

EAS/EmployeeAssistanceServices
Employee Assistance-Psychotherapy
Tom Lavin MFT, LADC
557 California Avenue
Reno, NV 89509
775-323-3330
www.EASEAP.com

Solutions for Caregiver Burnout
Tom Lavin, MFT, LADC

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Signs of caregiver burnout:

Approximately 35 million Americans have a chronic illness. For many of these people, a family member is their primary health caregiver. Caregivers may find that their day-to-day responsibilities are exhausting their health and coping resources. The following are signs of caregiver burnout:

- **Feeling overwhelmed, depressed, sad, helpless, hopeless**
- **Fatigued**
- **Decreased productivity**
- **Social withdrawal**
- **Irritability**
- **Change in eating patterns**
- **Sleep problems**

Questions to examine whether a caregiver has crossed the boundary from caregiver to being over-responsible and over-controlling.

(Adapted from Dr. Timmem Cermack, with permission)

1. Do you every worry excessively about any member of your family? About whom?
2. Are you ever embarrassed by another family member's behavior? What behavior?
3. Do you feel personally less worthwhile because of another family member's behavior?
4. Have you tried to control family members?
5. Do you take pride in your own self control?
6. Do you often feel personally inadequate?
7. Do you feel guilty or responsible for someone else's behavior? Whose?

8. Have you taken over family responsibilities that you do not believe should be yours?
9. Have you ever lied to cover up someone else's misbehavior?
10. Do you often meet other people's needs while you neglect your own?
11. Do your emotions get into a roller coaster, with quick ups and downs?
12. Do you often rescue other people?
13. Do you have compulsions (eating, TV, work, sex, shopping)? What compulsions?
14. Do you often feel anxious?

Key principles:

1. Continue to be a responsible person, but let go of the need to be in control
2. Ask for help with your care giving responsibilities (family, friends, medical professionals)
3. Develop greater trust in life, yourself, and others
4. Accept and be at peace with yourself - your strengths, your weaknesses, your limitations
5. Forgive yourself
6. Forgive others
7. Develop a care plan for yourself and follow it daily (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, social)
8. Know your needs and honestly share them with others
9. Accept that you can change yourself, but not others