; however, to help reduce stress you need to do aerobic exercise at least 20 minutes three times a week
- Get some fresh air
- Get enough sleep
- Take proper care of your health needs
- Understand, accept and express your emotions
- Spend time with people who help you feel good about yourself – develop a support system of people with whom you can talk freely concerning your problems and feelings; who will listen and encourage you to take positive steps

ODHS Safety, Oversight and Quality Unit April 2021

8

8

BURNOUT PREVENTION

- Avoid people who continually complain about their lives but do not take action to change
- Join a support group or professional association for AFH providers – you are not alone in the caregiving business
- Be kind to yourself and more tolerant of the way others think and feel
- Take stock of yourself – be aware of the way you talk to yourself and relate to others; are any of your attitudes self-defeating, or do you try to follow “be perfect” scripts?
- Substitute positive for negative attitudes – try to be more flexible in your thinking

ODHS Safety, Oversight and Quality Unit April 2021

9

9

BURNOUT PREVENTION

- Assess your attitudes about caregiving. If you think a residents needs are more important than your own , or that you are the only person who can provide the needed care, you are likely to become over-involved
- Set limits with residents and their family and friends.
- Focus on things you have done that have gone right
- Align your expectations with reality – you will lessen your frustrations and build your confidence
- Mistakes happen – learn from them and make changes, but don't count them
- Simplify your life – reduce the stressors in your personal and professional life, for example, hire a person to clean the house or cook the noon time meal

ODHS Safety, Oversight and Quality Unit April 2021

10

10

WHAT IS “COMPASSION FATIGUE”?

COMPASSION FATIGUE

A condition characterized by emotional and physical exhaustion leading to a diminished ability to empathize or feel compassion for others, often described as the negative cost of caring. It is sometimes referred to as secondary traumatic stress (STS).

Those working in “helping” professions are prone to experience compassion fatigue, often displaying signs of post-traumatic stress.

The onset of compassion fatigue can be sudden, whereas burnout usually emerges over time.

COMPASSION FATIGUE SYMPTOMS

- Chronic physical and emotional exhaustion
- Depersonalization
- Feelings of inequity toward the therapeutic or caregiver relationship
- Irritability
- Feelings or behaviors of indifference
- Feelings of self-contempt
- Difficulty sleeping
- Weight loss
- Headaches
- Poor job satisfaction

COMPASSION FATIGUE PREVENTION

Practicing self-awareness and self-monitoring on a regular basis can help prevent compassion fatigue.

Practicing self-care, regulating sleep habits, exercise, meditating, journaling and seeking professional help are just a few things those in the helping professions can do.

Be alert to signs that you (or staff) are not coping well – compulsive eating or increased use of alcohol or drugs signals trouble, calling in “sick” as a new behavior.

If you notice symptoms of compassion fatigue in yourself or the AFH staff, immediately take steps to combat it. Someone experiencing compassion fatigue cannot provide the best care and support for residents.

ODHS Safety, Oversight and Quality Unit April 2021

13

13

SELF-CARE

What does self-care mean to you?

ODHS Safety, Oversight and Quality Unit April 2021

14

14

PRACTICING SELF-CARE

In order to practice self-care, you may need to plan ahead. It can be a weekly ritual you do for an hour or two, or it can be longer such as a few days or more.

Plan your respite help in advance – work out a schedule that best fits your needs; try to take at least two days off each week.

Take vacations – plan far enough in advance so you can hire and train a reliable relief caregiver

Consider having the person work with you for a few days to learn the routine in your home and become acquainted with and familiar to residents

Knowing your relief caregiver is well prepared will allow you to relax on vacation

Be sure to let your residents, their families and others know you will be on vacation

SELF-CARE

ACTIVITY

Make a list of ways you can recognize burnout and compassion fatigue in yourself.

Next, make a list of self-care activities that are important to you.

Finally, make sure the daily and weekly AFH schedule provides time for you to engage in these activities.