



Friends of St. John the Caregiver

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www.FSJC.org • www.YourAgingParent.com • www.CatholicCaregivers.com

From *A Catholic Guide to Caring for Your Aging Parent*
by Monica Dodds
Loyola Press

A Depression Checklist for Family Caregivers

Over time, the challenges of caregiving can affect both the caregiver's and the care-receiver's physical and emotional health. Consider the frequency and severity that you or your loved one have experienced any of these symptoms for more than two weeks:

- A persistently sad, anxious, or empty mood
- Feelings of hopelessness, pessimism, and apathy
- Feelings of worthlessness, helplessness, and guilt
- Frequent crying
- A loss of interest in doing things that were once pleasurable
- Disturbed sleep: insomnia, early waking, or oversleeping
- Disturbed eating: a loss of appetite, weight gain, or weight loss
- Decreased energy and constant fatigue
- Recurring aches and pains
- Restlessness and irritability
- Difficulty performing daily tasks, such as going to work
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
- Neglect in personal appearance
- Thoughts of death or suicide

Seek professional help. An early diagnosis is important. Treatments have been very successful.

Some changes in lifestyle a caregiver can make that will help restore emotional health:

- Take time to pray each day and nurture your spiritual life
- Join a support group
- Get together with friends and have fun
- Reduce stress and avoid overloading your schedule
- Learn to recognize your negative thoughts and be more aware of the positive
- Identify problems and explore solutions and coping strategies
- Look for something pleasant to do, and do it
- Maintain your sense of purpose
- Cherish family relationships
- Exercise and eat healthy foods
- Be patient with yourself

For more free information, visit YourAgingParent.com, a program of the Friends of St. John the Caregiver. To receive a free copy of "The Little Book of Caregiver Prayers," send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Friends of St. John the Caregiver, P.O. Box 320, Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043.