

# Managing Stress

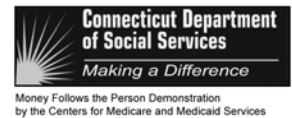
# MANAGING STRESS

## Connecticut Community Care, Inc. Self-Directed Support Services

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## Getting Started

We all have times in our lives when we experience stress. Usually it's when you have changes in your life. These changes can be positive or negative, but change itself can create stress. Moving to a new home or even hiring personal care assistants can create stress. When you are stressed, you may react physically and/or emotionally in ways you normally would not. You may withdraw or become "snappy." Recognize the stress you are under, and develop ways to manage your stress before it becomes a serious issue. It may not be possible to avoid the stress, but how you handle it is critical to your health and well-being. This tip sheet will help you identify stress. It will give you tips in helping you and/or your personal care assistant manage stress and prevent burnout.



## Work and Stress

Although stress can come from a variety of areas in your life, work can be affected. This is especially important for you to understand about your personal care assistants. There are ways to identify someone under stress. They are as follows:

- ☑ **They are easily distracted** – this includes forgetting to do things they normally do or not completing something as needed.
- ☑ **Overall job performance goes down** – decision-making becomes a problem, there are frequent absences, thinking is overwhelming and negative, and their interactions with you are also negative.
- ☑ **Health becomes affected** – this includes being sick a lot, which slows them down from working at a normal rate or keeps them out of work.

## Managing Stress

As mentioned previously, stress is a normal part of everyone's life at some point in time. Being able to recognize it before it leads to further issues is important. We all have a "bad day" every now and then, which is often caused by stress. Don't let a "bad day" become longer. If it does, this can lead to burnout. Burnout occurs when someone is stressed for a period of time. This can affect the person's health physically or mentally. The person will begin to lose interest in the things they enjoy doing. Some other signs of burnout include:

- ☑ Feeling like you don't have control of the activities in your life;
- ☑ Feeling negative about everything;
- ☑ Wanting to detach from others in your life, and struggle with current relationships; and
- ☑ Loss of energy or purpose.

If you or your personal care assistant has signs of stress and burnout, talk about it. You should deal with the problem

immediately before it becomes worse. See if there are things you can do to help reduce some stress. However, keep in mind your other personal care assistants should not have to pick-up the work that is not getting done. You should also not have to sacrifice your own well being. Find a balance that will meet both of your needs. It is also important to maintain a healthy lifestyle (eat a well balanced diet, exercise regularly, get proper sleep and limit caffeine and alcohol intake).

If you do not address this immediately, the situation between you and your personal care assistant will get worse. This will lead to communication issues, and ultimately lead to termination of employment for your personal care assistant. The best thing you can do as an employer is to address the issue. Being aware and responsive is critical.

Don't let stress lead to burnout. A good employer recognizes the symptoms and addresses the issues before its too late for you or your personal care assistant.

