



For Carers, by Carers: When Problems Arise



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Even in the best of situations, there are sometimes going to be problems, and everyone has times when they simply feel overwhelmed. We want you to know we've been there too. Remember that things will change and pass and that you are doing the best you can.

Here are some of the things that have helped us to get through difficult times. We hope they help you as well.



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Sometimes the professionals need to step in – it's not a sign of failure or weakness or not caring. It's actually the opposite of that. It's a sign you are doing what needs to be done.

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“Being able to talk about your problems with someone is important. It’s not necessarily about finding a solution, but airing the challenge and being acknowledged goes partway to handling it.”

What carers would like to share with you:

- “It’s okay to be angry or frustrated. Let it out. Count to ten, walk away and scream out loud, allow yourself to cry, whatever helps you to have your feelings.”
- “Accept what things you can’t overcome. Not everything is doable, and that’s okay. It doesn’t mean you failed. Forget about the things you can’t do and focus on what you can do.”
- “If you’re feeling overwhelmed, think about each thing you need to do and ask yourself, ‘Does this one thing really matter?’ If not, forget it and focus on something else.”
- “You don’t need to do everything yourself. Let others help you.”
- “Praise yourself for the great things you have already managed to do. Even if they seem like small things, they’ve made a huge difference.”
- “Focus on the present. Know you only have to cope for this day or this moment.”



How to know when you need help:

Be honest with yourself, and ask yourself these questions:

- Am I becoming exhausted? Am I having trouble sleeping?
- Am I more tense and anxious than is normal for me and more frequently than normal?
- Am I getting irritable with the person I care for?
- Are small things making me upset or agitated or angry?
- Have I been crying more than usual?
- Am I dreading the thought of yet another day?

If so, it may be a good time to ask someone for help.

And remember, it is a sign of strength to say you are not coping because of the situation. Many people wouldn't have the courage to do that.



How to ask for help:

- Know where to look for help before you need it. It may be a family member or a friend, your GP or your local carer organisation. If you know ahead of time who to ask, it makes asking easier. It's also reassuring to know they are there when you need them.
- If you feel nervous about asking for help, is there someone you feel comfortable talking to? Maybe they can help you ask or ask on your behalf.
- There are even some ways to ask confidentially for help. You can call the Alzheimer Scotland Helpline 24-hours a day, 7 days a week Tel: 0808 808 3000
- Consider making contact with other carers. They understand and won't judge you. They are going through it as well. They may have different ideas and strategies you haven't thought of.
- Speak to a local carer's organisation. They won't think you're stupid, and it's a great relief to feel some support.
- If someone offers you help, take them up on it! Even small gestures can make a big difference.