

# Care Partnerships Tips for carers.

Caring for a person with dementia can be very challenging. You're likely to experience an extreme range of emotions, one of which is often guilt.

You might feel like you're not doing a good enough job of caring for a loved one, or you may be struggling to accept help. This frame of mind is completely normal, and very common.

It's important to recognise and acknowledge any feelings of guilt, so you can start managing and working through them. Here are some common situations that might lead to guilt, along with some advice on managing your feelings.

## 1. Other Carers seem to manage better than me

Meeting up with other carers at support groups or reading about other people's experiences might make you think other carers are coping better than you are. You may feel guilty you haven't lived up to your own expectations, or to the expectations you consider other people may have of you.

But remember, there's no such thing as the 'faultless carer', and it's important not to be too hard on yourself. Are you being realistic about what you can achieve? If not, can you reduce any of the expectations you have of yourself, or get any more help?

Sometimes just letting family and friends know how you feel may give them the opportunity to help out.

## 2. Getting angry or irritated

If you feel angry and frustrated, you might occasionally have angry flare-ups towards the person you're caring for. Many carers find it hard to forgive themselves in this situation.

Try to remember that caring can be very stressful, and anger or frustration are natural in this situation. Taking some time for yourself to do something that you enjoy – such as reading or cooking – can help to improve these feelings. Exercise and relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing, can make you feel happier and less stressed, and can relieve your anger and frustration.

At times when you do find yourself becoming angry or frustrated, it can help to leave the room for a while to allow things to settle.

## 3. Wanting time apart

You may feel guilty about having time to yourself, but everyone needs to recharge their batteries now and again. It's very essential for carers to enjoy some time away from their caring role.

Many carers find that giving themselves some time apart, and doing things that make them feel happy and positive, makes them more able to fulfil their role.

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If the person you're caring for can't be left alone, ask friends or family whether they could pop in for a short time, or whether they could come and stay with the person for a few days

### 4. Accepting help

Many carers feel they should be able to manage without any help. But looking after a person with dementia can be exhausting.

You may be able to free up some valuable time by accepting respite care, such as help in the home, day care services, or residential care services. This will give you more energy and may enable you to go on caring for longer.

Even if the person with dementia is initially upset about others becoming involved, they may well come to terms with the idea. The first experience of separation often makes carers feel guilty and unable to relax, but in time you will probably get used to the separation and will be able to see the benefits this can bring

### 5. Moving into residential care

Carers often feel that moving the person into a home is disloyal. You might think you've let the person down, or that you should have coped for longer. You may have previously promised the person you would always look after them at home and now feel forced to break that promise.

Remember that any promises were probably made in a completely different situation. The move to a care home doesn't need to mean that you give up your caring role completely – it's just a different way of caring.

Some carers find residential care helps them to have a better relationship with the person, as their time together can be more special, less stressful, and more like it used to be before the constant worry about practicalities

### Final Message

The impact of dementia on the family and the person cannot be underestimated, it is our goal of care to work in a partnership with the family to support you on this new journey.

*Kind Regards*

*Michelle Harris Allsop*