

Who is a Caregiver?

A caregiver is a family member or friend who provides care for someone living with challenges due to disability, illness, or age.

They include:

- Spouses caring for their partner with a chronic or terminal illness.
- Adult children caring for aging parents
- Parents caring for a child with a disability or mental illness.
- Friends or neighbours who run errands because there is nobody else.



Caregiving by Numbers

- 1 in 4** Number of Albertans over 45 caring for a senior. That number does not include those caring for a loved one under 65.
- 80%** Percentage of care provided by family caregivers for loved ones with a chronic illness.
- 38%** Percent of caregivers with the symptoms of or a diagnosis of depression
- +70%** Percent of caregivers providing care while employed fulltime

For more information about the Alberta Caregivers Association or our programs please contact us.

Phone: 780-453-5088 or
Toll free: 1-877-453-5088

Website:
www.albertacaregivers.org

Email:
office@albertacaregivers.org

Mailing Address:
Alberta Caregivers Association
Fulton Place Building
10310-56 Street
Edmonton, AB T6A 2J2

The Alberta Caregivers Association helps make caregivers' lives less difficult through information, education, support, networking, advocacy, and community development.

Caring for the Caregiver

"If Canada's health care system were a plant, **family caregivers** would be its roots—fragile, vital and invisible."
—Silver Donald Cameron



The Caregiving Experience

Regardless of who they are caring for, or the nature of their care receiver's needs, most caregivers will relate the most common challenges of caregiving.

Difficult Emotions

Caregivers frequently report feelings of guilt, frustration, resentment, and isolation. Though often unrecognized, they are likely also grieving the changes in their relationships, loss or deferral of their dreams and goals, and the decline of their loved one.

Physical Health

With 20% of caregivers fitting a high stress profile, many caregivers are at risk of burnout and other stress related illnesses. Many also report a lack of or disturbed sleep, and physical strain.

Impact on Relationships

Family dynamics often shift when a loved one becomes ill. Caregivers may also have difficulty relating to family and friends who are not caregiving, leaving them isolated.

Finding Services & Supports

Many caregivers report difficulty in getting the information they need, finding supports and navigating the system. Caregiving is often a huge financial burden.

Supporting Caregivers in Your Practice

In a society where the focus is all on the client, caregivers are often invisible. However, once you begin to look, caregivers are everywhere. Here are some ways that you can support the caregivers in your practice:

- Acknowledge caregivers and ask them how they are doing.
- Help caregivers identify themselves as a caregiver.
- Encourage caregivers to seek help and practice self-care. Help them accept their limitations: not being able to do it all does not make them a bad person.
- Work with them: listen to their concerns and include them in planning.
- Make sure they are aware of where they can find respite & services are available.

Signs of Caregiver Burnout

1. Life is dominated by their caregiving role
2. Lacks energy and is always exhausted
3. Neglects their own needs
4. Often sick
5. Has difficulty relaxing when help is available
6. Is impatient or irritable with care recipient
7. Feels overwhelmed, helpless and hopeless

ACGA Resources

The Alberta Caregivers Association works in partnership and collaboration with other agencies to support caregivers across the province. Please visit our website or contact us to learn more about our programs and services.

COMPASS for the Caregiver

An 8-module workshop that teaches caregivers how to care for themselves. Topics include: managing stress and guilt, recognizing grief and finding hope, navigating the system, and avoiding burnout.

Community Caregiver Groups (CCG)

CCGs provide caregivers with the opportunity to take a break from their caregiving responsibilities and to socialize with fellow caregivers in a community environment.

Caregiver Advisor

The Caregiver Advisor works with other agencies to identify resources and develop strategies to address the needs of the caregivers they serve. They also provide some one-on-one support, advocacy, and linkages for caregivers.

"The irony of caregiving is that most people do not self identify, but nearly everyone knows a current caregiver, a past caregiver, someone who will be a caregiver, or a care recipient."

- Professional Respondent to Caregiver Consultation Survey

