

# Top Ten Ways To Minimize Holiday Caregiver Stress

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As the holidays approach, caregiver stress escalates due to changes in routine, changes in expectations from the caregiver and the care recipient, sadness thinking about past holiday pleasures, and anxiety about what difficulties the holidays will bring.

Here are ten tips to help make this coming holiday season pleasurable for yourself and the one you care for.

1. Let other family members know how they can be helpful; try not to assume they know what you need.
2. Make lists about what needs to be done and delegate responsibilities, either to family members, friends, or hired services. Consider using respite services if necessary, such as Adult Day Centers.
3. Keep expectations low; don't overload yourself with unnecessary activities. Give yourself permission to do less than you have done in the past.
4. Start new traditions which better fit into the current circumstances such as go out and visit others rather than entertaining many guests at home.
5. Provide your loved one with a quiet room where they can go if the holiday confusion becomes over-whelming.
6. Try to include the care recipient in some of the holiday preparations. Find activities which will enhance their feelings of usefulness and offer successes.
7. Try to monitor the amount of sweets which are consumed by the care recipient. Many people with dementia cannot tell when they've had too much to eat.
8. Take care of yourself. Plan on providing yourself with relaxation strategies such taking a break from caregiving responsibilities, listening to calming music, scheduling massages, visiting with friends, etc.
9. Avoid caffeine and alcohol, as self medication for "bad days or nights."
10. Accept your feelings. A sense of sadness, anger, loss, frustration, and disappointment are common at this time. Talk to someone with whom you can share your feelings.

Have a safe and very happy holiday season!

Provided as a public service of the Caregiver Resource Network. The **Caregiver Resource Network** is a collaboration of West Michigan organizations dedicated to providing for the needs and welfare of family and professional caregivers within the community. Funded by the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan with Older American's Act Title III-E, Family Caregiver Support funds. For more information consult our website at [www.CaregiverResource.net](http://www.CaregiverResource.net) or call toll free at 1-888-456-5664.