

# Self care and mental health tips

for caregivers of loved ones with Alzheimer's disease or other dementias

Alzheimer's disease is the **sixth-leading cause of death** in the United States.<sup>1</sup> Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, though underreported in American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations, is a growing problem.<sup>2</sup> With **approximately 90%** of family members providing long-term **caregiving to loved** ones in AI/AN families, it is important that caregivers focus on self care and their mental health.<sup>3</sup>



## Remember your self care<sup>4</sup>

- Seek support from, family, friends, or other caregivers.
- Take care of your own health so you can be strong enough to take care of your loved one.
- Watch out for signs of depression. Don't delay getting professional help when you need it.
- Engage in ceremony or a spiritual practice to uplift your spirits.



## Your mental health matters<sup>5</sup>

Higher levels of stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health effects are common among family members who care for an older relative or friend. Research shows the effects of mental health can be alleviated at least partially by:

- Assessing the family caregiver's needs to create a care plan with support services
- Caregiver education and support programs
- Respite to reduce caregiver burden
- Financial support to alleviate the economic stress of caregiving
- Primary care interventions that address caregiver needs.



## Stay organized<sup>6</sup>

- Organize your loved one's medical information so it's up to date and easy to find.
- Always carry an updated list of prescriptions, over the counter medications, and supplements.
- Put medicine into daily or weekly pill boxes and set electronic reminders or alarms to remind you to give them to your loved one.
- Make sure legal documents are in order.
- Be open to new technology that can help you care for your loved one.

## Feeling overwhelmed?

Call the Alzheimer's Association 24/7 helpline at 866-232-8484

## Sources

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