Taking Care of Yourself through the Ups and Downs of Caregiving
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- CONSULTANT
- EDUCATOR
- CAREGIVING EXPERT

Schroeder Girls, Mom & Nanny
1997

Mom, Dad & Joey
1992
Taking Care of Yourself through the Ups and Downs of Caregiving

Today, we will explore the

• physical and emotional changes that can come with each stage of caregiving

• range of feelings (the ups and the downs) as a natural part of caregiving

• ways to spot stress and other mental health concerns

• tips to staying healthy and well
“If the health care system were a plant, family caregivers would be the roots: invisible, fragile and vital.”

*This Day is for Me*, Silver Donald Cameron, 2003, www.mcconnellfoundation.ca/kh/resources/publication/this-day-is-for-me-caring-for-the-caregivers
The Stages of Caregiving

Adapted from *Stages of Caregiving*, Denise Brown, 2008, www.caregiving.com/the-caregiving-years
The Expectant Caregiver

• Growing concern.
• Keyword: ASK
• Purpose: Prepare, research options, gather information.

Adapted from Stages of Caregiving, Denise Brown, 2008, www.caregiving.com/the-caregiving-years
The New Caregiver

- Caring for a short time.
- **Keyword:** FIND
- **Purpose:** Take proactive steps to understand your role & care for yourself.

Adapted from *Stages of Caregiving*, Denise Brown, 2008, [www.caregiving.com/the-caregiving-years](http://www.caregiving.com/the-caregiving-years)
The Committed Caregiver

• Daily care.
• **Keyword:** RECEIVE
• **Purpose:** Balances the needs of the person you are caring for AND you.

Adapted from *Stages of Caregiving*, Denise Brown, 2008, www.caregiving.com/the-caregiving-years

Photo credit: www.freefoto.com
The Experienced Caregiver

- You have been through it all!
- **Keyword**: WELCOME
- **Purpose**: Personal growth and reflection.

Adapted from *Stages of Caregiving*, Denise Brown, 2008, [www.caregiving.com/the-caregiving-years](http://www.caregiving.com/the-caregiving-years)
The Transitioning Caregiver

- Your role is changing.
- **Keyword:** ALLOW
- **Purpose:** Walk with your family member.

Adapted from *Stages of Caregiving*, Denise Brown, 2008, [www.caregiving.com/the-caregiving-years](http://www.caregiving.com/the-caregiving-years)
The Treasuring Caregiver

• Your caregiving has ended.
• **Keyword:** TREASURE
• **Purpose:** Reap the benefits of your efforts.

Adapted from *Stages of Caregiving*, Denise Brown, 2008, [www.caregiving.com/the-caregiving-years](http://www.caregiving.com/the-caregiving-years)
What stages are you in now?
Range of Emotions
The Emotional Side of Caregiving

feel care...help

cope need

caregiver

time...good

loss...tired

grief...alone

emotions...loss

cope...help

Do you need support?

Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada

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
Caring for someone with dementia
Identifying Stress

Are I in balance?

Legend:
1. No
2. Somewhat
3. Yes

- Physical Health
- Mental Health
- Relationships
- Positive Outlook
- Skills & Knowledge
- Respite & Time for Self
- Managing at Home
- Money
- Work
- Future Planning
IN EMERGENCY
PUSH
Tips to Staying Healthy & Well
Keeping active and moving is key to your physical and mental health.

- Walk, lift weights, swim, dance, bowl or garden. Keep your body moving.
- Already active? Increase the time you spend being active. Minutes count!
- Take time to plan and eat healthy meals.
- Get a good night sleep.
- Join a support group. Talk with other caregivers about your experiences.
- Talk to your doctor about your mental health.
Over time you may lose touch with family and friends. Relationships are important and need to be nurtured.

- Take your caregiving hat off. Focus on your relationship with the person.
- Call a friend and invite for a coffee or a walk.
- Ask other family members to help out – be specific.
In tough times, we may focus on the negative. Changing your point of view can help you to see things differently.

- Write down your thoughts. Journaling has been proven to change a person’s outlook for the better.
- Make a list of the things you are most thankful for in your life. List the benefits of being a caregiver.
- Spot your bad thoughts. Ask yourself if it is true? What would your friend say about you?
Caregivers need new knowledge and skills to do it well.

- Talk with your doctor and/or home care provider about how you can learn skills safely.
- Attend a caregiver education course in your community.
- Be clear on what you can and can not take on as a caregiver.
Caregivers need support to manage at home.

• Ask for support. Home and community care agencies offer many services including transportation, personal support, meals on wheels, and respite services.

• Ask other family members to help out – be specific.
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.

• Make respite part of the caregiving plan. And follow through on your plan. The goal is to feel like you have had a respite break.

• Plan for both short 5 minute respite breaks to more regular breaks in your schedule.

• Plan a time where you can be with your family member as a spouse, daughter or son. Your relationship is worth it!
Money can be a source of stress in many families. Try to find a balance.

• Talk with your bank about your options.
• Explore provincial and federal tax credits for caregiver.
Needing to work to make money while caregiving can also be stressful. Try to find a balance.

• Talk with your human resources manager about your work and caregiving responsibilities.
• Ask to see a counsellor through your workplace benefits, if available.
• Plan for your time way from work to care and use the Compassionate Care Benefits through Employment Insurance.
Caregiving is a journey. You need to be prepared for each new stage.

- Plan your own bucket list.
- Find new things to be excited about together.
- Talk to your family member about their wishes.
- Check out the Speak Up campaign.
• You are NOT ALONE!

• It is about the RELATIONSHIP!

• You are VITAL!

• It is a JOURNEY...

• RESPITE – it is essential!

Summary

• It is OK to focus on YOU too!
Do you need support?

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Caring for someone with dementia
Questions?
Comments?
Surprises?
Suggestions?
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<th>Category</th>
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<td>Public Health Agency of Canada, Aging and Seniors</td>
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<td>Active Living Alliance for Older Adults</td>
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<td>Emotional Health</td>
<td>Family Caregiving Alliance, The Emotional Side of Caregiving &amp; Taking care of YOU - Self-care for family caregivers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health</td>
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<td>Positive Outlook</td>
<td>Edmunson, Janet. (2006). Finding Meaning With Charles: Caregiving with Love through a Degenerative Disease</td>
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<td>Skills &amp; Knowledge</td>
<td>The Caregiver Network</td>
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<td>Managing at Home</td>
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<td>Saint Elizabeth, Caregiver Compass</td>
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