



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER: February 2026

A Note from Haven's Dementia Care Manager

How many of you grew up reciting or hearing your children recite the familiar 4-H pledge? "I pledge my Head to clearer thinking, my Heart to greater loyalty, my Hands to larger service, and my Health to better living, for my club, my community, my country, and my world."

I find myself reflecting on this pledge often in my role at Haven. I was involved in 4-H from the age of five until I graduated from high school. I feel the values and skills I gained from 4-H played a significant part in shaping who I am today. This pledge stays with me because, in its own simple way, it reminds us that each part of our body – and our lives – depends on the others to function well. Our thinking relies on our hearts, our hearts rely on our actions, and all of it depends on how we care for our health.

This idea becomes more meaningful when we consider the connection between heart disease and dementia in the following paragraphs.

February is American Heart Month

- Heart disease is the #1 cause of death in the U.S. and worldwide.
- 80% of heart disease and stroke can be prevented
- Heart failure is associated with an 84% higher risk of developing dementia and Alzheimer's disease



Ways to Reduce the Risk of Heart Disease

- **Get active:** 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise at least 5 days per week
- **Eat healthy** to reduce weight, blood sugar, and control cholesterol: Eat 5 servings of fruits and vegetables, choose whole grains over processed (refined) grains and sugars, choose healthy fats (monounsaturated and polyunsaturated) over unhealthy fats (saturated and trans)

- o Consider a Mediterranean-style diet
- o Limit salt intake to 1 teaspoon per day (2300 milligrams)
- o Limit saturated fats to 6% of total calories. Ex. 2,000 calories per day with limit of 120 calories from saturated fat.
- **Control blood pressure:** Normal for adults is below 120/80mm Hg
- **Quit smoking:** Smoking increases risk for heart disease, strokes, and blood clots
- Take steps to **reduce stress** such as walking, reading a book, meditation
- **Get 7 – 9 hours of sleep:** Be consistent with the time that you go to bed and get up so that your body can reach its internal circadian rhythm.

You may have noticed that the steps we take to lower our risk of heart disease also lower our risk of developing dementia. Research shows that cardiovascular conditions such as coronary artery disease, atrial fibrillation, and heart failure can contribute to cognitive decline and increase the likelihood of dementia. With every heartbeat, roughly 20-25% of the blood pumped by the heart travels to the head delivering the oxygen and nutrients necessary for the brain to properly function. When that blood flow is disrupted by an irregular rhythm or by damaged or clogged blood vessels, the brain cannot work efficiently or remove harmful waste products such as beta-amyloid which may cause cognitive impairment.

In short, what supports a healthy heart supports a healthy brain.

It is our goal in the Haven Dementia Care Program to improve the quality of life for our patients, provide support and education as needed for their caregivers, and to provide education to our community partners. Please know that we recognize and appreciate the care that you provide daily to your loved one. We are honored that you have welcomed us to take part in your journey. In this addition, we will focus on caregiver burnout, ways to reduce it, and respite care. We hope that you find the information useful.

If there is a topic related to dementia that you would like more information on, please email me at anita.howard@havenhospice.com.

Sincerely,

Anita Howard
Dementia Care Program Manager

February 20th is National Caregivers Day

National Caregivers Day was first introduced by the Providers Association for Home Health and Hospice Agencies, PAHHHA, in February 2015 with the first celebration taking place in 2016. Since then, the third Friday of February has been designated as a day to recognize and honor caregivers for the care, dedication, and love that they provide to a family member or friend. In 2024, the Alzheimer's Association reported that over 11 million Americans provided care to a loved one with dementia without any pay or reimbursement. Many reported that they have no additional support from family or their community and that they are learning "day to day" how to meet the needs of their person.

February 14 - 21 is Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Care Staff Education Week

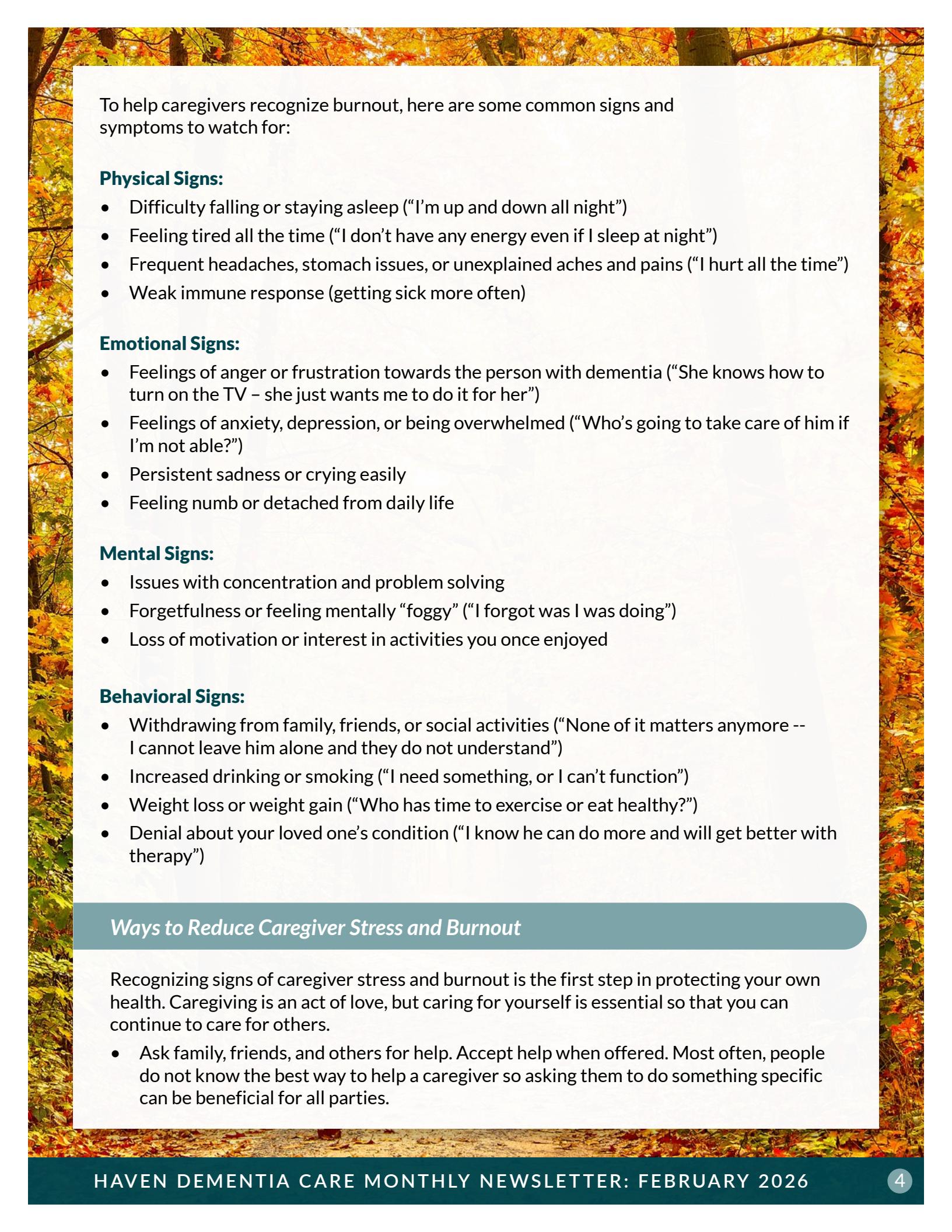
In 2007, the week of February 14 - 21 was officially recognized as Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Care Staff Education Week. This initiative was started by the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners (NCCDP) to raise awareness about the importance of education and advancements in medical care for those living with dementia. By ensuring that families and care partners have access to resources including education, medical treatment, and support groups, the quality of life improves for everyone.

Five Facts About Caregivers

1. 83% of care provided to older adults in America comes from family, friends, or other unpaid caregivers
2. 48% of caregivers take care of a person with dementia
3. 27% of caregivers are "sandwich generation" caregivers meaning that they are trying to care for their children and parents at the same time
4. 61% of family caregivers are women
5. 30% of caregivers are age 65 and older while 23% are between the ages of 18 and 49

What is Caregiver Burnout?

Caregiver burnout is caused by long-term stress that can affect your physical, emotional, and mental well-being. Yet, when asked, most caregivers report that they are coping and do not feel that they are burning out. This happens because caregivers are devoted to the person that they are caring for and because the warning signs of burnout are subtle and easy to dismiss until they become overwhelming.



To help caregivers recognize burnout, here are some common signs and symptoms to watch for:

Physical Signs:

- Difficulty falling or staying asleep ("I'm up and down all night")
- Feeling tired all the time ("I don't have any energy even if I sleep at night")
- Frequent headaches, stomach issues, or unexplained aches and pains ("I hurt all the time")
- Weak immune response (getting sick more often)

Emotional Signs:

- Feelings of anger or frustration towards the person with dementia ("She knows how to turn on the TV – she just wants me to do it for her")
- Feelings of anxiety, depression, or being overwhelmed ("Who's going to take care of him if I'm not able?")
- Persistent sadness or crying easily
- Feeling numb or detached from daily life

Mental Signs:

- Issues with concentration and problem solving
- Forgetfulness or feeling mentally "foggy" ("I forgot what I was doing")
- Loss of motivation or interest in activities you once enjoyed

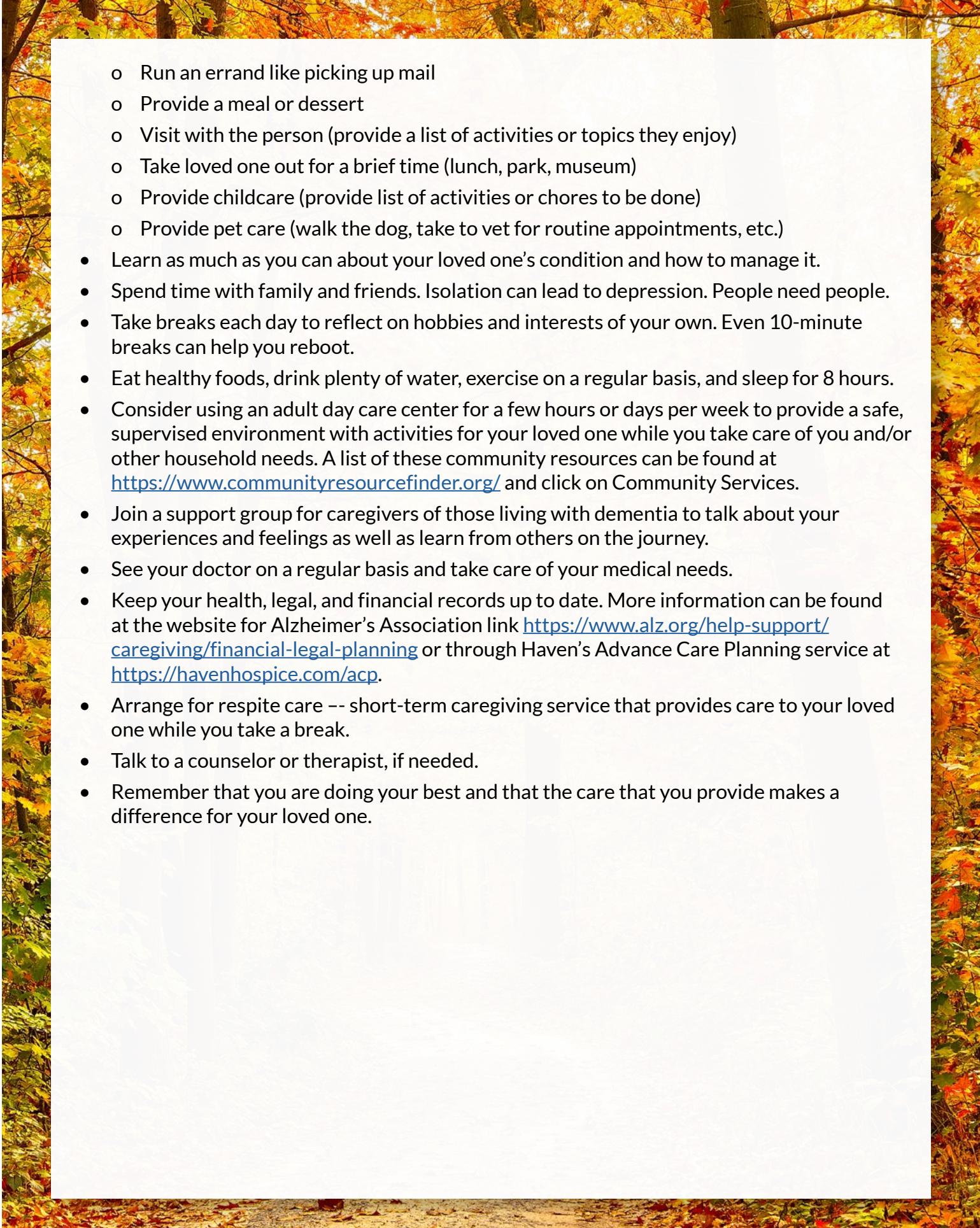
Behavioral Signs:

- Withdrawing from family, friends, or social activities ("None of it matters anymore -- I cannot leave him alone and they do not understand")
- Increased drinking or smoking ("I need something, or I can't function")
- Weight loss or weight gain ("Who has time to exercise or eat healthy?")
- Denial about your loved one's condition ("I know he can do more and will get better with therapy")

Ways to Reduce Caregiver Stress and Burnout

Recognizing signs of caregiver stress and burnout is the first step in protecting your own health. Caregiving is an act of love, but caring for yourself is essential so that you can continue to care for others.

- Ask family, friends, and others for help. Accept help when offered. Most often, people do not know the best way to help a caregiver so asking them to do something specific can be beneficial for all parties.



- o Run an errand like picking up mail
- o Provide a meal or dessert
- o Visit with the person (provide a list of activities or topics they enjoy)
- o Take loved one out for a brief time (lunch, park, museum)
- o Provide childcare (provide list of activities or chores to be done)
- o Provide pet care (walk the dog, take to vet for routine appointments, etc.)
- Learn as much as you can about your loved one's condition and how to manage it.
- Spend time with family and friends. Isolation can lead to depression. People need people.
- Take breaks each day to reflect on hobbies and interests of your own. Even 10-minute breaks can help you reboot.
- Eat healthy foods, drink plenty of water, exercise on a regular basis, and sleep for 8 hours.
- Consider using an adult day care center for a few hours or days per week to provide a safe, supervised environment with activities for your loved one while you take care of you and/or other household needs. A list of these community resources can be found at <https://www.communityresourcefinder.org/> and click on Community Services.
- Join a support group for caregivers of those living with dementia to talk about your experiences and feelings as well as learn from others on the journey.
- See your doctor on a regular basis and take care of your medical needs.
- Keep your health, legal, and financial records up to date. More information can be found at the website for Alzheimer's Association link <https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/financial-legal-planning> or through Haven's Advance Care Planning service at <https://havenhospice.com/acp>.
- Arrange for respite care -- short-term caregiving service that provides care to your loved one while you take a break.
- Talk to a counselor or therapist, if needed.
- Remember that you are doing your best and that the care that you provide makes a difference for your loved one.

7 Days of **Self-Care**

#SelfcareSunday



Create your
self-care checklist
for the week

#MindfulMonday



Know your **blood pressure numbers** and other heart stats

#TastyTuesday



Try a **tasty, heart-healthy recipe**

#WellnessWednesday



Put your **heart** into your wellness routine

#TreatYourselfThursday



Treat your heart to some **relaxation and fun**

#FollowFriday



Share **who inspires you** to show your heart more love

#SelfieSaturday



Post about your favorite way to take care of **your heart**



#OurHearts

Finish the Phrase! (Challenges participants to recall words and reminisce)

Phrase	Answer	Possible Conversation Topic
Love is in the	Air	<i>First date, favorite gift, Valentine's Day</i>
Hope springs	Eternal	<i>Springtime, Easter, marriage</i>
Signed, sealed, and	Delivered	<i>Letters, cards, music, babies</i>
What happens in Vegas	Stays in Vegas	<i>Vacations, secrets, travel plans</i>
They're playing a game of cat	and mouse	<i>Sports, kids, pets</i>
It takes two to	Tango	<i>Dancing, games, family</i>
Laughter is the best	Medicine	<i>Jokes, memories</i>
A picture is worth a	Thousands words	<i>Favorite pictures, movies, books</i>
You can bet your bottom	Dollar	<i>Work, hobbies</i>
Eat, drink, and be	Merry	<i>Family, friends, holidays</i>

Respite Care

Respite care can provide you with a break away from your caregiving role to focus on you and your health so that you can be at your best when you are with your loved one. Respite care may take place in the home, community or faith based organization, adult day care, or healthcare facility. It may be for several hours to a few days depending on your needs and what is available in your community. Fees for respite care vary depending on the provider and services offered. It is often covered or partially covered by insurance and/or other community programs.

Respite Care at Haven

For our patients on hospice, we offer 24/7 care from medical staff in a homelike environment for up to five days in one of our five hospice care centers or in a Medicare approved skilled nursing facility within your community.

Service locations include:

- E.T. York Hospice Care Center (4200 NW 90th Blvd. Gainesville, FL 32606)
- Tri-Counties Hospice Care Center (311 N.E. 9th St. Chiefland, FL 32626)
- Suwannee Valley Hospice Care Center (6037 W. US Hwy 90 Lake City, FL 32055)
- Custead Hospice Care Center (745 Blanding Blvd. Orange Park, FL 32065)
- Roberts Hospice Care Center (6400 St. Johns Ave. Palatka, FL 32177)

Why ask for respite care?

Caregiving takes strength, patience, and perseverance. It is not easy to meet the demands of 24/7 caregiving and find time for self-care. Some reasons to make a request include:

- To help prevent physical and emotional exhaustion or “caregiver burnout”
- To focus on personal health and wellness needs to help prevent insomnia, depression, and stress
- To recover from an illness, hospitalization, or surgery
- To go on a vacation, attend a wedding, graduation, or other important life event

How to request respite care:

Talk to your RN case manager or social worker. They will help you prearrange dates for care and secure a location for services.

Stretches/Chair Exercises

Take a ten minute break and stretch your joints. This can be done alone or with your loved one. Turn on some music and encourage your loved one to do as many reps as they can. They may follow along or just move to the music. The point is to allow your body and mind to focus on relaxing.

Seated Exercise Activity for Seniors

Chair March



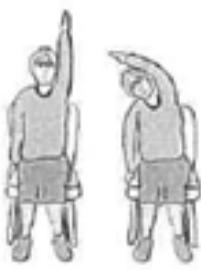
Arm Swings



Chest Stretch



Arm Reaches



Body Twist



Leg Stretch



Knee Taps



Leg Extend



Leg Circles





Dementia Caregiver Support Groups: February 2026

If you are caring for a loved one with a dementia-related diagnosis and need some additional education and support, please join us. The topic will be **“Creating Meaningful Memories.”**

Please RSVP to Anita Howard at **352.215.7465** or Anita.Howard@HavenHospice.com

Online Meeting

Second Monday of Each Month | 5 - 6 p.m. | Next Meeting: February 9

Email Anita Howard at Anita.Howard@HavenHospice.com for a link to the meeting, or visit HavenHospice.com/Dementia and find the link under “Upcoming Online Support Group”



Alachua County

» **Second Tuesday of Each Month | 4 - 5 p.m. | Next Meeting: February 10**

Alachua County Library District, Alachua Branch (14913 NW 140 St., Alachua, FL)

» **Second Wednesday of Each Month | 3 - 4 p.m. | Next Meeting: February 11**

Senior Recreation Center, Eldercare of Alachua County (5701 NW 34th Blvd, Gainesville, FL)

Clay County

» **First Tuesday of Each Month | 6 - 7 p.m. | Next Meeting: February 3**

Canterfield of Clay County (1611 Winners Circle, Theatre Room - 3rd Floor, Middleburg, FL)

» **Fourth Thursday of Each Month | 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. | Next Meeting: February 26**

Allegro Senior Living - Fleming Island (3651 US Hwy 17, Fleming Island, FL)

Duval County

» **Second Tuesday of Each Month | 10 - 11 a.m. | Next Meeting: February 10**

Riverside Post Acute (1750 Stockton St. Jacksonville, FL)

» **Third Tuesday of Each Month | 3 - 4 p.m. | Next Meeting: February 17**

Camellia at Deerwood (10061 Sweetwater Parkway Jacksonville, FL)

» **Third Tuesday of Each Month | 4:30 - 5:30 p.m. | Next Meeting: February 17**

The Windsor at Ortega (5939 Roosevelt Blvd., Jacksonville, FL)

» **Third Wednesday of Each Month | 1 - 2 p.m. | Next Meeting: February 18**

Starling at San Jose Assisted Living and Memory Care (9075 San Jose Blvd., Jacksonville, FL)

» **Fourth Tuesday of Each Month | 6 - 7 p.m. | Next Meeting: February 24**

Bartram Lakes Assisted Living Facility (6209 Brooks Bartram Dr., Jacksonville, FL)

» **Fourth Wednesday of Each Month | 3 - 4 p.m. | Next Meeting: February 25**

Beach House Assisted Living and Memory Care (1315 2nd Ave N., Jacksonville Beach, FL)

(Duval Continued on Next Page)

Duval County (Continued)

- » **Last Wednesday of Each Month | 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. | Next Meeting: February 25**
Grand Living at Tamaya - "Studio Room" on the 4th floor (3270 Tamaya Blvd., Jacksonville, FL)
- » **Last Thursday of Each Month | 5 - 6 p.m. | Next Meeting: February 26**
The Canopy at Duval Station (1035 Starratt Rd, Jacksonville, FL 32218)

Gilchrist County

- » **Fourth Tuesday of Each Month | 4 - 5 p.m. | Next Meeting: February 24**
Tri-County Nursing Home (7280 SW State Rd 26, Trenton, FL)

Hamilton County

- » **Third Thursday of Each Month | 3 - 4 p.m. | Next Meeting: February 19**
Suwannee Valley Nursing Center (427 15th Ave NW, Jasper, FL)

Levy County

- » **Second Tuesday of Each Month | 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. | Next Meeting: February 10**
Haven Hospice Tri-Counties Care Center, Community Building (311 N.E. 9th St., Chiefland, FL)
Caregivers and their loved one living with dementia are invited

Putnam County

- » **Third Thursday of Each Month | 3 - 4 p.m. | Next Meeting: February 19**
Vintage Care of Palatka (203 S Moody Rd, Palatka, FL)

St. Johns County

- » **First Wednesday of Each Month | 12 - 1:30 p.m. | Next meeting: February 4**
Starling at Ponte Vedra (405 Solano Rd., Ponte Vedra, FL)
- » **Second Thursday of Each Month | 4 - 5 p.m. | Next Meeting: February 12**
Starling at Nocatee Assisted Living and Memory Care (999 Crosswater Pkwy, Ponte Vedra, FL)
- » **Third Wednesday of Each Month | 10:30 -11:30 a.m. | Next Meeting: February 18**
The Blake at St. Johns – Theatre Room on the 2nd Floor (2430 County Rd 210, St. Johns, FL)
- » **Third Wednesday of Each Month | 1 - 2 p.m. | Next Meeting: February 18**
The Addison of St. Johns (115 Benton Lane, St. Augustine, FL)
- » **Fourth Tuesday of Each Month | 2 - 3 p.m. | Next Meeting: February 24**
Senior Living at the Greens (4950 State Rd. 16, St. Augustine, FL)
- » **Fourth Tuesday of Each Month | 4 - 5 p.m. | Next Meeting: February 24**
Ponte Vedra Gardens Memory Care Community - TPC Room (5125 Palm Valley Road, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL)

Resources for Support

Alzheimer's and Related Dementia Education and Referral Center

Email: adear@nia.nih.gov

Phone: 1-800-438-4380

www.alzheimers.gov

The ADEAR Center can provide information on diagnosis, treatment, patient care, caregiver needs, long-term care, research, and clinical trials. Staff can refer you to local and national resources.

Alzheimer's Association

Phone: 1-800-272-3900

www.alz.org

Offers information, a help line, and support services for those living with dementia and their caregivers.

Eldercare Locator

Phone: 1-800-677-1116

<https://eldercare.acl.gov>

Provides information about local resources such as home care, Meals on Wheels, adult day care, and nursing facilities.

Elder Affairs Florida

Phone: 1-850-414-2000

<https://elderaffairs.org/programs-and-services/caregiving/>

Provides information on services available for adult family members caring for a person aged 60 or older, grandparents and relatives aged 55 or older caring for children 18 and younger, or children of any age with disabilities. Programs include National Family Caregiver Support, Respite for Elders Living in Everyday Families (RELIEF) and Home Care for the Elderly (HCE).

Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology

Phone: 1-877-506-2723

Provides free access to information, referral services, education programs, and publications related to disability rights, laws and policies, and funding opportunities for assistive devices and durable medical equipment that are largely covered by Medicare and Medicaid.

Resources for Support

Florida Department of Elder Affairs: Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders (SHINE)

Phone: 1-800-963-5337

<https://floridashine.org/>

Free program assisting older adults and their caregivers with Medicare, Medicaid, and health insurance questions.

Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs

Phone: 1-844-693-5838

<https://floridavets.org/benefits-services/>

Connects Florida veterans to earned federal and state benefits and support services.

National Adult Day Services Association

Phone: 1-877-745-1440

www.nadsa.org/consumers/choosing-a-center

Provides a safe environment, activities, and staff that pay attention to the needs of the person while under their supervision. Adult Day Care Services typically charge an hourly rate.

National Institute on Aging

Phone: 1-800-222-2225

www.nia.nih.gov

Offers free publications about aging that can be viewed, printed, or ordered online.

References

Alzheimer's Association 2025 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures. <https://www.alz.org/getmedia/ef8f48f9-ad36-48ea-87f9-b74034635c1e/alzheimers-facts-and-figures.pdf>. Accessed January 23, 2026.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND DEMENTIA CARE STAFF EDUCATION WEEK - February 14-21, 2026 - National Today. <https://nationaltoday.com/alzheimers-disease-and-dementia-care-staff-education-week/#history>. Accessed February 2, 2026.

Caregiving | Elder Affairs Florida. <https://elderaffairs.org/programs-and-services/caregiving/>. Accessed January 23, 2026.

Caregiver Stress | Alzheimer's Association. <https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/caregiver-health/caregiver-stress>. Accessed January 31, 2026.

Common Heart Conditions Can Contribute to Dementia Risk. <https://www.texashealth.org/areyouawellbeing/Heart-Health/Common-Heart-Conditions-Can-Contribute-to-Dementia-Risk>. Accessed February 2, 2026.

Find Local Caregiver Resources Serving Florida. <https://states.aarp.org/florida/caregiver-resources/>. Accessed January 23, 2026.

NATIONAL CAREGIVERS DAY - February 20, 2026 - National Today. <https://nationaltoday.com/national-caregivers-day/>. Accessed January 23, 2026.

What can you do today to improve your heart health? Simple steps can make a difference | American Heart Association. <https://www.heart.org/en/news/2026/02/02/what-can-you-do-today-to-improve-your-heart-health-simple-steps-can-make-a-difference>. Accessed February 2, 2026.

The Dementia Care Program and this newsletter is made possible by the generous donations and support of the Haven Foundation.

