

Caring for dementia patient during pandemic? Try these stress-busting tips

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(HealthDay)—The coronavirus pandemic will put extra stress on

caregivers of loved ones with dementias, so the Alzheimer's Foundation of America offers some advice.

"Reducing stress is always important for caregivers, and even more so now," said Charles Fuschillo Jr., the foundation's president and CEO.

"Disruptions in [daily routines](#), [social isolation](#) and anxiety are all added stressors caused by the coronavirus, but there are steps caregivers can take to help reduce stress and take care of themselves so that they can continue to provide care to their loved ones," he said in a foundation news release.

The organization offered these pointers:

- **Social distancing doesn't mean cutting off contact with others.** Caregivers can use video chats, [phone calls](#), text messages and emails to stay in touch with loved ones and friends.
- **Strive to be adaptable and upbeat.** Your attitude can also influence the person you're caring for, the foundation pointed out. Try to focus on situations in a constructive way. For example, if your loved one's adult day program is now closed, plan some easy, fun activities at home to keep them engaged.
- **Focus on things you can control.** That includes following [public health guidelines](#), eating properly, following a routine, getting a good night's sleep and prioritizing self-care.
- **Try to refresh your mind.** Exercise, yoga, meditating, listening to music or deep breathing can help relax your mind and reduce stress. Figure out which steps work for you and do them regularly.
- **Stay informed, but overloading on news can add to your stress.** Constantly checking social media can increase anxiety levels. It's also important to get your news from trusted sources—such as the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention or your state/local health department. It's also a good idea to set a schedule for news updates: for example, 6 p.m. every night for 30 minutes.

- **Talking about your stress can help ease it.** That can include people on your support team, a professional or even a stranger. The Alzheimer's Foundation of America Helpline (866-232-8484) has licensed [social workers](#) available for caregivers seven days a week to provide support or just listen.

More information: The American Academy of Family Physicians has more on [caregiver health and wellness](#).

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