

Facing Fear

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Fear is a normal emotion for caregivers. It does not always follow the rules of logic, but it is neither good nor bad. The way we handle our feelings of fear is important. Ignored or mismanaged fear can become crippling so that caregivers may become unable to cope with their responsibilities in a positive manner.

Care givers often experience fear as the relationship between the caregiver and care-receiver changes. Caregivers may fear:

- Being alone. They may fear that others will abandon them and they will be left alone.
- Expressing strong emotions. Outbursts and mismanaged emotions may bring additional stress on the caregiver and care-receiver.
- Losing control over their own lives. Caregivers are juggling additional demands on time, energy, and finances.
- The future. Caregivers may be uncertain about the effects of the disease on the care-receiver, as well as what sort of care the care-receiver will require.
- Death. Caregivers examine their own beliefs about death as they face the death of the care-receiver.
- Not being able to continue providing care.
- Financial burdens.

Lessen the Effects of Fear

- Know what to expect.
- Learn about the disease and the care required.
- Find out about the caregiving experience.
- Talk to other caregivers.
- Read books and articles, and search the Internet for information.
- Ask health professionals for assistance and information.

Take action

Ask yourself, "What am I really afraid of? Why does this frighten me?"

- Break your fear down into manageable components. It is easier to manage specific concerns than general ones.
- Continue this process until your fears seem manageable.
- Consider each component.
- Decide what you can do and act on it.