



DANGER SIGNALS THAT SAY . . .
WARNING: CAREGIVER NEEDS HELP!

When is it okay to cry “Uncle”? To say, “I can’t give any more unless I get some help”?

Many caregivers would rather trudge on under unbearable conditions than to admit such failure. What happens, though, is their own health suffers more and more, and eventually they need care. Others simply don’t realize they are taking on too much until it’s too late.

If you notice any of the following danger signals, you are probably approaching role overload and should seek assistance from a local support group or self-help agency:

- Your relative’s condition is worsening despite your best efforts.
- No matter what you do, it isn’t enough.
- You feel you’re the only person in the world enduring this.
- You no longer have any time or place to be alone for even a brief respite.
- Things you used to do occasionally to help out are now part of your daily routine.
- Family relationships are breaking down because of caregiving pressures.
- Your caregiving duties are interfering with your work and social life to an unacceptable degree.
- You’re going on in a no-win situation just to avoid admitting failure.
- You realize you’re all alone – and doing it all – because you’ve shut out everyone who’s offered help.
- You refuse to think of yourself because that would be selfish (even though you’re unselfish 99 percent of the time).
- Your coping methods have become destructive. You’re overeating/under-eating, abusing drugs/alcohol, or taking it out on your relative.
- There are no more happy times, loving and caring have given way to exhaustion and resentment, and you no longer feel good about yourself or take pride in what you’re doing.