**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Date: 26 June, 2020

# Preventing Elder Abuse: Recognizing and Treating Caregiver Burnout

**JOHNSON CITY, Tenn.**— One of the most important tools in the prevention of elder abuse is the careful selection and ongoing support of caregivers. Think about what the caregivers of older adults face every day: Assisting with bathing, dressing and other personal care; coping with the maze of medical, insurance and social services programs with appointments, paperwork, and financial information; watching their loved ones deteriorate physically and/or mentally; and dealing with the changes in all facets of their own lives as they simultaneously manage another person’s life as well.

Stresses add up—even for the strongest, most-prepared caregivers. It is important to recognize when the frustrations that you may be feeling go beyond your ability to manage them. Here are some warning signs of Caregiver Burnout:

* Being on the verge of tears or crying a lot
* Feeling helpless or hopeless
* Overreacting to minor nuisances
* Feeling constantly exhausted
* Decreased productivity, or losing interest in work
* Withdrawing from social contacts
* Increasing use of alcohol or stimulants
* Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
* Inability to relax
* Scattered thinking
* Feeling increasingly resentful
* Being short-tempered with care recipient frequently
* Increasing thoughts of death

Caregivers may not recognize signs of burnout in themselves, but their friends and family certainly will. Take their feedback seriously and recognize that you can better help others if you are physically and mentally well. There are many ways to address caregiver burnout, and many resources to help caregivers cope with their responsibilities. Some of the most effective strategies are:

* Participate in a support network, either in-person, by phone or online, to share joys and frustrations with peers
* Consult with a professional counselor for one-on-one counseling
* Attend a support group to receive positive feedback and coping strategies from others in similar situations
* Maintain good health: exercise regularly and eating a healthy diet
* Take regular time out for journaling, meditation or contemplation
* Stay involved in activities or hobbies you enjoy

For more caregiver resources, including newsletters, support groups and online workshops, contact Tracy Buckles, caregiver coordinator at First Tennessee Area Agency on Aging and Disability (FTAAAD), at 423-722-5109.

First Tennessee Area Agency on Aging and Disability (FTAAAD) supports older adults and family caregivers by providing resources and education and by offering an Information and Assistance line that informs, guides, directs and links Northeast Tennesseans to needed and available resources. Call 866-836-6678 for I&A assistance with local resources and programs, or for questions about potential scams or fraud. For additional information on programs and services for older adults or adults with disabilities, contact Kathy Whitaker at 423-722-5102.

**About First Tennessee Development District Area Agency on Aging and Disability**FTAAAD’s mission is to improve the quality of life for older adults and adults with disabilities who live in the eight counties of Northeast Tennessee by advocating, setting policy, identifying local needs, providing services, coordinating resources, and providing information to promote a continuum of care which supports independence, choice, and empowerment for those we are committed to serve. For more information, call 423-928-3258 or visit [www.ftaaad.org](http://www.ftaaad.org).