

FAMILY CAREGIVING IN CANADA: COVID-19 & BEYOND

Digital Resource Package



Intro

On May 28th, 2020 the National Caregiver Recognition Working Group held a virtual caregiver forum that brought caregivers together from across Canada. The goal of the 'Family Caregiving in Canada: COVID-19 & Beyond' forum was to give caregivers a platform to 'hear and be heard' during the COVID-19 pandemic. This event was part of the May 'Caregiver Aware 2020' campaign seeking to unify and align awareness efforts from coast to coast to coast.

This resource package was designed to share the many resources that were discussed in the forum as well as to share what we learned from you.

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We are learning how to move through grief and loss in ways we may never have experienced before.

Well-Being

At the best of times caregiving can be challenging and this is not the best of times. With COVID-19 placing extra caregiving responsibilities on so many people and creating a climate of worry and unpredictability. Caregiver distress and burnout are very real and we want to share resources on well-being in its many forms. Being in the company of others who understand and practice self compassion are essential. You are not alone.



Social Connection & Peer Support

Joining support groups can be a great way to hear other caregiver experiences, share your story and feel supported and not alone.

Virtual support groups are offered by:

- [Family Caregivers of British Columbia](#)
- [Caregivers Alberta](#)
- [Young Caregivers Association](#)
- [The Ontario Caregiver Organization](#)
- [Caregivers Nova Scotia](#)

Caregiver Support Lines for 1-1 support

One-on-one support for caregivers is offered by:

- [Family Caregivers of British Columbia](#)
- [Caregivers Alberta](#)
- [Young Caregivers Association](#)
- [The Ontario Caregiver Organization](#)
- [Caregivers Nova Scotia](#)



Podcasts for Caregivers: Caregivers Out Loud

A space to connect, listen, and learn with other caregivers. Host Jodie McDonald is a psychotherapist and social worker that specializes in boundary setting, self-care, and education for caregivers.

Listen to the first season with four episodes: Support Networks, Communication, Relationships, and Self-Care.

The Caregiver's Handbook

The Caregiver's Handbook is filled with tools, tips, and resources intended to support you, the caregiver. We hope this resource will enhance the rewarding aspects of caregiving by helping you to manage some of its challenges and demands. [Access it here.](#)



Well-Being



TAO

TAO is an online library of engaging, interactive programs to learn life skills and to help you bounce back from disappointments or stumbling blocks in life. As you watch videos and engage with the interactive components, you'll gain the knowledge, self-awareness, and skills you need to achieve your goals. [Learn more.](#)

Printable Resources

Access a collection of printable resources intended to help you on your caregiving journey. Topics include:

- What is Mindset?
- Caregiver Bill of Rights
- Stress Reduction Plan to Build Resilience



[Access them here.](#)



SCALE Program Webinars and Online Group Coaching

The SCALE Program webinars were designed to focus on a series of subjects that are applicable to new or experienced caregivers positioning you and your well-being at the centre of the sessions. [Learn more.](#)

Flip Books and Tip Sheets

It can feel overwhelming and time-consuming to sift through websites and links so that's why FCBC has created a Top Tips and Tools for Caregivers resource page. Topics include:

- Family Caregiving – Don't Do It Alone
- Building Your Personal Resilience
- How to Support Remotely
- Intention Setting



**Family Caregivers
of British Columbia**

[Access it here.](#)

Work & School

Caregiving can be challenging when balancing work and/or school. COVID-19 has increased this challenge for employed caregivers and young caregivers. Here are some resources that may help while balancing caregiving and other responsibilities.



Toolkit for Working Caregivers

This toolkit was designed by the Ontario Caregiver Organization to help you manage the competing needs of work and caregiving while taking care of your own health and happiness at the same time. [Access it here.](#)

Young Caregivers: Stay at Home Kits

Activity kits to help support young caregivers during this time. [Access these and other young caregiver specific resources here.](#)

Young Caregivers Association also provides the following services during this time of pandemic:

- Online support groups and life skills programs
- Counselling by phone or video
- Summer program activities (online)



Family Caregivers of British Columbia

Work & Caregiving Blog Post

Balancing caregiving and work situations vary tremendously and no single action plan works for everyone. [Here are a few strategies to lighten your load and reduce stress.](#)

For Employers: How to talk to your employees about caregiving

It can be difficult to know how to best respond when an employee discloses their caregiver status. [Here are suggestions to make the conversation a little easier.](#)



Financial

Finances are one of the most asked about caregiver questions. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, caregiving was taking a toll on caregiver's financial security. Here are some resources that may help. We also encourage you to connect with your provincial organization for more specific financial resources.



COVID Relief Rundown: Financial Relief Programs for Canadians

RBC has summarized the financial relief measures available to Canadians as of May 1, 2020 on both national and provincial levels. [Learn more.](#)

Federal Programs for Caregivers

- [Canada Caregiver Credit \(CRA\)](#)
- [Compassionate Care Benefit \(EI\)](#)
- [Disability Tax Credit \(CRA\)](#)
- [Family Caregiver Benefit for Adults \(EI\)](#)
- [Family Caregiver Benefit for Children \(EI\)](#)
- [Home Accessibility Tax Credit \(HATC\)](#)
- [Medical Expense Tax Credit \(METC\)](#)



Veterans Affairs Canada

- [Caregiver Recognition Benefit](#)
- [Veterans Independence Program](#)

To find out what financial supports are available in your province please connect with your provincial caregiver organization (contact information located at the end of this package).

If you do not have a caregiver organization in your province please check [211](#) or your provincial government website.



Budgeting and Money Management During Times of Crisis (Online Workshop)

Join Caregivers Alberta on June 23rd from 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM (MDT) to learn more about the financial programs that exist today at the local, provincial and federal level. You'll also learn about some of the available COVID-19 specific programs. [Register here.](#)

Other Resources to Explore...

We recognize that not all caregivers have access to a local caregiving organization. Here are just a few of the great resources that are available to caregivers Canada wide.

Canadian Caregiver Network (Huddol)

Huddol's mission is to bring caregivers together to share their experiences. This platform is a community dedicated to your well-being where you can exchange with their network of professionals and others like you. [Learn more.](#)

Canadian Virtual Hospice

The Canadian Virtual Hospice provides support and personalized information about palliative and end-of-life care to patients, family members, health care providers, researchers, and educators. [Learn more.](#)

Elizz

Elizz is a lifestyle destination that inspires daughters and sons to live well while caring for their aging parents. Through thoughtful content, they provide resources to help with caregiving, inspirations to practice self-care, and connection with others going through similar journeys. [Learn more.](#)

The Caregiver Space

The Caregiver Space provides a safe and open space where caregivers across North America can be real about what it's like to care for someone dealing with a serious disability or illness. Their community of caregivers is a place to ask questions, share experiences, get real answers, or just get things off your chest. [Learn more.](#)

Carers Canada

Carers Canada embodies and reinforces the national and international movement to ensure the recognition and inclusion of carers in social policy. [Learn more.](#)

What We Heard From You: Caregiver Tips



"I like the oxygen mask analogy. When flight attendants give their pre-flight safety instructions one of the things they tell you is that in the case of a change in cabin pressure, be sure to place the resulting oxygen mask over your own face first before assisting anyone else."

"The way I am coping during COVID-19 is the same way I have coped during the 15 years I have been caregiving for my parents. I take a good look inside myself and ask myself, what is there to learn from this experience?"

"I am so grateful for technology and the ability to instantly connect to others, to be able to laugh or cry or rage at the things we have zero control over."

"Nurture yourself so that you can nurture others."

"In the end, the relationships we can cultivate and nurture become life-saving!"

"Have difficult conversations with your aging parents before you hit a crisis. Ask them what they want!"

"I just want all caregivers to give yourself a moment to find joy if only for 5 minutes a day...You all are so important and doing the best role you ever could take on...It's such a selfless act you all are doing."

"The only way to change is to facilitate communication."

"When I go through feelings of not being able to go on caring for my parent. I do my best to stay in the moment. To appreciate the time I have..."

"I need to ask even more of my colleagues how they are doing."

"Find and reach out to your personal circle of persons and caregivers organization to receive the support and advocacy you deserve. They are amazing!"



What We Heard From You: Forum Feedback

**100% rated the forum Good
to Excellent**

*"Thanks for the stories and the
support. I feel less alone."*

**86% felt heard
87% felt supported**

"We are hearing and being heard."

74% learned something new

"Thank you for the real conversation."

Thank You...

Our panel acknowledges that we are addressing COVID-19 & beyond. We heard many people request more events like this forum and we are exploring how we could do this again in the future. Our goal as a national group is to continue to spread caregiver awareness across Canada and create spaces in which caregivers can hear and be heard and we will continue to do that work. We're already looking ahead to #CaregiverAware2021!

We encourage you to call the caregiver support lines, join the caregiver support groups, or check out one of the many virtual resources available.

Best wishes from all of us,

The National Caregiver Recognition Working Group

Stay connected with us by signing up for our newsletters!

- [Family Caregivers of British Columbia](#)
- [Caregivers Alberta](#)
- [The Ontario Caregiver Organization](#)
- [Caregivers Nova Scotia](#)

Thank you to our panelists...

- Barb MacLean, Family Caregivers of British Columbia
- Sandy Sereda, Caregivers Alberta
- Michelle Lewis, Young Caregivers Association
- Amy Coupal, The Ontario Caregiver Organization
- Jenny Theriault, Caregivers Nova Scotia
- Rachel Kielb, RBC ([i-CARE Employee Resource Group](#)).

And to the rest of our national working group...

- Hope Tagesen, Family Caregivers of British Columbia
- Tristyn Wilm, Caregivers Alberta
- Danielle VanDuzer, The Ontario Caregiver Organization
- Carmen Stossel, RBC ([i-CARE Employee Resource Group](#))

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- [Dialogue Partners](#)
- [Blue Toque Productions](#)

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Connect With Us!

More resources and supports can be found on our websites or you can reach out to us by phone or email!

Family Caregivers of British Columbia

- [Website](#)
- Toll-Free Caregiver Support Line:
1-877-520-3267
- [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Twitter](#)
- [Contact Us!](#)



**Family Caregivers
of British Columbia**

Caregivers Alberta

- [Website](#)
- Toll-Free Caregiver Advisor Line:
1-877-453-5088
- [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Twitter](#)
- [Contact Us!](#)



Young Caregivers Association

- [Website](#)
- Phone Number: 905-397-4201
- [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Twitter](#)
- [Contact Us!](#)



The Ontario Caregiver Organization

- [Website](#)
- Ontario Caregiver Helpline: 1-833-416-2273
- [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Twitter](#)
- [Contact Us!](#)



Caregivers Nova Scotia

- [Website](#)
- Toll-Free Support Line: 1-877-488-7390
- [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)
- [Contact Us!](#)

