

January 2024

*Helping caregivers through their journey one step at a time.*

## Positive New Year's Resolutions for Caregivers

### Recognize the Signs of Caregiver Fatigue

The first step is understanding these caregiver fatigue warning signs:

- Anxiety, depression, and irritability
- Feeling tired and run down all the time
- Difficulty sleeping
- Overreacting to minor annoyances
- New or worsening health problems
- Trouble concentrating
- Feeling increasingly resentful
- Drinking alcohol, smoking, or eating more
- Neglecting responsibilities
- Lack of interest in activities once enjoyed

If you don't get the help you need, caregiving fatigue can transition into full-blown caregiver burnout. Once that happens, your quality of life – and that of your care recipient – could be in jeopardy.

### Confront Negative Feelings

Many caregivers hold onto unnecessary emotions like guilt because they never feel like they are doing enough. After all, caregivers are selfless, giving people. This year don't allow yourself to be haunted by negative feelings resulting from unrealistic expectations. When the guilt and frustration are caused by something outside your control, do your best to confront those emotions and kick them to the curb.

### Socialize More

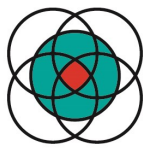
It's common for family caregivers to become socially isolated, a decision that is often not a conscious one. The demands of caregiving can make it nearly impossible to seek out social connections that human beings' value so much. A lack of socialization can jeopardize close relationships and put you at higher risk for depression, heart disease, and stroke. For instance, schedule recurring lunch dates with some of your favorite people or a weekend getaway with your significant other.



### Take Better Care of Myself

Because informal caregivers are so selfless, they often neglect their physical, mental, and emotional needs. Clinical depression affects roughly half of all family caregivers, with many experiencing physical consequences as a result. With that in mind, focus more on yourself this year by exercising regularly, eating nutritious foods, not abusing alcohol, and getting 7 to 8 hours of sleep each day. If you haven't had one for a while, also be sure to schedule a complete health screening with your primary care doctor.

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## Ask for Help When Needed (continued from page 1)

This resolution is often easier said than done. As a family caregiver, there probably aren't too many people who can take care of your loved one the way you can.

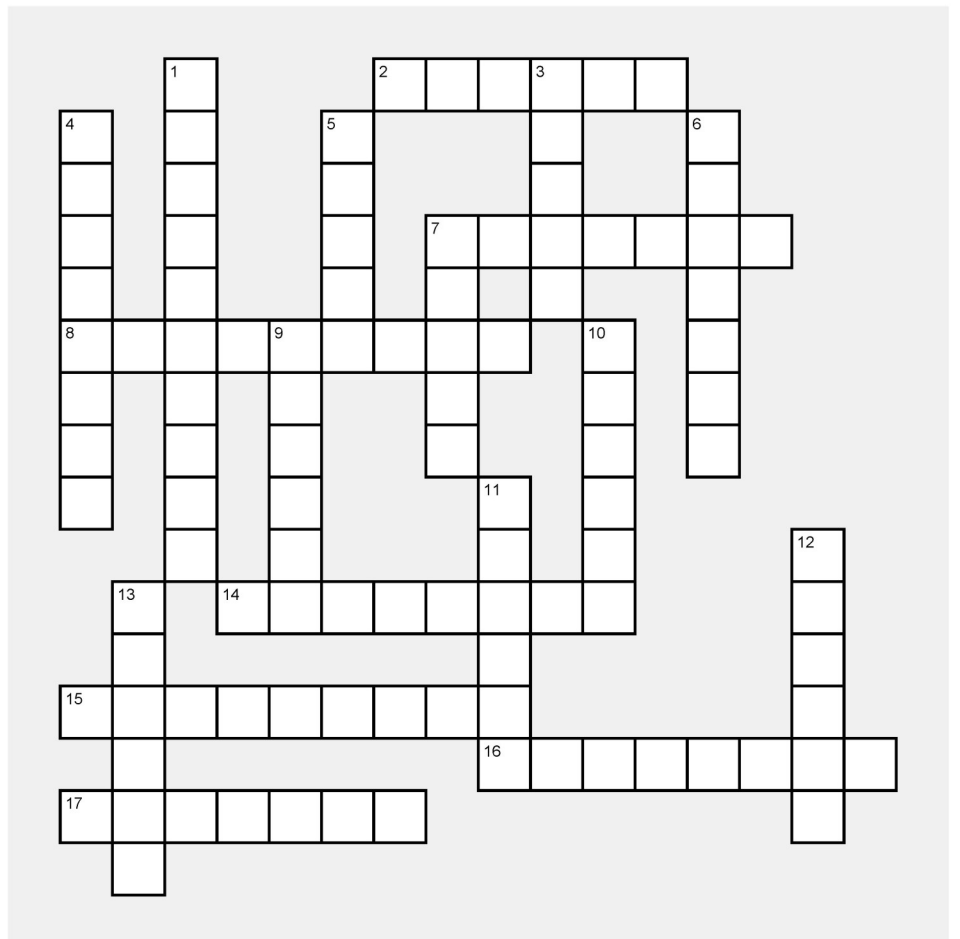
However, looking after your own mental and physical health needs to be an essential part of your caregiving duties. This year, resolve to ask for help whenever you feel caregiver fatigue begin to set in. Even if it's only for a few hours, sources of caregiver relief – or “respite” – include trusted family members, friends, and neighbors. You can also seek outside assistance through a meal delivery service, adult daycare center, or professional in-home respite caregiver. Whatever you do, resolve to not go it alone this year when the health and well-being of you and your loved one weigh in the balance!

<https://www.senior1care.com/family-caregiver/resolutions-for-caregivers/>

Hello! My name is **Alison Simo**, MSN, RN, CDCES and I am the Wellness Education Coordinator and Dementia Health Coach at Thrive Alliance. Please reach out to me for suggestions at any time at 812-418-6690 or [asimo@thrive-alliance.org](mailto:asimo@thrive-alliance.org).

**This newsletter is for YOU!!!**

## Winter Crossword

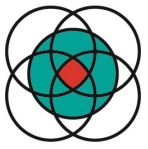


### ACROSS

- 2) Frozen spike
- 7) Winter sculpture
- 8) Present day?
- 14) Winter coasting
- 15) Hearth
- 16) Rudolph and teammates
- 17) Winter \_\_\_\_ Games

### DOWN

- 1) White Rabbit's milieu
- 3) Hot chocolate
- 4) Winter outerwear
- 5) Icy coating
- 6) Rink dancing
- 7) Neck wrap
- 9) Snow remover
- 10) Aspen activity
- 11) Small shake
- 12) Stanley Cup sport
- 13) Uncomfortably cool



## WELLNESS CORNER for Caregivers (and those in their care)

Feeling down, just not as happy in the winter months; when there is less sunlight, longer days, cold/icy, sometimes lonely, and sad. When sad is a daily feeling it may be more than the winter blues, it could be SAD.

### What is SAD?

SAD stands for Seasonal Affective Disorder. Many people go through short periods when they feel sad or unlike their usual selves. Sometimes, these mood changes begin and end when the seasons change. Many people feel “down” or have the “winter blues” when the days get shorter in the fall and winter and feel better in the spring when longer daylight hours return.

Sometimes, these mood changes are more serious and can affect how a person feels, thinks, and behaves. If you have noticed significant changes in your mood and behavior when the seasons change, you may be experiencing seasonal affective disorder (SAD).

### What helps SAD?

Getting out in natural sun-light has been shown to help reduce SAD symptoms, as well as Vitamin D supplements. Light therapy can also help; open curtains, open blinds, sit in sunlight even if indoors. Antidepressants can be prescribed by your provider. Also, being as active as possible in natural sun-light by walking outside when weather permits.

Talk to a health care provider about the potential benefits and risks of different treatment options and which treatment is best for you.

Please read link for more information on SAD.  
<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/sites/default/files/documents/health/publications/seasonal-affective-disorder/seasonal-affective-disorder-508.pdf>

**January has several health awareness topics, see links below for more information:**

#### **Glaucoma Awareness Month**

<https://www.nei.nih.gov/learn-about-eye-health/outreach-resources/glaucoma-resources/glaucoma-awareness-month>

#### **Thyroid Awareness Month**

<https://www.thyroid.org/thyroid-information/>

### WINTER CROSSWORD SOLUTION

