



Family Caregivers Programs Serving Snohomish County



Caregiver Fatigue Timeline

1-18 Months

- Recognizes (and perhaps struggling with) the differences between providing care over the long term (vs. acute care)
- Anxious to provide best possible care
- Manages the house, garden, car, shopping, bill paying, cooking
- Attends to family relations
- “Keeps up appearances”
- Helps person with dementia through social situations
- Remains optimistic, caring, supportive
- Operates as “superwoman” or “superman”
- Attends to personal care
- If working, spends “vacation” time for caregiving

At 21 Months

- Begins to take medication, usually for sleep / headaches
- It becomes harder and harder to keep on top of things. The loved-one’s personal care needs intensify, adding new duties (for example trips to the doctor, medication management, etc.)
- Some help from family still available
- Takes more time off from work

24-32 months

- Emotional and physical resources drained
- Less and less personal contact with own doctor, dentist, minister, friends
- Experiences feelings of powerlessness
- Caregiving consumes both day and night
- Along with increasing personal care demands now tries to meet socialization needs
- Outside help dwindles away
- If working, not able to attend training for advancement and/or skips promotions

At 32 Months

- Stress becomes harder to conceal
- Caregiver begins taking tranquilizers
- Begins using medication for musculoskeletal pain
- Sleep is continually disturbed
- Caregiver becomes irritable
- Less and less contact with others
- If working, may scale back further on work hours or responsibilities

By 38 Months

- Caregiver feels unhealthy
- Finds it hard to get up
- Never feels rested
- May have hypertension/colitis
- Has symptoms of chronic fatigue
- Caregiver loses the will to take care of him / herself
- Is unable to manage the household
- Rarely socializes with others
- Feels helpless, guilty, a failure

After 50 Months

- Chronic state of fatigue
- Caregiver is in a state of “unwellness”
- Becomes isolated
- Is unwilling or unable to ask for information or help

*Adapted from the FCSP,
Northwest Regional Council*