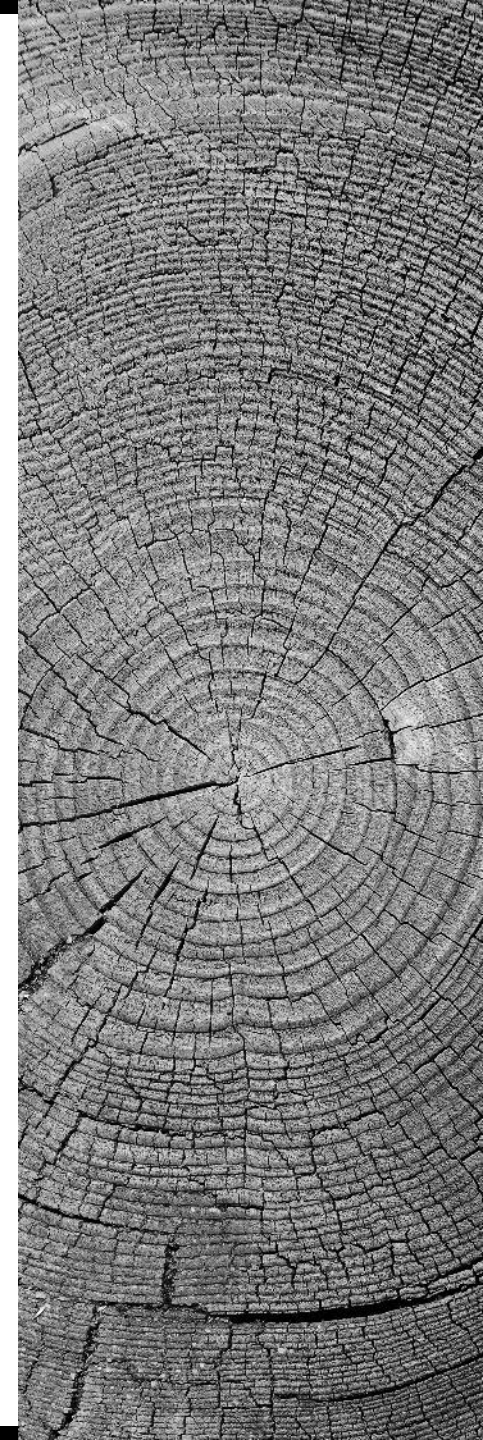


UCD Alzheimer's Disease Center Caregiver Bootcamp

CAREGIVER STRESS + STRESS MANAGEMENT

Presented by Dr. Alyssa Weakley



WHO IS A CAREGIVER?

- Anyone who takes responsibility for the basic needs of another person
 - Physical care, guidance, companionship, emotional support, decision making
 - Temporary or permanent
 - In person or at a distance



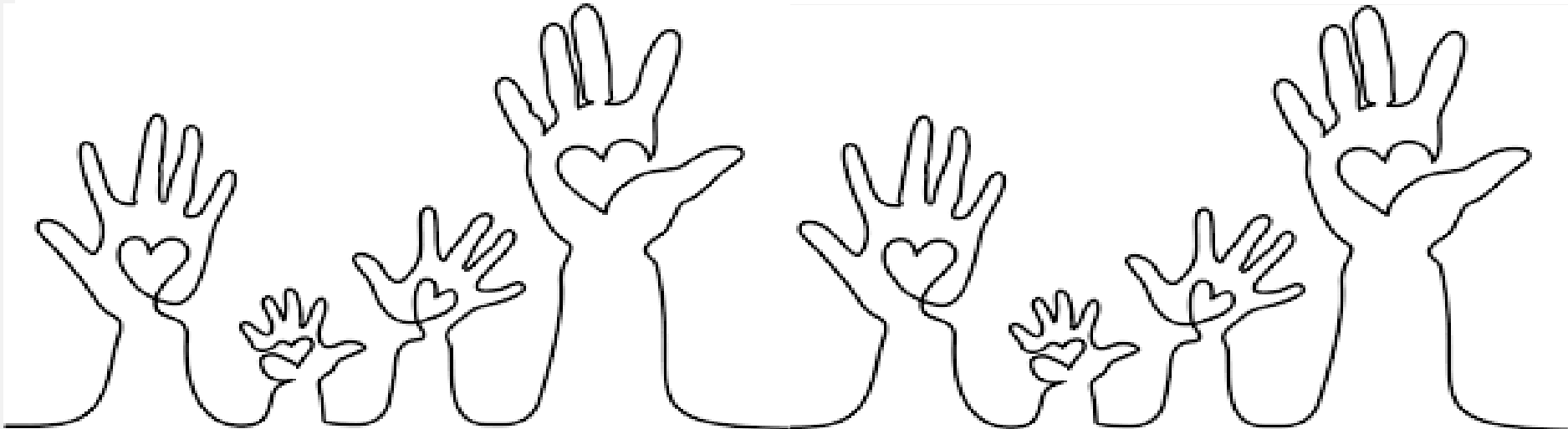
BECOMING A CAREGIVER

- It is not clear when exactly caregivers become caregivers
- The point at which people feel they've become caregivers varies
- It may be a conscious decision or it may just happen
- However it happened, it is important to know that you're working to meet your loved one's needs and best interests AND you are not alone



CAREGIVER STRESS

- Is real
- Is a moving target
- Is unavoidable at times
- Is related to the emotional and physical strain of caregiving
- Is not a reflection on you, your loved one, or your efforts

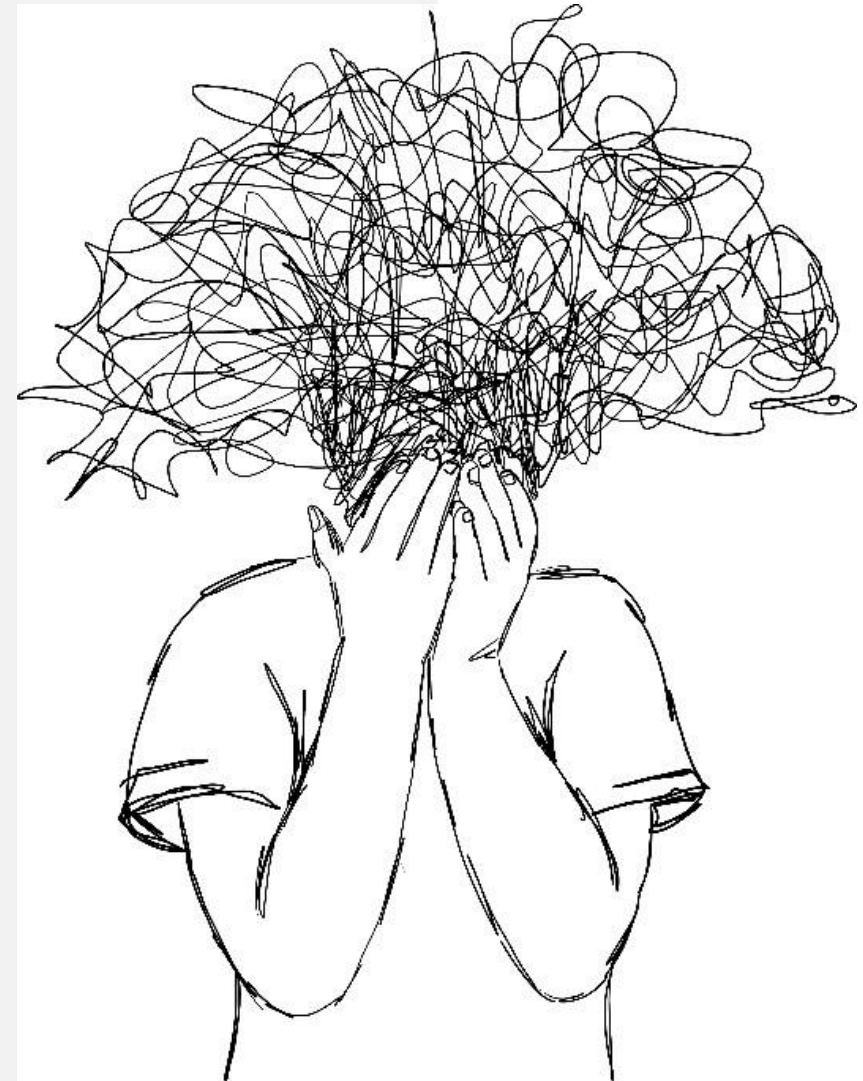


SOURCES OF STRESS

1. Having too much to do
2. Added, unforeseen responsibilities
3. Routine frustrations of daily care, which often are beyond your control
4. Changes that inhibit your lifestyle, social life, and future plans
5. Feeling inadequate to the task of caregiving
6. A sense of personal loss or grief associated with caregiving
7. Disagreements with others regarding care of your love one
8. Uncertainty about what the future holds
9. Sadness regarding what is going on with loved one
10. Financial strain

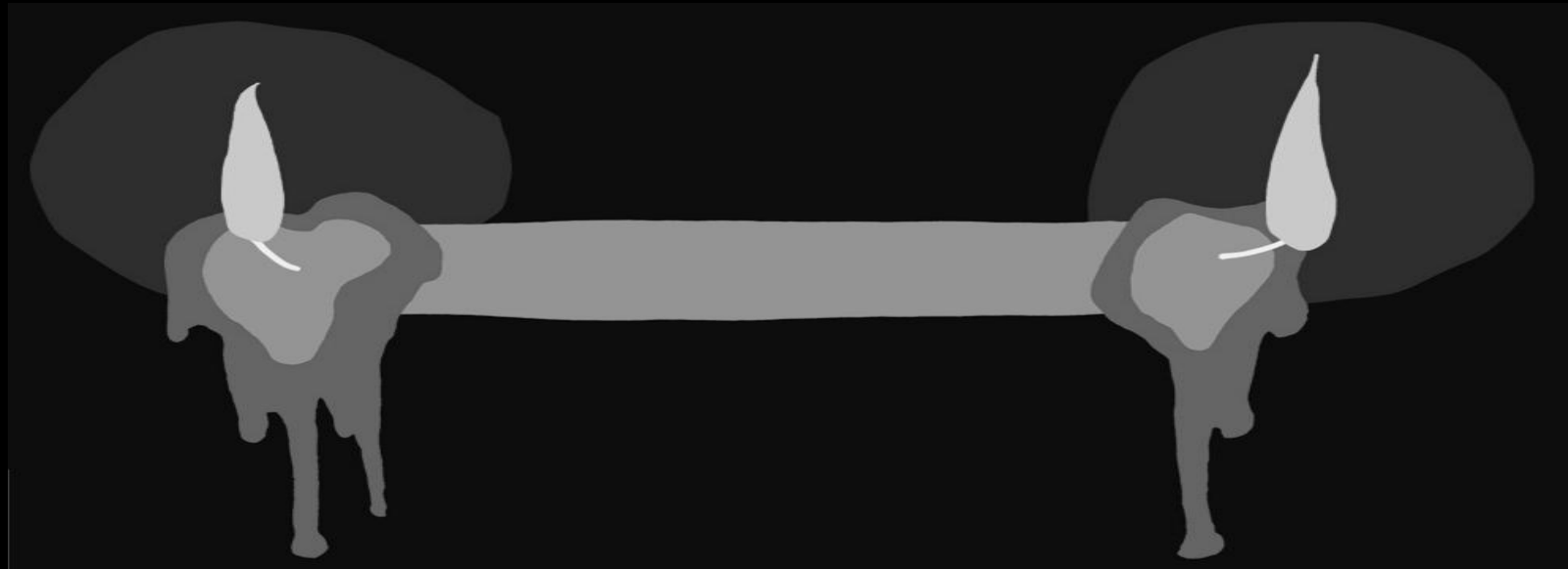
CAREGIVER STRESS WARNING SIGNS

1. Easily lose patience or get angry with your loved one
2. Overreact to minor nuisances
3. Experience a persistent lack of sleep
4. New or worsening health problems
5. Trouble with memory or concentration
6. Feel despair, anguish, or depression
7. Find no joy in any aspect of life
8. Cut back on things you typically enjoy
9. Experience changes in appetite or energy levels
10. Neglect responsibilities
11. Self-medication through substance use, shopping, gambling
12. Have frequent crying spells



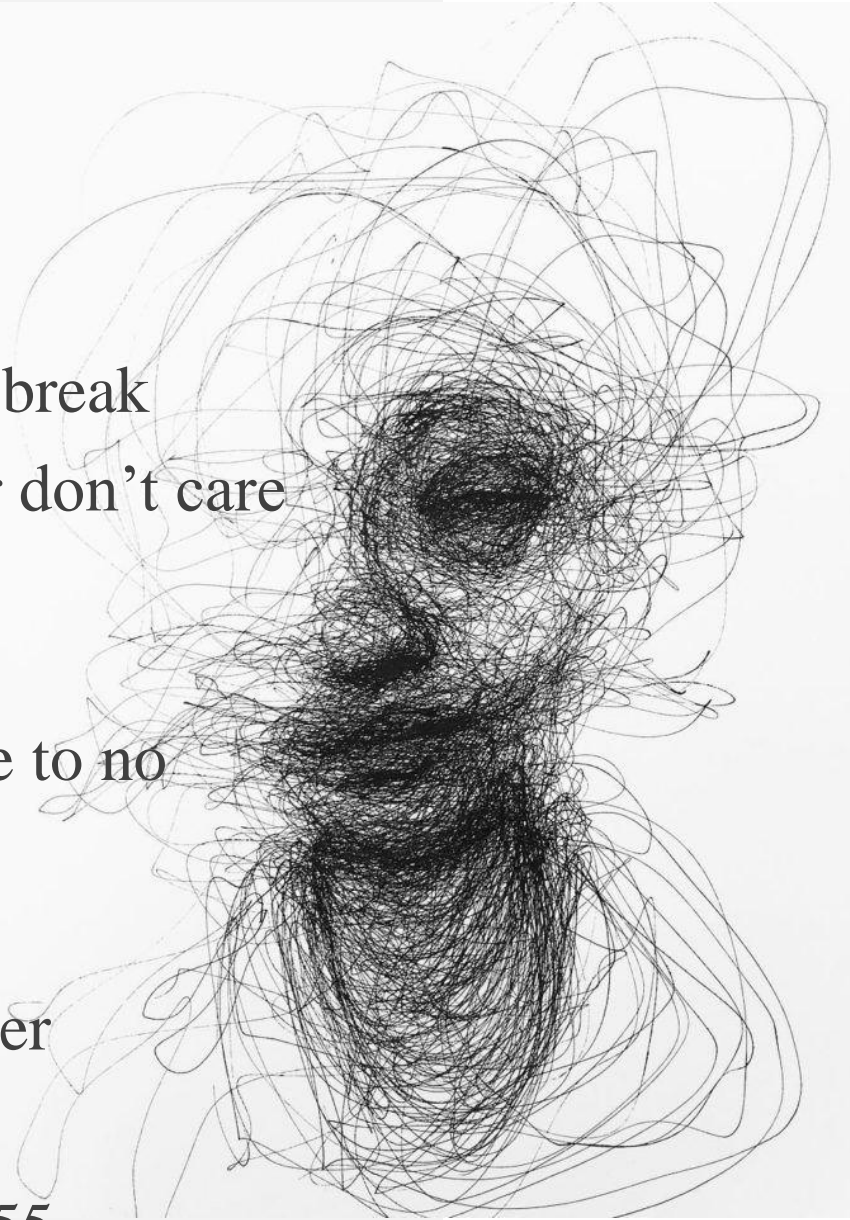
BURNOUT

- State of emotional and physical exhaustion and low morale
- Stress left unchecked
- You and the person you're caring for suffer
- The point at which you may no longer be able to (or should not) continue in caring role



CAREGIVER BURNOUT WARNING SIGNS

1. Much less energy than you once had
2. Easily catch cold/become sick
3. Completely exhausted, even after sleep or taking a break
4. Neglect own needs, either because you are too busy or don't care anymore
5. Feel like you are losing yourself/your self identity
6. Feel life revolves around caregiving and give you little to no satisfaction
7. Trouble relaxing, even when able to
8. Increasingly impatient and irritable toward care receiver
9. You feel helpless and hopeless
10. Think about suicide or end of life [hotline: 800-273-8255](tel:800-273-8255)



RESEARCH ON CAREGIVER BURNOUT

- Mediating role in the relationship between patient behavioral disturbance and nursing home admission
- Worse personal health, injury, depression, anxiety, fatigue, financial problems and employment losses
- Increased risk for cognitive impairment and mortality
- Those with high perceived self-efficacy, social support, and coping strategies experience less strain, higher mental well-being and greater vitality





HEADING OFF STRESS AND BURNOUT

1. Start by increasing your knowledge

- The more you understand about dementia, the better prepared you will be to address and adapt to disease related changes
- Enhances self-efficacy

2. Set realistic expectations

- Learn what the person can do and what may be too difficult, complex, or frustrating
- Take your needs into account
- Learn what you can and cannot do

KNOWING WHAT WE CAN AND CANNOT DO

Caregivers cannot

- Control the course that dementia takes
- Know why the disease affects their loved one in the way it does
- Do everything alone

Caregivers can

- Shape the manner in which they support and care their loved one
- Strengthen their abilities to cope with their assumed responsibilities
- Acknowledge limitations
- Expect and accept missteps
- Learn from experience and experiences of others





HEADING OFF STRESS AND BURNOUT

3. Involve family, friends, and hired help

- Hold regular meetings
- Provide others opportunity to help
- Create a list of needs and delegate
- In-home services (meals, housekeeping, health aids), transportation/escort services, day activity programs

4. Make a care plan

- Involve your loved one while they are able
- Advance directive, DPOA, living will, conservatorship
- Meet with a social worker or other professional to assist in planning



HEADING OFF STRESS AND BURNOUT

5. Have a back-up plan

- Contact local care facilities to find have paperwork on file for quick admission
- Inquire if local care facilities will provide short-term respite care if you become ill or need surgery
- Create a list of people who could assist with certain functions and when
- Make a list of important information that an emergency caregiver would need to know

HEADING OFF STRESS AND BURNOUT

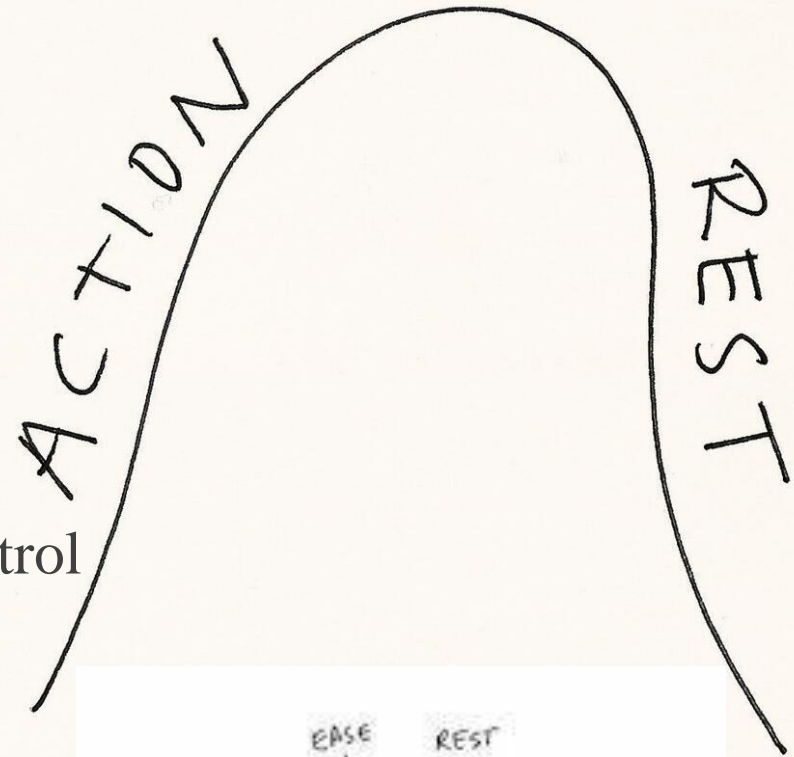


6. Focus on yourself

- Focusing on yourself may seem at odds with decision to be a caregiver.
- Consider the alternative – what can you contribute to caregiving if you are sick, fatigued, or burned out? What kind of care will they receive if you are depressed, emotionally drained, or unable to continue participating in this role?
- It is critical for caregivers to make themselves and their self-care a priority and make a commitment to their own physical and mental health

FINDING A BALANCE

1. Acknowledge your emotions
2. Set your limits and achievable goals
3. Take regular breaks
4. Identify and examine your stressors
5. Focus on what you can control – and lose some control
6. Find ways to acknowledge and reward yourself
7. Ask for help and delegate
8. Self-care (more on this later)
 - Exercise – even 10 min/day can help
 - Find time for yourself
 - Eat well
 - Visit your doctor regularly
 - Get plenty of rest/sleep



FINDING A BALANCE



caregiving
has us
managing
two lives
and
balancing
both

9. Find your support

- Family and Friends
- Psychologist, therapist, counselor
- Support groups

<https://www.alz.org/help-support/community/support-groups>

https://www.alz.org/norcal/helping_you/support_groups

10. Get help when you need it

Psychologytoday.com

Utilize your team

Respite care

24/7 Alz. Assoc. hotline 800.272.3900

11. Learn to relax

- Meditation, Mindfulness, Yoga, Visualization
- Breathing Exercise, Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Practice Gratitude – 3 good things

Please remember:

- Your support is an expression of love and respect for someone close to you.
- Hopefully, you feel a sense of gratification for the time and effort you put into your caregiving.
- Over time, this process can be a profoundly positive experience. For some, it unearths unknown reserves of resilience, patience, and compassion.



Caregiver
Bootcamp

THANK YOU

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🔗 <https://health.ucdavis.edu/neurology/research/res-ECRAL.html>