



Family Caregivers
of British Columbia

Family Caregivers of BC

INTERNET SUPPORTED, APP SUPPORTED AND ON-LINE CAREGIVER RESOURCES

Should you have more questions, we invite you to give our staff a call at our toll-free Caregiver Support Line, open Monday - Friday 1-877-520-3267



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Currently, 71 percent of caregivers are interested in using technology to support their caregiving tasks, but only 7 percent are using care-related technology, according to AARP's 2016 Caregiving and Technology study.

Fifty-eight percent of the caregivers surveyed in The Caregiving Experience In Ontario, 2018 by the Change Foundation said they used the internet for gathering additional information on how to properly care for their loved one. Only 28% turned to formal care providers.

As with anything online, there are lots of services and supports for caregivers offered. When exploring on your own a helpful way to weed things out may be to see what has been developed with participation from a major university or hospital. This may mean the product includes more research and best practice than one developed by a software company alone. You can usually find this information until "About Us" on a website about the product.

Podcasts

Sometimes it is nice to hear other voices and know you are not alone. Here are two podcasts that are by and for caregivers. Neither of these require any special programs to listen, just the internet link.

Caregiver SOS

A weekly podcast that delves into a wide variety of caregiving issues, Caregiver SOS is presented by the WellMed Charitable Foundation. This hour-long show provides essential caregiver information presented by a gerontologist Carol Zernial and author Dr. James Huysman PsyD, and hosted by Ron Aaron. Topics range from end-of-life communication to new healthcare technology.

Listen here:

<https://soundcloud.com/caregiversos>

The Agewyz Podcast, With Jana Panarites

Caregiving expert and author Jana Panarites engages with unsung heroes — people caring for family members, friends and relatives amid the demands of their own lives — plus professionals in the field of aging and people using film, theater and other media to creatively address major health issues, foster dialogue and challenge widespread assumptions about aging.

<http://agewyz.com/podcast-library/>



Blogs

Family Caregiver Council – A mix of useful advice on a range of topics. The legal and financial information is American, but the general information can make for useful browsing.

<http://familycaregivercouncil.com/>

Elizz – The caregiving blog and article depository for Canadian caregivers, by St Elizabeth’s Health. Find it at <https://elizz.com> While they do sell services, if you find “Caregiver Resources” at the top of the page, it will take you to the articles. You can also access their chatbot from here.

Chat Bots

Elizz Bot – Sometimes you just need a friend and to get it all out. You can do that without fear of any kind of judgement with the St Elizabeth chatbot. This is an artificial intelligence bot that learns more about you the more you chat. You can access it through Facebook messenger or by sending Hi to 647-492-8640. Its phone based chat is still being tested and getting better all the time. It will need to know a bit about you, like your first name, before you chat, but it rapidly begins to offer ideas for how to counter the feelings you are having. It also tells a pretty good joke if you ask it to! Some questions are answered at <https://elizz.com/landing-page/elizzbot>

Facebook Groups for Caregivers

There are lots of Facebook groups for caregivers. Many are specialized by the disease or disorder of the person receiving care or by the roles you have. These are two general ones, one a bit more active and the other a little less so, that you can start with. They are both groups you need to request to join, so the groups are private, not public.

Caregivers Connect (There are several with very similar names, some use all uppercase letters, others make a small change. They may be great too, but we don’t know. Explore them!) This group is open to both family or friend caregivers and also professionals. They share stories, experience and advice along the journey. This group is run by an administrator with clear rules for conduct. There are over 4000 members, but they are not all active at once. This averages about 9 posts a day so it isn’t too noisy. It is sponsored by Great Call who make independent living technologies.

Caregivers Hub Support Group – This group is open to both family/friend and professional caregivers. It is fairly active with 36 posts on the day it was looked at by FCBC staff. It is both administered and moderated, though the “rules” are not visible to non-members.



Support to Get (and Stay) Organized while also Asking for Help

CareZone <https://carezone.com/home>

Carezone is a free app. You can keep all of your loved one's pertinent information on the secured app and invite family and friends to view and participate in his or her care. It has a place for notes and observations, a task list, medication logging (including pharmacy numbers, dosing, prescribing physicians, etc.), a place to upload photos -- and you can even send a voice message to up to 100 recipients. The app is available for iPhone and Android systems. You can find it at the above web address or in your app store.

Caring Village <https://www.caringvillage.com/product/> This can be accessed from a computer or from a mobile device, though it does require you create a “home base” for the village on a computer before using the mobile app. This could even be done at the library. Set up on computer first, then use it there or download apps for Android or iPhone. Others can use the app to easily to join your care villiage.

The app’s “virtual caregiving village” enables families to communicate using the secure in-app messaging feature and access everything they need in one place — anytime, anywhere . A shared calendar tracks medical appointments, you can make medication lists (past, current and refill notices), legal, medical and financial documents can be uploaded and stored securely, just in case. The to do lists help you see what needs to be done, assign tasks or request help from your volunteers. Caregivers can engage family and friends to assist them with transportation, meal deliveries, errands, companion care and other important caregiving responsibilities to ensure their loved ones are living with comfort, dignity, and purpose. A wellness journal that anyone who interacts with your loved one can update helps you easily share and keep track of how they are feeling.

Lotsa Helping Hands <https://lotsahelpinghands.com/how-it-works/>

You can use it right on a computer or with an app for either iPhone or Android

With the Help Calendar, you can post requests for support - things like meals for the family, rides to medical appointments, or just stopping by to visit.

Members of your community can quickly find ways to help, and Lotsa will send reminders and help coordinate logistics automatically so nothing falls through the cracks. It doesn't have any real bells or whistles, it just does this function very well.



Medication Management

Pill Reminder

This app has both a free version and an option to upgrade for more features. It is available for Android and iPhone

Pill Reminder's mission is to give you the reminder tools, support, and info you need to safely take pills. Pharmacists rank Pill Reminder by Medisafe #1 out of 461 apps they've tested. The app is free to download and use, while the premium version upgrades your experience and gives you unlimited Medfriend supporters, unlimited family, and friend profiles, access to 20+ health measurements, choice of a dozen Medtone reminder voices, ability to pick color themes and pillbox shapes, and no banner ads for \$4.99US a month or \$39.99US a year through an auto-renewing subscription.

MyMeds <https://www.my-meds.com/patient-solution/>

MyMeds is a secure, easy-to-use medication management platform. It can be used as an app on Android, iPhone or on any internet connected computer.

MyMeds can help keep you healthy by:

- Sending you daily medication and refill reminders (text, email, and push notification depending on your preference)
- Helping you understand the reasons for taking your medications
- Keeping your healthcare team and loved ones in sync on what medications you're taking
- Analyzing your medication usage history
- Finding the best price for prescriptions near you
- Informing you about your medications and their side effects.

Mental Health Support

Bounce Back®

Bounce Back® teaches effective skills to help individuals (aged 15+) overcome symptoms of mild to moderate depression or anxiety, and improve their mental health. Participants can learn skills to help combat unhelpful thinking, manage worry and anxiety, and become more active and assertive.

This program is free to residents of BC and has a couple ways to start. You can go to your family doctor and ask for a referral into the live coaching program. You will have 4 to 6 sessions with a coach along with work sheets, videos and other things to try in between sessions. Or you can go to



<http://www.bouncebackonline.ca/> and just register yourself. You can start the on line program with videos, ebooks and worksheets right away.

Bounce Back® has been shown to help reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety by half, and over 90% say they would recommend it to a friend or family member.

Moodgym

<https://moodgym.com.au> Moodgym can be used on line directly through the computer. It is a subscription service with a fee of \$39AU for 12 months, the Australian dollar is usually about par with the Canadian. This was developed by researchers at the Australian National University.

It is an interactive program designed to help you:

- Identify whether you are having problems with emotions like anxiety and depression.
- Learn skills that can help you cope with these emotions.

Moodgym is based on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and Interpersonal Therapy which have been shown to be successful in preventing and treating depression and anxiety.

Printable Resources for People

Moodjuice

Moodjuice was developed by the Scottish National Health Service. It is a printable workbook that is designed to help support a change in thinking by teaching some of the Cognitive Behaviour Therapy skills and supporting their use. <https://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/depression.asp>

Online or Text-Based Accredited Counselling

TalkSpace

Plans that offer unlimited, any time texting with a qualified counsellor start at \$49USD per week. Video chats can be added if you need a little extra. You are matched with a counsellor based on your needs and will always connect with the same person. This can work on a device such as your phone or on an internet connected computer.

BetterHelp



This group has certified counsellors and plans that range from \$40 to \$70 monthly. You can connect with your counsellor using messages, live chat, video conferences or just the phone. You can pick a nickname to sign up with if you would prefer to have anonymity.

Online Courses for Mental Health Support and Mindfulness

Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy or CBT is a therapeutic training system with lots of clinical evidence behind it. It holds that if you learn to spot the thoughts you are having about your circumstances, you have some control over changing them which will, in the end, affect how you feel about your situation. CBT works well for anxiety, overwhelm and depression. You get out of CBT what you put into learning CBT as a user of the method.

There are on line classes that can teach you the methods. Most are self-paced but recommend neither racing through it all at once or neglecting it between learning sessions. Often a lesson a week is the recommended “dose” of this therapeutic learning. With this method, because you are independent as a learner and user, you really only can get out of it what you put into it. Perhaps combine this with a method of talking with someone listed below or share your plans with a trusted person who can help keep you accountable or another idea that would work even better for you.

Should you not find online CBT learning effective, please don't decide it will never work for you. The delivery process may not have been right and if a face to face therapist wants to talk about it, it may be good to remain open.

This Way Up - <https://thiswayup.org.au/how-we-can-help/courses/mixed-depressionand-anxiety/>

These courses are a product of This Way Up, a non-profit sponsored by the Australian government and pioneered by the medical and psychiatric staff at a prominent Sydney hospital. The link here is to a 6 session learning course for general anxiety and depression, but if you explore the site they have other courses as well. For 3 months of access to the course the cost is \$59AU and the Australian dollar hovers around par with the Canadian dollar. There are 6 learning units including stories told in a graphic novel or comic book style, stories of recovery, worksheets to use between learning sessions and questionnaires.

Apps for Mental Health Support

1. Anxiety

- Error! Filename not specified. Self-Help Anxiety Management - available for Android and iPhone
 - This was developed by the University of the West of England and is recommended by the Scarborough Hospital and University of Toronto. The content of Self Anxiety Management



- (SAM) is presented in various formats in order to support users in learning about anxiety
- and practicing self-help. Although not text-heavy, users will need to study the guidance to get the best out of SAM. Users are encouraged to build their own Anxiety Toolkit of resources that they find helpful and to draw on this for regular practice in managing situations that are associated with anxiety.
- SAM may be used with or without the support of a registered health provider but you may wish to consult with your local practitioner if you are uncertain about using SAM.

2. Stress

- Headspace (recommended by the Scarborough Hospital and University of Toronto) - available for Android and iPhone
 - Core features and early meditations in the Basics course are free, more available with a subscription of approximately \$12.99US a month or \$94US per year or a once only lifetime subscription for \$399.99US
 - Headspace is the simple way to reframe stress. Relax with guided meditations and mindfulness techniques that bring calm, wellness and balance to your life in just a few minutes a day. The basics course is completely free to try and use as often as you would like.

3. Happiness Support and Development

- Happify - available for Android and iPhone and Computer use
 - This is a variety site to support happiness journeys. It has assessments, videos and games, lots of games, that help you think differently. It even assigns the occasional adorable animal video, because who doesn't love that! While it is not attached to a single academic institution, it has the support of many qualified experts who helped develop aspects of it and it is clear about the happiness science it uses. Occasionally caregiver specific readings or suggestions will pop up, but the site is about everyone's general happiness.
 - How you feel matters! Whether you're feeling sad, anxious, or stressed, Happify brings you effective tools and programs to help you take control of your feelings and thoughts.
 - Our proven techniques are developed by leading scientists and experts who've been studying evidence-based interventions in the fields of positive psychology, mindfulness, and cognitive behavioral therapy for decades.

4. Mood and Depression

- *MoodSpace* – Android phones only, in google play. Developed by John Hopkins. You can share your results and information with physicians and supporters if you choose to.
 - MoodSpace aims to create a self-help space where you will have the opportunity to experiment with different treatment methods, in the form of interactive mood workouts, to see what works for you.



- These mood workouts are designed as short, habit building, self-help exercises that can be completed on your phone, at any time you choose and every workout is based on the latest research into depression treatments.
- Even once you've beaten depression, it's important to carry on using these coping strategies. 50% of people who experience an episode of depression suffer a relapse. Continuing to practice your coping mechanisms will help you maintain your resilience.
- *MoodTools* – Depression Aid (recommended by the Scarborough Hospital and University of Toronto and positively reviewed by the Anxiety and Depression Association of America) Includes a section to support overcoming suicidal thoughts Available for Android and iPhone
 - If you are feeling sad, anxious, or depressed, lift your mood with MoodTools! MoodTools is designed to help you combat depression and alleviate your negative moods, aiding you on your road to recovery.
 - MoodTools contains several different research-supported tools. They include:
 - Thought Diary - Improve your mood by analyzing your thoughts and identifying negative / distorted thinking patterns based on principles from Cognitive Therapy
 - Activities - Regain your energy by performing energizing activities and tracking your mood before and after, based on Behavioral Activation Therapy
 - Safety Plan - Develop a suicide safety plan to keep you safe and utilize emergency resources during a suicidal crisis
 - Information - Read information, self-help guidelines, and find help with internet resources
 - Test - Take the PHQ-9 depression questionnaire and track your symptom severity over time. You can share this information with a health care provider if you wish.
 - Video - Discover helpful YouTube videos that can improve your mood and behavior, from guided meditations to enlightening TED talks

5. Reframing Negative Thoughts (CBT Principle)

- CBT Thought Record Diary (recommended by the Scarborough Hospital and University of Toronto) - available for Android and iPhone
 - Do you feel like you're stressed, anxious, sad, frustrated, or unmotivated? The centrepiece of cognitive-behavioral therapy is changing your emotions by identifying negative and distorted thinking patterns. With a thought diary, you can document your negative emotions, analyze flaws in your thinking, and reevaluate your thoughts. It may even help you recognize ways to deal with your negative behaviors and emotions.
 - This app uses the concept of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy to help you challenge the inaccurate thoughts which may be playing a role in your depression. The app also suggests helpful behaviours that may work to reduce the intensity of your distressing emotions.

6. Peer to Peer Support (with professional options too, can reduce feelings of isolation also)



- *Seven Cups*: Computer - available for Android and iPhone
 - Through this program (via an app on your phone or the website) you can connect to trained volunteer listeners. You can choose whoever is available right now or look for specific traits. Listeners move through “levels” from newbie onwards as they complete trainings and conduct chats with people like you. Many are budding service providers engaged in the final stages of training. Many are just individuals who want to help others. There are also professional therapists listed among the volunteer listeners, in case you decide that this is right for you now.
 - This is a significant community so can also reduce a feeling of being cut off. You can speak to a wide range of people from all over the world. Support is offered in English but also in many other languages if that is helpful.