



***Module 9:
Self Care***

Stress

- Under stress, the body releases chemicals into the blood. These chemicals give people more energy and strength, which can be a good thing if the stress is caused by physical danger. But stress can be a bad thing when it goes on for too long. Symptoms associated with normal stress should cause you no concern – but **some symptoms may indicate chronic stress:**

Loss of sex drive

Loss of enjoyment and spontaneity

Stomach pain, allergies, and/or urinary problems

Pounding heart

Dry mouth

Fatigue

Unrealistic expectations Butterflies in the stomach

Inability to make decisions

The urge to go to the bathroom

Aggression

Cold hands and feet

Apathy or depression

Restlessness or feeling jumpy

Increasingly critical outlook or intolerance

Confusion or forgetfulness

Increased breathing rate

Excessive worrying

Sweating

Being overly emotional

Muscle tension

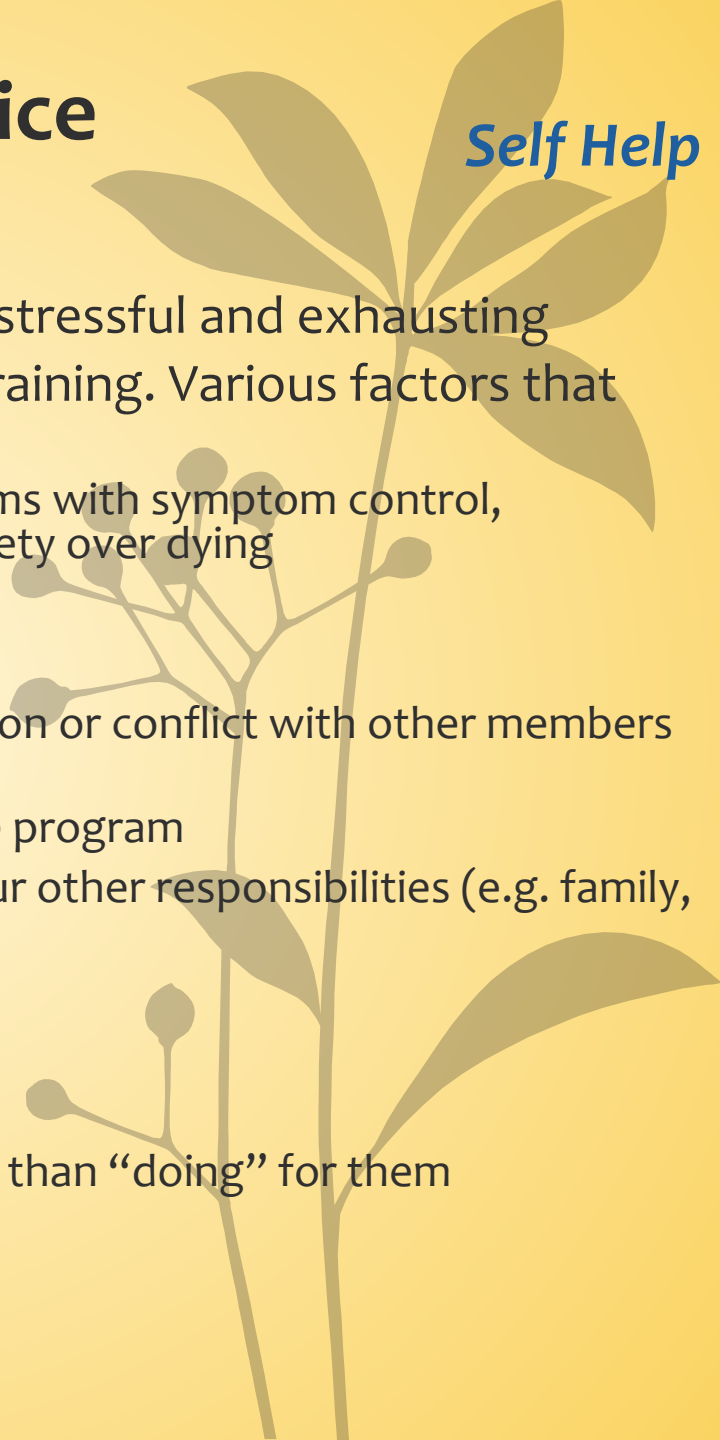
Racing thoughts and inability to “switch off”

Irritability or impatience

The Stresses of Being a Hospice Palliative Care Volunteer

Self Help

- Supporting a dying person and family can be stressful and exhausting
- The connection will be short, intense – and draining. Various factors that may cause stress for you:
 - factors related to the dying person such as problems with symptom control, psychiatric or personality issues, and anger or anxiety over dying
 - trying to support a dysfunctional family
 - workload
 - lack of clarity about your role, lack of communication or conflict with other members of the team
 - lack of resources or administrative problems in the program
 - balancing the demands of volunteer work with your other responsibilities (e.g. family, work, leisure)
 - inadequate training for the role
 - stresses in your own personal life
 - unrealistic expectations for yourself
 - the challenge of just “being” with someone rather than “doing” for them



Strategies to Manage Stress

- Reflection
- A support network
- Having fun
- Relaxing into being
- Revisiting boundaries



Your Self-Care Kit

- Be gentle with yourself
- Ask for help
- Give and accept support, to and from your team
- Value your relationships
- Be aware of your own strengths, weaknesses, and feelings
- Complain only when there's a purpose
- Surround yourself with life, color, creativity
- Let off steam
- Use your sense of humor
- Change it up
- Just say “no” sometimes
- Deal with stress early
- Step back to see the big picture, and be open to change



Next Steps?

- Click on the link below to take you to the *Module 9: Self-Care Quiz* section
 - [Module 9 Quiz](#)

