










Taking Care of Yourself through the Ups and Downs of Caregiving

Many caregivers share their experience of both the ups and downs of caregiving. It is when the down-side of caregiving takes over that we need to be worried. We know many caregivers feel stress. As many as 35% of caregivers who care for someone with dementia, MS and Parkinson, report feeling stress. Caregivers feel stress when part of the life is not in balance. Fill out the form below to spot areas of stress in your life and where you might want to take action to reduce it.

Am I in balance? Identifying your areas of stress

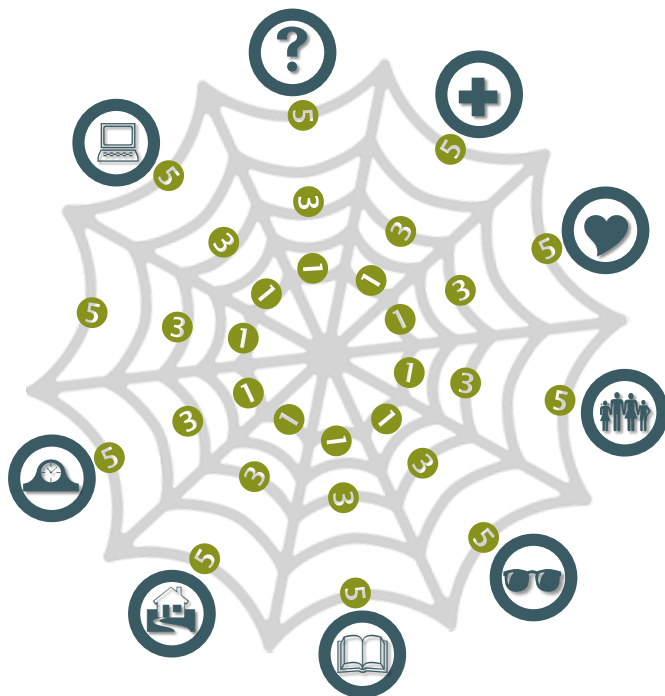
Areas of Stress	Statements 1 No 3 Somewhat 5 Yes	Take action to stay healthy and well. Check off things you will do to reduce your stress.
 <p>Physical Health</p>	<p>I am physically healthy. I am eating and sleeping well. I take time to exercise. I limit drinking and smoking.</p> <p>1 No 3 Somewhat 5 Yes</p>	<p>Keeping active and moving is key to your physical and mental health.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Walk, lift weights, swim, dance, bowl or garden. Keep your body moving! <input type="checkbox"/> Already active? Increase the time you spend moving. Minutes count! <input type="checkbox"/> Take time to plan and eat healthy meals. <input type="checkbox"/> Get a good night sleep. <input type="checkbox"/>
 <p>Emotional Health</p>	<p>I am emotionally healthy. I am coping with the stress.</p> <p>1 No 3 Somewhat 5 Yes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Join a support group. <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to another caregiver about your experiences. <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to your doctor about your mental health. <input type="checkbox"/>
 <p>Relationships</p>	<p>My relationship with my family member is strong. I am close to other family and friends.</p> <p>1 No 3 Somewhat 5 Yes</p>	<p>Over time you may lose touch with other family and friends. Relationships are important and need to be taken care of too.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Take your caregiving hat off. Focus on your relationship with the person. <input type="checkbox"/> Call a friend and invite them for a coffee or a walk. <input type="checkbox"/>

Areas of Stress	Statements 1 No 3 Somewhat 5 Yes	Take action to stay healthy and well. Check off things you will do to reduce your stress.
 Positive Outlook	I have a positive outlook on my caregiving experience. 1 No 3 Somewhat 5 Yes	<p>In tough times, we may focus on the negative. Changing your point of view can help you to see things differently.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Write down your thoughts. Journaling has been proven to change a person’s outlook for the better. <input type="checkbox"/> Make a list of the things you are most thankful for in your life. List the benefits of being a caregiver. <input type="checkbox"/> Spot your bad thoughts. Ask yourself if it is true? What would your friend say about you? <input type="checkbox"/>
 Skills & Knowledge	I have the right knowledge and skills to be a caregiver. I know who to ask if I need help. I know what to expect. 1 No 3 Somewhat 5 Yes	<p>Caregivers need new knowledge and skills to do it well.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Talk with your doctor and/or home care provider about how you can learn skills safely. <input type="checkbox"/> Attend a caregiver education course in your community or online. <input type="checkbox"/> Be clear on what you will and will not take on as a caregiver. <input type="checkbox"/>
 Managing at Home	I am managing at home. We have the right services. I can talk with the health care providers. 1 No 3 Somewhat 5 Yes	<p>Caregivers need support to manage at home.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ask for support. Home and community care agencies offer many services including transportation, personal support, meals on wheels, and respite services. <input type="checkbox"/> Ask other family members to help out – be specific. <input type="checkbox"/>
 Respite/ Time for Self	I make time to care for myself. I take time to do my hobbies. I feel relaxed after I take time for myself. 1 No 3 Somewhat 5 Yes	<p>Caregiving is one of the many roles you take on in life. Make sure you take time for yourself to get a break, relax and recharge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Make respite part of the caregiving plan. Follow through on your plan to get a break away. The goal is to feel like you have had a respite break. <input type="checkbox"/> Plan for respite. Include short 5 minute respite breaks as well as longer breaks in your plan. <input type="checkbox"/> Plan times when you can be with your family member as a spouse, daughter or son. Your relationship is worth it! <input type="checkbox"/>
 Money	Money is not an issue. We are able to spend money on things we need. 1 No 3 Somewhat 5 Yes	<p>Money can be a source of stress in many families. Try to find a balance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Talk with your bank about your options. <input type="checkbox"/> Explore provincial and federal tax credits for caregiver. <input type="checkbox"/>

Areas of Stress	Statements	Take action to stay healthy and well. Check off things you can do to reduce your stress.
 Work	My caregiving responsibilities do not impact my work. I have a supportive manager. 1 No 3 Somewhat 5 Yes	Needing to work while caregiving can also be stressful. <input type="checkbox"/> Talk with your human resources manager about your work and caregiving responsibilities. <input type="checkbox"/> Ask to see a counsellor through your workplace benefits, if available. <input type="checkbox"/> Plan for your time way from work. Use the Employment Insurance Compassionate Care Benefits. <input type="checkbox"/>
 Future Planning	We have a future plan. We have a will in place. We have an advanced care plan. 1 No 3 Somewhat 5 Yes	Caregiving is a journey. You need to be prepare for each new stage. <input type="checkbox"/> Plan your own bucket list. <input type="checkbox"/> Find new things to be excited about together. <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to your lawyer about making a will. <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to your family member about their wishes. <input type="checkbox"/> Check out the <u>Speak Up</u> campaign to make your advanced care plan. <input type="checkbox"/>

Am I in balance? Planning to stay healthy and well

Based on your answers above, fill out the web of stress. Then, create a plan to deal with your stress.



Top three (3) areas of stress (List the areas that you answered with **1** No).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Three (3) things I will take action on to stay healthy and well. (List the things you checked off above).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

I will review my action plan in one month on [date]:

I found making changes easy in [which area]: _____

I found making changes hard in [which area]: _____

I will continue to make changes to stay healthy and well by: _____

Resources

	Physical Health	Public Health Agency of Canada, Aging and Seniors Active Living Alliance for Older Adults
	Emotional Health	Family Caregiving Alliance, <i>The Emotional Side of Caregiving</i> & <i>Taking care of YOU - Self-care for family caregivers</i> Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health
	Positive Outlook	Edmunson, Janet. (2006). <i>Finding Meaning With Charles: Caregiving with Love through a Degenerative Disease.</i> Campbell, Judith M. (2014). <i>The Caregiver's Companion.</i>
	Skills & Knowledge	The Caregiver Network Lauber, Rick. (2010). <i>Caregiver's Guide for Canadians.</i>
	Managing at Home	Seniors Canada
	Respite/ Time for Self	Saint Elizabeth, Creative Ways to Take a Respite Break Saint Elizabeth, Caregiver Compass
	Money	Canada Revenue Agency, Caregiver Tax Credits RBC Royal Bank, Your Caregiver Planner
	Work	Compassionate Care Benefits - Employment Insurance Canadian Human Rights Commission, A Guide to Balancing Work and Caregiving Obligations
	Future Planning	Advanced Care Planning – My Speak Up Plan Canadian Virtual Hospice



1-800-268-7582
 info@mssociety.ca
 www.mssociety.ca
[I am a caregiver for someone with MS](#)



Parkinson Canada

1-800-565-3000
 info@parkinson.ca
 www.parkinson.ca
[For caregivers](#)

Alzheimer Society

1-800-616-8816
 info@alzheimer.ca
 www.alzheimer.ca/en/provincial-office-directory
[Caring for someone with dementia](#)