

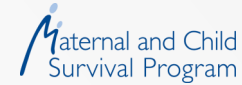
Where can I get help?

- 1. Caregivers Association of Trinidad and Tobago (Support Group)**
WhatsApp: 1-868-310-2742
Email: ashamungal@gmail.com
- 2. Parenting TT (Parent Education, Talks, Workshops, Parent Empowerment)**
Address: LP#66 Meade Extension, El Dorado
Phone: 1-868-662-8264, 289-IPTT (1788)
Email: parentingtt@gmail.com
Website: www.parentingtt.org
- 3. National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme (Treatment and Rehabilitation, Public Education)**
Ministry of Social Development and Family Services
Address: #62 Abercromby Street, POS
Tel: 1-868-627-3506/3527
Fax: 1-868-627-4471
Email: nadapp@tstt.net.tt



Prepared by: Mr. Gerard Baptiste, M.Sc.,
Clinical Psychologist
Child Development & Behaviour Unit,
North Central Regional Health Authority

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Managing Caregiver Stress



Photo Credit: Work Well Research

WHO IS A CAREGIVER?

A caregiver is anyone who gives care and help to another individual, including a child, spouse, parent, sibling, friend, or some other family member.

The reasons for the care may include health, disability, injury, or age concerns.

Caregivers provide many different kinds of help:

- Cooking, cleaning, or helping another person with household responsibilities
- Providing daily assistance with activities such as personal care, dressing, etc.
- Accompanying the person to doctors' visits or therapy appointments

Caregivers may experience caregiver stress, which is a normal response to physical or emotional challenges that occur when demands on the caregiver are out of balance with the caregiver's resources for coping with that stress.

How to I identify symptoms of Caregiver Stress?

Physical

- Tiredness
- Fast heartbeat
- Headaches
- Muscle aches
- Sleep disturbances
- Stomach ailments

Mental

- Difficulty concentrating
- Mental avoidance

Financial

- Financial hardship, as caring for someone may require paying for medication or therapy and managing those costs can be stressful

Social and Behavioral

- Unhealthy use of drugs or alcohol or social isolation (can occur due to time spent taking care of someone)

Emotional

Caregivers often have a range of feelings about addressing the needs of their loved ones, including:

- Helplessness
- Loneliness
- Embarrassment or shame
- Self-doubt
- Guilt
- Depression
- Fear
- Anger
- Anxiety

How do I manage Caregiver Stress?

Managing stress requires the caregiver to develop a daily set of skills. These skills can be mastered by remembering the acronym **RESTORE**.

R: It is important for the caregiver to find a way each day to relax, whether it is reading a book, watching a movie, listening to music, or getting proper sleep (at least 8 hours).

E: Develop a daily routine of at least 30–45 minutes per day of vigorous exercise.

S: Research shows that daily connections with a higher power may help to manage stress and enhance experience of silence/spirituality.

T: Despite the constant attention to the needs of a loved one that are a large part of caregiving, individual time should be spent daily to attend to caregivers' needs.

O: Caregivers need to connect daily with other people as a source of comfort and support.

R: Learning proper respiration (breathing) techniques using the diaphragm helps more oxygen to enter the lungs and helps the brain to receive proper nutrients.

E: Eating a proper diet high in fruits and vegetables, low in saturated fats, and rich in protein, as well as eliminating alcohol and drugs, can help fight the effects of stress.

R	Relaxation	Find time daily to rest, read a book, etc.
E	Exercise	Daily exercise reduces stress and releases positive chemicals into the brain.
S	Silence/ Spirituality	Connect daily with your higher power in moments of silence.
T	Time	Take time out of your day just for yourself.
O	Others	Connect with other people in your social circle daily for support and love.
R	Respiration	Take slow, deep breaths from your diaphragm. Practice daily deep breathing exercises.
E	Eat	Eat a healthy diet, and avoid alcohol, caffeine, and cigarettes. Eat fruits and vegetables.

Photo Credit: Michael Heim

