

What is parent & carer diabetes distress & burnout?

Diabetes distress refers to a pattern of thoughts, feelings and behaviours that parents and carers might experience when they feel overwhelmed or exhausted by the demands of supporting a child living with type 1 diabetes.

Distress in parents and carers can often manifest in the following ways:

- Feeling so consumed by diabetes that it's all you focus on (for example only talking about diabetes management). You may feel like you're losing focus on your relationship with your child, yourself and/or other people in your life
- Feeling stuck in unhelpful patterns with your child when it comes to their diabetes management (for example constant arguments about diabetes)
- A change in your attitude or feelings – for example regularly feeling angry, low or numb

If diabetes distress continues for a while it can change the way a parent or carer behaves around their child and manages their child's diabetes, commonly referred to as 'burnout'

Some signs of burnout could include:

- Using unhelpful strategies to manage or avoid how you feel – for example isolating yourself and not talking about how you're feeling, or drinking too much alcohol
- Starting to avoid situations linked to your child's diabetes (e.g. avoiding diabetes clinic, or doing the 'bare minimum' to manage your child's diabetes)

