



Family Caregivers
of British Columbia

— Let us help —

The Challenges & Benefits of Caregiving



CAREGIVER

CHALLENGES

Caregiving can have an impact in many areas – not just the physical side of care.

It's likely that you'll experience changes in your relationships with spouses/partners siblings, children, and mostly, the person you're caring for. You can also expect some strong feelings to surface. Mostly, caregivers are surprised by the number of challenges they face or ones they didn't expect.¹ Despite the challenges, 90% of family caregivers report positive experiences in their caregiving. The challenges are not ignored but rather, they are acknowledged as one part of a caregiver's experience that can help adapt, grow and gain insight into their strengths and positive aspects of caring.

Challenges

Living Environment: Caregivers often live with the care recipient and are typically dependent on each other's financial contributions. In other cases, caregivers live long distances and that creates stress and feelings of not being able to help with supporting the person in their home.

Employment & Financial: Caregivers express a lack of **work-life balance** and for some, a loss of income and benefits. There are often added costs for travel, medications, purchasing care, services, supplies and home renovations/adaptations.

Caregiver Needs: A caregiver's life is changed in an instant. Their own hopes, goals and dreams are put on hold. Younger caregivers often don't expect to be in such a role at this time of their life. Caregivers may experience a lack of time for self-care and their own health care appointments.

Mental & Physical Health: Many caregivers report signs of emotional stress such as feeling depressed, anger, irritable, unhappy, and isolated. Caregivers are more likely to sustain an injury and require medical attention as a result of their caregiving tasks. Caregivers are at higher risk of adverse outcomes and were two & 1/2 times more likely to visit the doctor and four times more likely to report poor or fair health⁴.

Personal Relationships: Caregivers express a change in relationships with those they are caring for. There can be grief and loss with these changes. Some may feel frustrated as they have to care more over time. There are also different cultural understandings of caregiving.

Benefits^{2,3}

Improved relationships: some caregivers feel they have the time to focus on making their relationship with the person they are caring for a priority. Many also feel the relationship is strengthened by the act of caregiving.

Finding their inner Superhero: Many caregivers expressed feeling an inner strength to develop strategies to cope with a very stressful time or situation. Almost all caregivers will say it was hard to accept help but they were very grateful when they did – for information, support from others and finding respite from caregiving.

A chance to give back: Having the opportunity to give back is stated as a very rewarding experience. Caregivers also have the satisfaction of knowing that the person they are caring for is receiving good care by being engaged in conversations and decisions as part of the care team.

Purpose & competence: Some caregivers find meaning in the care that they provide, sometimes reinforcing their own beliefs and values. Others feel accomplished and competent with the mastery of new skills and to be able to genuinely help the person they are caring for.



Family Caregivers of BC is Here to Support You

The following resources and services are available to support family caregivers in BC.

- ♥ For **emotional support or questions** related to caregiving, call our toll-free Caregiver Support Line (BC) at **1-877-520-3267**. We're available Mon-Fri, 8:30am to 4pm. When you call our support line, we will listen to you and talk with you through whatever is on your mind. When we answer support calls, our goal is to listen with compassion, remembering that while there are common themes, each caregiving experience is different and so are the needs. If we feel you could benefit from more one to one support, and/or are moving through a complex situation we can also refer you to our [1:1 Caregiver Coaching—see if you qualify](#).
- ♥ To receive news and information to your inbox, [sign up](#) for our newsletter and e-news.
- ♥ Visit our [Top Tips and Tools for Caregivers](#): We recognize it can feel overwhelming and time-consuming to sift through websites and links. We've narrowed our focus to come up with topics that address the most commonly expressed questions and concerns that we hear from caregivers (e.g. caregiver well-being, financial information, health care navigation and more!).
- ♥ Want to learn more about how to be a caregiver? Sign up for an upcoming [webinar](#). These free educational events cover your high-priority questions. And listen to our new podcast, [Caregivers Out Loud](#).
- ♥ Join a [family caregiver support group](#) and learn from other family caregivers and share your advice to help others.



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2. Hermann, N. (2017). Your Health Matters: The positive aspects of caregiving for dementia. Retrieved from: <http://health.sunnybrook.ca/memory-doctor/positivecaregiving-dementia/>
3. Peacock, S. et al. (2010). The Positive Aspects of the Caregiving Journey With Dementia: Using a Strengths-Based Perspective to Reveal Opportunities. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Maureen_Markle-Reid/publication/239479259_The_Positive_Aspects_of_the_Caregiving_Journey_With_Dementia_Using_a_Strengths-Based_Perspective_to_Reveal_Opportunities/links/5755a8aa08ae0405a5757aa0.pdf
4. Raquel Betini (2017). Caregivers in distress: Using interRAI assessments to target and evaluate community-based interventions.UWSpace. <http://hdl.handle.net/10012/11213>