

Caregiver Stress and Burnout Checklist

A clinical conversation guide for caregivers and families

Purpose: This checklist helps organize a conversation about caregiving demands, strain, available support, and the sustainability of the current arrangement. It is not a validated diagnostic instrument and does not establish a mental health diagnosis.

Instructions

Complete the checklist based on the past three months. When appropriate, the caregiver and involved family members may each complete a separate copy and then compare patterns rather than argue about a single total score.

0	1	2	3	4
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost always

#	Statement	0	1	2	3	4
1	Caregiving demands feel greater than the time, energy, or resources available to me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2	I have little dependable relief from caregiving responsibilities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3	I remain mentally preoccupied with the care recipient even when I am away.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4	I feel guilty when I rest, say no, enjoy myself, or attend to my own needs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5	I feel increasingly irritable, anxious, sad, resentful, numb, or emotionally exhausted.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6	I continue taking on responsibilities even when I recognize that the pattern is unsustainable.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7	Caregiving has interfered with my sleep, health, medical care, exercise, or nutrition.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8	Caregiving has interfered with my work, finances, relationships, or other important responsibilities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9	Activities, friendships, or sources of meaning that once sustained me have become smaller or disappeared.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10	Other family members underestimate the amount of care required or rely too heavily on me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11	I have difficulty asking for, accepting, or directing help from others.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12	My frustration sometimes affects the patience, warmth, or quality of care I provide.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13	I worry that exhaustion, anger, distraction, or physical limitations could create a safety problem.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14	Relatives, friends, health professionals, or others have expressed concern about my well-being.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15	I feel ambivalent: part of me wants help or change, while another part believes I must continue as I am.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16	I am willing to discuss one specific support, boundary, or next step with my family or a qualified professional.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Clinical Review

Use the responses to locate patterns, differences in perspective, and the next clinically appropriate conversation.

1. Review by domain

Domain	Items	Clinical focus
Caregiving strain	Items 1-6	Look for overload, inadequate relief, persistent preoccupation, guilt, emotional exhaustion, and continuation of an unsustainable pattern.
Life and care impact	Items 7-12	Look for effects on health, work, finances, relationships, sustaining activities, family responsibility, help-seeking, and quality of care.
Safety and change	Items 13-16	Address potential safety problems, outside concern, ambivalence, and readiness for one concrete support or boundary.

2. Interpretation

This checklist intentionally has no diagnostic cutoff. A total score can obscure the most important information. Review which individual items were marked Often or Almost always, where family members differ, and whether the pattern indicates caregiver exhaustion, declining health, impaired functioning, inadequate support, compromised care, or a need for additional assessment and services.

Clinical caution: Any concern involving possible neglect, abuse, medication errors, unsafe transfers, impaired driving, wandering, suicidal thinking, or inability to meet either person's basic needs warrants direct assessment. Urgent danger should be addressed through appropriate emergency, medical, protective, or respite resources.

3. Discussion prompts

- Which response concerns you most, and why?
- Which responsibilities truly require this caregiver, and which could be shared or changed?
- What has caregiving begun to replace in the caregiver's life?
- Where do family members' perceptions of the burden differ most?
- What form of support would provide meaningful rather than symbolic relief?
- What is one observable change that would make care safer or more sustainable?

4. Notes and next step

Primary concern:

Difference in family members' perspectives:

Immediate safety consideration:

Agreed next step:

Follow-up date: