

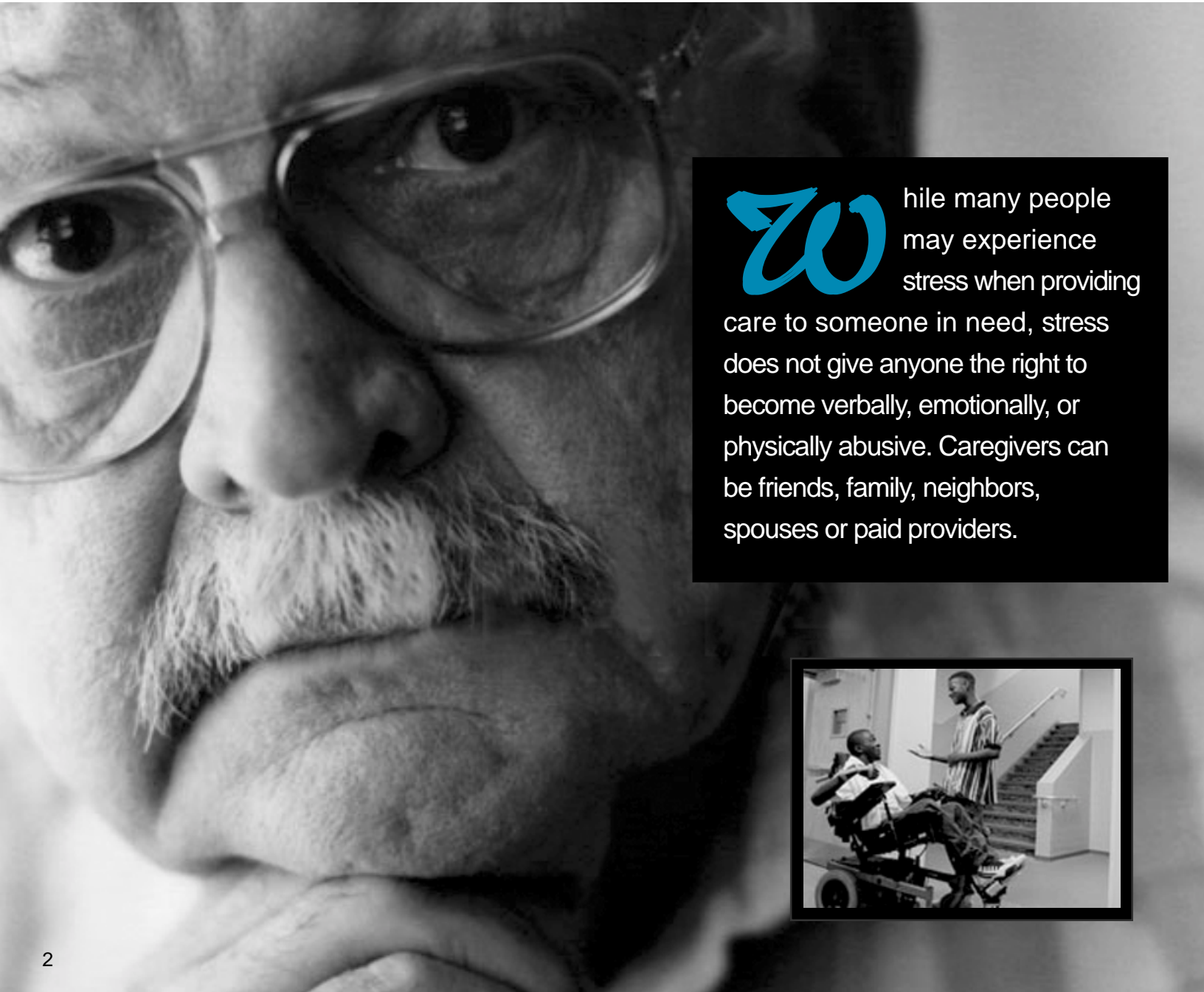


# Stress

is not an excuse  
for abuse.

**1-800-799-SAFE**

**(1-800-799-7233)**



W


hile many people may experience stress when providing care to someone in need, stress does not give anyone the right to become verbally, emotionally, or physically abusive. Caregivers can be friends, family, neighbors, spouses or paid providers.



**Regardless of the relationship between the caregiver and the care-receiver, no one has the right to take control over another person by:**

- Calling names or putting the person down;
- Providing care in a rough, hurtful manner;
- Blaming the care-receiver for making them feel stressed, overworked and angry;
- Denying the care-receiver food, personal hygiene care (bathing, toileting, dressing etc.), medicine or medical care;
- Preventing the care-receiver from answering questions or giving information about their needs;
- Denying the care-receiver opportunities to increase their independence, seek employment or use equipment/devices that may increase their independence (glasses, canes, walkers, wheelchairs, etc.);
- Keeping the care-receiver from friends, other caregivers and spiritual leaders of their choice;
- Threatening to place or placing the care-receiver in a facility against their will;
- Stealing from the care-receiver;
- Controlling the care-receiver with threats of physical harm, or threats to not let the person do what they need or want to do;
- Intimidating the care-receiver by throwing things, destroying personal belongings or damaging property;
- Pushing, shoving, slapping or hitting;
- Using weapons to intimidate or injure the care-receiver.

If a caregiver is controlling another person by using these tactics, their behavior may be unacceptable, harmful, and possibly illegal.\*

A large, high-contrast, black and white close-up of an elderly woman's face, showing her eyes, nose, and mouth. She has a slight smile and is looking towards the camera.

A person who is being controlled by anyone using abusive tactics has the right to make decisions about their own safety and how they seek help.



## Some options for seeking help include:

- Contacting a local domestic violence program for information on abusive and controlling relationships, services for victims of domestic violence, support counseling, 24 hour hotline services, batterer intervention programs and emergency shelter services.
- Contacting a local senior center for more information on caregiver abuse and services for senior citizens.
- Contacting a center for independent living for information on independent living services and assistive devices/equipment.
- Contacting the local police department to report criminal offenses of domestic assault/battery, sexual assault, and abuse and neglect of an elderly person or other vulnerable adult.

- Reporting abuse and neglect of a mentally or physically incapacitated adult to the local Adult Protective Services Unit or the Elder Abuse/Neglect Hotline at 1-800-352-6513. (Contact your local Adult Protective Services Unit for more information on understanding “mentally or physically incapacitated” adults and mandatory reporting.)
- Reporting nursing home or residential care facility abuse to the elder abuse hotline and/or the WV Long-Term Care office at 1-800-834-0598.

**CAUTION!!** While it is important (and for some professionals mandatory) to report abuse and neglect of the elderly and other vulnerable adults who are incapacitated, adult victims who are not incapacitated have the right to make decisions about involving the criminal justice and social service systems in their lives.



While caregiver stress is never an acceptable excuse for using

abusive/controlling behaviors, it can happen in any care giving situation. Caregiver stress impacts both the caregiver and the care-receiver. The caregiver is responsible for taking measures to reduce and cope with the stress that is impacting them personally while maintaining the care-receiver's right to decide about the type of care they receive, the environment they live in and the services they receive.





**The following options are available to caregivers and care-receivers when caregiver stress is difficult to manage:**

**Options for caregivers:**

- Ask for help – make a master list of daily tasks, share the list with friends and family and let them take on some of the tasks.
- Take care of yourself as best as you can – balance your time to allow time to rest, eat well and to do something that is personally enjoyable. Don't try to be superhuman.
- Confide in someone- talk with someone you trust who will listen and understand your situation.
- Contact an online or meeting support group for caregivers (e.g. Alzheimer's Association) – the local senior center or center for independent living can provide support group information.
- Look for online and community resources (see resources on page 10).
- Get training on caregiving techniques and skills.
- Make a cooperative respite plan that provides stress relief for you and respects the rights and wishes of your care receiver.

**Signs of caregiver stress:**

- Having trouble getting organized
- Crying for no reason
- Feeling short tempered
- Feeling that everyday tasks are getting harder to accomplish
- Feeling constantly pressed for time
- Feeling that there is no time for self



While caregiver stress is understandable, using stress as an excuse for abusive/controlling behaviors is not. Help keep the *care* in caregiver.



**The following options are available to care-receivers when caregiver stress is difficult to manage:**

**Options for care-receivers:**

- Local senior centers offer options for services such as adult daycare, home care services, respite services, home delivered meals, Medicaid services and residential placement options. When these options are understood and chosen by the person receiving care, they can provide feelings of independence and dignity for the care-receiver as well as provide care giving relief for the caregiver.
- Centers for independent living can provide options for the care-receiver to live more independently and possibly require less care from the

caregiver (such as devices/ equipment, independent living skill enhancement, service dogs, etc.).

- Look for online and community resources (see resources on page 10).



# Resources

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**Centers for Independent Living** provide advocacy, information and referrals, skills training and peer support to anyone who indicates they have a disability.

Northern WV Center for Independent Living (can provide contact information for WV centers for independent living).  
1-800-834-6408

**Elder Abuse Hotline** is available 24 hours to take reports of child or adult abuse/neglect.  
1-800-352-6513

**Licensed domestic violence programs** provide free and confidential assistance to victims of domestic violence and their children which include individual safety planning, shelter, 24 hour emergency hotline, legal advocacy, peer support counseling, support groups, services for children and other support services (such as help in obtaining medical care; legal protection; housing; furniture; clothing; training and educational services; employment; social services; emergency transportation; and translation services).

Beckley Area	1-888-825-7836 Voice/TTY
Charleston Area	1-800-681-8663 Voice/TTY
Elkins Area	1-800-339-1185 Voice/TTY
Fairmont Area	1-304-367-1100 Voice
	1-304-367-1101 TTY only
Huntington Area	1-888-538-9838 Voice/TTY
Keyser Area	1-800-698-1240 Voice
	1-304-788-6556 TTY only
Lewisburg Area	1-866-645-6334 Voice/TTY

Martinsburg Area	1-304-263-8522 Voice/TTY
Morgantown Area	1-304-292-5100 Voice
	1-304-263-8522 TTY only
Parkersburg Area	1-800-794-2335 Voice/TTY
Welch Area	1-304-436-8117 Voice/TTY
Weirton Area	1-800-340-0639 Voice
Wheeling Area	1-800-698-1247 Voice/TTY
Williamson Area	1-304-235-6121 Voice/TTY

## **National Domestic Violence Hotline**

1-800-799-SAFE (7233)  
1-800-787-3224 (TTY)

**WV Advocates** is the advocacy organization for people with disabilities in West Virginia.  
304-346-0847 Voice/TDD \ 800-950-5250  
wvadvocates@newwave.net

## **West Virginia Alzheimer's Associations**

www.wvalz.org  
Charleston 1-800-491-2717  
Morgantown 1-877-570-1159  
Williamstown 1-800-441-3322

## **WVATS (West Virginia Assistive Technology Systems)**

Regional Resource Centers have assistive technology lending libraries, toll-free information hotlines and provide sites for free demonstrations of assistive technology devices. WVATS Tech Teams are community-based problem solving groups that serve as regional consulting and support groups for individuals with disabilities.

Central WV Tech Team	Techlink (Parkersburg)
(304) 765-5890	(304) 422-3151
www.techteam.bizland.com	Southern WV Tech Team
	(304) 425-3810

**The WV Bureau of Senior Services** administers a wide range of programs targeted primarily to West Virginia's elderly population.  
304-558-3317

**WV Long-Term Care Ombudsman** provide advocacy for residents of nursing homes, board and care homes, and assisted living. Ombudsmen provide information about how to find a facility and what to do to get quality care.  
1-800-834-0598

**WV Rehabilitation Services**  
1-800-642-8207

**WV Senior Legal Aid** is a non-profit organization that provides free civil legal services to West Virginians 60 years of age and older, regardless of income level. A Legal Advice and Referral Hotline is available 24 hours a day.  
1-800-229-5068  
[www.seniorlegalaid.org](http://www.seniorlegalaid.org)

**WV Society for the Blind and Severely Disabled**  
304-558-2373

**The West Virginia University Center on Aging** provides for the development of excellence in service, education, research and policy.  
304-293-2968  
<http://www.hsc.wvu.edu/coa/>

## **National Organizations**

**American Association of Retired Persons**  
[www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org)

**National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life**  
[www.ncall.us](http://www.ncall.us)

**Central Abuse Registry**  
1-800-962-ABUSE (2873)

**Elder Abuse Center**  
[www.elderabusecenter.org](http://www.elderabusecenter.org)

**ElderCare Locator** provides information and referral on services for the elderly in any area of the US  
1-800-677-1116.

**Victims of Crime**  
[www.ojp.usdoj.gov](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov)

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\* Sometimes the caregiver may be a decision-maker. A decision-maker is required to act in the care receiver's best interest, which means the decision-maker must balance the care receiver's known wishes with considerations of safety. Even if a person has a guardian or medical power of attorney, the care receiver still has rights and in no instance is causing harm acceptable. A decision-maker is appointed when a person is declared incapacitated by a court or doctor or a durable power of attorney has been signed. (For more information on understanding how to determine if a person is incapacitated or for information on durable power of attorneys, contact your local adult protective services or WV Senior Legal Aid [www.wvseniorlegalaid.org](http://www.wvseniorlegalaid.org).)



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Charleston, WV 25302  
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Fax: (304) 965-3572  
[www.wvcadv.org](http://www.wvcadv.org)