

# Managing Depression and Anxiety as a Caregiver

## SIGNS OF DEPRESSION & ANXIETY

- Constant worry or racing thoughts
- Feeling overwhelmed or emotionally exhausted
- Changes in sleep or appetite
- Irritability or increased frustration
- Feeling numb, hopeless, or detached
- Difficulty concentrating or remembering things
- Loss of interest in activities you once enjoyed
- Panic attacks or feelings of impending doom
- Withdrawing from family or friends
- Physical symptoms such as headaches, tension, or fatigue

*Your mental health matters just as much as the care you provide. You do not have to wait until you are completely overwhelmed to seek help.*

## CONNECT WITH US:

 800-543-8312

 [caregiveroc.org](http://caregiveroc.org)

Family caregivers are more likely to experience anxiety and depression than the general population. Long-term caregiving responsibilities, uncertainty, grief, role changes, and lack of rest can all contribute to declining mental health.

1

### Take short mental breaks.

*Even brief pauses throughout the day can help reset your nervous system. Stepping outside, listening to music, taking deep breaths, or changing your environment for a few minutes can reduce stress and help you recenter emotionally.*

2

### Practice breathing and relaxation techniques.

*Breathing exercises and meditation can help calm the body during stressful moments. One simple technique is "4-7-8 breathing": inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 7 seconds, and exhale slowly for 8 seconds. Practices like meditation, stretching, or mindfulness can help reduce anxiety over time.*

3

### Stay connected.

*Isolation can worsen depression and anxiety. Connecting with friends, family, support groups, or other caregivers can help reduce feelings of loneliness and provide emotional validation. Many caregivers report feeling relief simply by talking to someone who understands the caregiving experience. Additionally, you can connect with a therapist for individual counseling.*

4

### Pay attention to your own health.

*Caregivers often delay their own appointments, ignore symptoms, or neglect basic needs like nutrition, hydration, sleep, and exercise. Taking care of your own health is not selfish, it is necessary for sustainable caregiving.*

5

### Accept help.

*Asking for help with meals, errands, transportation, respite care, or appointments can reduce stress and prevent burnout.*