



Caring for Yourself

The role of a caregiver has both positive and negative impacts, but there are clear tolls on the caregiver. A 2018 caregiver survey completed by The Change Foundation confirm this:

- Three-fifths of caregivers admitted they are caregivers because they have no choice, and two-fifths feel trapped, helpless and frustrated at times.
- There are many aspects of caregiving they find to be stressful, particularly dealing with the declining health of their family member, meeting the needs of their family member as well as managing their own emotions.
- About half of the caregivers had talked to their doctors about their ability to physically and emotionally handle being a caregiver. On the other hand, half have never had this conversation.
- About half feel their personal time, social life and ability to care for themselves have been negatively impacted. Almost half have seen a negative impact on their mental health.

As a caregiver, it is important to look after your own health and ensure that you can recognize signs of burnout and understand how to manage your own needs.

It is important to be able to recognize both physical and emotional signs of burnout, which include:

Physical

- Headaches
- Fluctuations in weight
- Trouble sleeping or feeling tired

Emotional

- Being angry, sad or resentful
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Becoming easily frustrated

It is also important to understand actions or feelings that may increase the risk of burnout. Try following some of these tips to help reduce the risk of burnout:

- Learn how to say “no”
- Set realistic expectations of yourself
- Understand that others are capable of providing adequate care to your loved one
- Ask for help and accept help when it’s offered

- Take time for yourself, every day
- Do not always sacrifice your needs in order to benefit others
- Communicate your needs and feelings to others (e.g. family, friends, support groups, etc.)

Caregiver Support Resources

There are a variety of caregiver support services and websites available to help you in your caregiving journey.

Support Groups and Online Resources:

General Caregiver Support

- <https://caregiveraction.org/community> (an on-line forum connecting you with other caregivers)
- <https://dixiebloor.ca/older-adults/>
- <https://www.caregiverexchange.ca/>
- <https://elizz.com/>

Dementia Caregiver Support

- <https://alzheimer.ca/en/peel/We-can-help/Support%20groups>
- <https://www.baycrest.org/Baycrest/Healthcare-Programs-Services/Programs/Online-Caregiver-Support-Group>

Multicultural Caregiver Support

- <https://www.mississaugahaltonhealthline.ca/displayService.aspx?id=174454>

Chat Tools

- Elizzbot – An on-demand Smart Chatbot for Family Caregivers developed by SE Home Care that uses artificial intelligence to provide support to caregivers whenever needed <https://elizz.com/landing-page/elizzbot>

Mobile Apps

- Dementia Advisor – An app developed by Sinai Health System to help caregivers learn practical coping skills and receive expert coaching through chat-based role playing

Organization Tools

- A site that allows family and friends to coordinate caregiving tasks online. The site is sponsored by the National Alliance for Caregiving. <https://nac.lotsahelpinghands.com/eldercare/home/>

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