



Burnout Among LGBTQ+ Caregivers

Like any other caregiver, burnout among the LGBTQ+ community of caregivers is a challenge. A lack of access to formal networks and social support can negatively impact mental health.

Here, we'll explore causes of burnout for LGBTQ+ caregivers and offer practical tips on what you can do in the face of burnout.

Who Might Be At Risk For Burnout?

When caring for a loved one or family member, your risk for burnout is heightened if you are:

- **Part of the LGBTQ+ community.** You might already feel social isolation and not know where to turn or have historical tension with your loved one if they aren't affirming.
- **NOT part of the LGBTQ+ community but caring for someone who is.** Your care recipient might not trust others, especially healthcare providers, making it difficult for you to help them.
- **In the LGBTQ+ community AND your loved one is LGBTQ+.** Here, you both might feel socially isolated and experience emotional strain navigating trusted care.

Recognizing the signs of burnout is the same as any other caregiver, but you may be less likely to know where to turn. Seek out support and develop a plan before developing feelings of burnout.

CONSIDER THIS

As part of the LGBTQ+ community, it's likely that you have adopted a mentality of "acceptance." You might think, "It's always been hard for me or us. This time is no different". Try to recognize these thoughts and realize it's another form of neglecting your own needs. We all deserve care and support, no matter how we identify or what we have experienced.

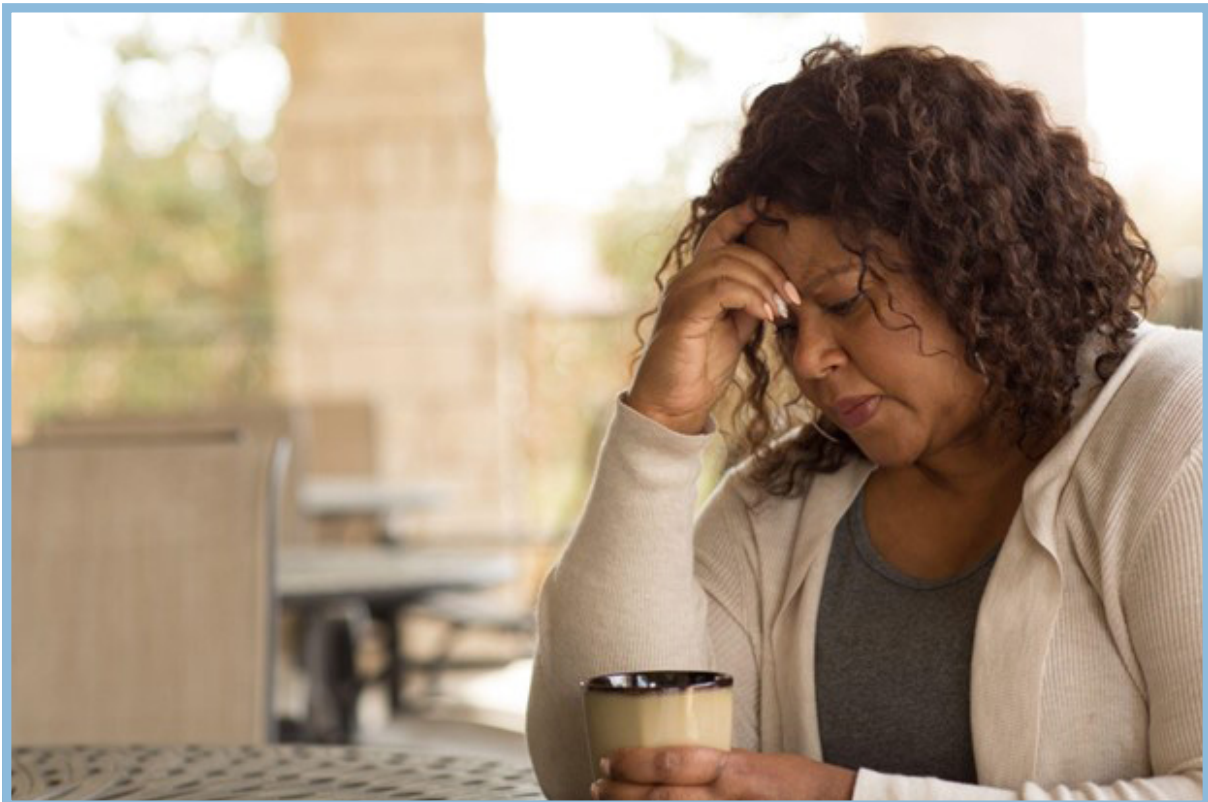
What Causes Burnout for LGBTQ+ Caregivers?

There are several reasons LGBTQ+ caregivers may experience burnout faster than other people. For example, an LGBTQ+ care recipient might not have as many people to turn to if they don't have kids. Therefore, you might not expect to become a primary caregiver for the person.

Further, LGBTQ+ people may be more reluctant to interact with medical and healthcare professionals than other caregivers or care recipients. This can be due to past experiences. Or, it can be the result of a general lack of feeling accepted.

And an LGBTQ+ person is more likely to need care, and for more than just one reason. Due to the impact of minority stress and inequitable access to care, many LGBTQ+ people suffer from chronic illness or have more than one health condition.

Lastly, and most obviously, an LGBTQ+ caregiver has less formal and informal support to turn to.



How To Avoid LGBTQ+ Caregiver Burnout

Although you'll be at a higher risk for burnout, there are steps you can take to avoid the impact. And, you can work to have a plan in place before feeling overwhelmed.

1. Identify Common Signs Of Caregiver Burnout

- You might be feeling more irritable than usual or having less patience now with your loved one or others in your life.
- You might find that sleep is impacting you. For example, you're not sleeping as well as you normally used to, you're waking up in the night, or having a tough time falling asleep.
- You might feel more tired than normal.
- Balancing other responsibilities in your life might seem more taxing than it used to be or what you think it should be.

DID YOU KNOW?

Even the most loving caregivers can slowly and inadvertently commit elder abuse when experiencing burnout. For LGBTQ+ people, elder abuse might include things like threatening to out the care recipient or share their private information if they do not change their behavior.

2. Connect With Resources

Finding helpful resources might be a challenge for you. Here are some ways you can connect with other formal and informal resources to ease your burden and get a plan in place.

- **Consider who is in your network.** Identify who you can turn to when you need a break or need help. Once you know who these people are, talk to them in advance. Let them know you may need to rely on their help in the future and ask if they'd be willing to step in. You can even consider asking them where they think they'd be able to help best so that you have a running list of who to turn to and for what.

- **If you're financially able, consider a caregiving service.** Finding the right care team to trust, especially for LGBTQ+ people, can be difficult. Research this type of help in advance and meet with them to determine your comfort level for when the time arises. Don't wait until you're feeling stressed to do this. It may only make it harder to find the care you can trust with help.
- **Consider LGBTQ+ community groups and affirming places of worship for help.** Keep your eyes open to informal networks and groups or groups of other caregivers. Just like the other steps, connect with them sooner than later. The simple connection might ease your mind.
- **Don't forget the care within the LGBTQ+ community.** The silver lining is that LGBTQ+ people have a history of taking care of each other. While other LGBTQ+ people might not be going through exactly what you are, members of your community can rally together to find the right kind of support. It might be awkward, but be open to trusting your community. On the other hand, connecting with people from the LGBTQ+ community might help you feel right at home.
- **Affirming support groups and counseling should never be dismissed.** While it might be hard to reach out for this type of help, this might be exactly what you need. Knowing it's an option in advance reduces the pain of making the decision or doing the research later when you need it most.

Help Ideas For Burnout Relief

POTENTIAL HELPERS	TASKS TO ASK FOR HELP WITH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbor • Friend of loved one • Coworker • Family member • LGBTQ+ network • Places of worship volunteers • Friend of personal family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groceries • Laundry • Meal ordering • Meal pickup • Transportation • Pet care • House cleaning

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