

CAREGIVER CONNECTION



Family Caregivers
of British Columbia

WINTER 2021/2022

VOLUME 36 ISSUE 1



Creative Goal Setting: How to Value Yourself

*From the Creative Visualization Workbook by Shakti Gawain
Revised for publication by Family Caregivers of BC 2021*

Creative goal setting and visualization are positive, inexpensive, and helpful techniques to deal with any stressful situation. They can be performed almost anywhere. One has only to take a few minutes, find a quiet/comfortable spot and begin to concentrate on oneself.

IMAGINE as clearly and realistically as possible what you want to happen. For example: "I would like a break from my caregiving responsibilities every third weekend." or "I would like to be more assertive."

MAKE an affirmation out of this desire by imagining it is

Continued on page 2

In this issue

- R.E.C.H.A.R.G.E.
- Build Your Self-Care Plan
- Dear Caregiver Support Line
- Planning Care with the Care Recipient in Mind
- Ten Timely Tips for Family Caregivers
- Resources for Family and Friend Caregivers

Family Caregivers of BC is a registered non-profit dedicated 100% to supporting family caregivers.

BC Caregiver Support Line
1-877-520-3267

familycaregiversbc.ca

already happening or feeling it as if it were already true. Put it in the present. “I have arranged my caregiving responsibilities so that I have a break every third weekend.” or “I speak up and express my needs appropriately.”

CONSCIOUSLY turn it over to your higher self or the higher power of the universe. Just relax and let the higher force go to work within you to create it. Be open to growing and changing. You may need to start your creative goal setting with an affirmation like “I trust in the creativity and ingenuity of my higher self. I am open to growth and change.”

POST your affirmations around the house.

WRITE down all the reasons why you think you can't have what you want. For example:

- I do not deserve so many breaks.
- He or she will not get the proper care.
- It is my job to care for this person.
- My friends will not approve.
- My family will call me selfish.
- The person I care for will be miserable and make life miserable when I return.
- Other caregivers will not be as patient or look after their needs.

Decide which of the statements have the most power over you. Write an affirmation to counteract each one. For example: “Others do provide high standards of care. I can let go of wanting to control this.” “I am loved and respected by my family and friends. They support and admire my desire to remain active outside my caregiving responsibilities.”

Like any other new technique, this one will take some learning. Persevere. You are worth it!

How to Value Yourself

Don't demand perfection from yourself. Set realistic goals that you can and want to achieve. Have the courage to be imperfect.

Reward, comfort, and love yourself. You're OK!!

You have the right to decide what to do, how, and what you want to be without making excuses,

justifying, or saying “I'm sorry”. You are responsible totally for who you are today and will be tomorrow. So, it's your life and what happens is up to you.

Refuse to be manipulated by other people's greed, helplessness, or anger. Set limits. Say “no” when you mean “no”. Confront those who try to manipulate you with “you should” and offer guilt provoking statements

Check your “shoulds” to yourself. It is something you want? Ok. Something you must do, like pay your bills. That's reality. But that's not a “should”.

Recognize feelings of inadequacy and guilt for what they are – legacies from your past. You can decide not to feel that way.

Be constructively selfish. In the long run, doing what is best for you is usually best for everyone concerned. Remember that no matter what you do, someone is not going to like it so you have to risk being disliked, or even ending relationships if you are going to function in your own best interests.

Recognize that there are limits to your power. You control no more than 50% of a relationship – your half.

Don't answer questions you don't want to answer. Questions are often threatening, demanding, manipulative-especially the WHY and WHY NOT questions. Nowhere is it engraved in stone that you must answer questions.

Stay in the here-and-now and cope with reality. If you blame others or the world for your problems...or if your behaviour is aimed at making you feel better instead of solving your problems – you are defending instead of coping. Every healthy person has problems and you do have the ability to cope with them.



Editor's Note

Planning for the Coming Year



By Victoria Lougheed
Education and Learning Lead, Family Caregivers of BC

I am honoured to take the reins for the Caregiver Connection from Kate Landreth as she embarks on her own adventure in parenting a newborn this year. As a family caregiver myself, I find it helps me to set goals at the start of each year.

First, I review my calendar and take stock. I note appointments, events, milestones, and reminders for a thousand tasks and patterns like pharmacy trips, doctors' visits, team sports, etc. Next, I read my journal to see what has gone well and where I've struggled as a caregiver. One tool that helps me is an online calendar I share with others in my circle of care. Everyone can see what's coming up for my family and care recipient. When friends reach out to offer support, I can see what's coming and give them ready suggestions.

Planning also helps me keep up my self-care. Making commitments to meet friends helps me

follow through, instead of staying home – which I might if it was just me. I look for events or classes we can take – cooking, watercolor, or yoga are ways to get out regularly.

Articles in this issue may inspire you with ideas for planning your coming year. Our Dear Caregiver Support Line column provides information about hiring private care for your care recipient. This is a caregiving decision that needs some planning and is especially timely to this edition.

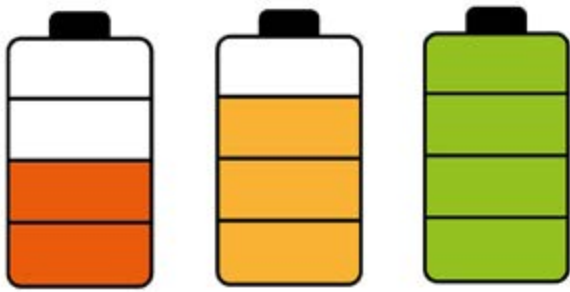
Wishing you a year of contentment and connection,

Victoria Lougheed
Education and Resource Lead (interim)

We gratefully acknowledge our donors and funding partners



Recharge



By Mary Damiano

Recharging your batteries is one of the most important ways to help your loved one.

Rest

One of the most important things a caregiver can do for the person they're caring for is to take care of themselves. A caregiver who wears himself out and keeps going 24/7 risks burnout.

Eat right

Take a cue from your loved one's diet and take the opportunity to eat healthy things as well. Maybe you don't have to adhere to such a strict diet but eating right certainly never hurts. Take vitamins if you don't get enough nutrition from your food.

Communicate your needs to others

Don't expect anyone, even other family members, to read your mind about what you or your loved one needs. Let people around you know about things that need to be done and that you could use help occasionally.

Hydrate

Drink lots of water. Water hydrates your body and keeps you energized.

Accept help

It's one of the best things a caregiver can do for their loved one and for themselves. Get over the notion that the only way to get it done is to do it yourself. When you have a few moments, really think about what will make life a little easier. Then when people ask, you'll be ready. Helping makes people feel good about themselves. Don't deprive anyone of that joy.

Respite

Caregivers should make a point of getting away sometimes, to take a mini respite for themselves. A movie, lunch somewhere, walking along the beach or through a park can be enough to get some distance and come back with a fresh perspective on things.

Get enough sleep

This is often hardest because you're on someone else's schedule. But sleep is one of the best things we can do for ourselves. Eight hours of sleep is ideal, but if this is impossible, try breaking sleep up. A short nap can be very refreshing and just the thing you need to get you through the day.

Exercise

Anything will help. Walk around the block when you have a few spare minutes. Try yoga, something that will exercise your muscles, yet relax your mind. Meditate. Spend a few minutes alone and quiet.

Adapted from <http://www.caregiver.com/articles/print/recharge.htm>

Caregiver Self Assessment

Start by responding to the statements below to recognize the positive steps you are already taking to ensure you stay healthy, and to identify areas where you might consider action to help keep you resilient.

1. I am satisfied with my overall personal health.

Yes No

2. I have the skills and information I need in order to give the required care.

Yes No

3. I maintain regular contact with family and friends and make time to spend with them

Yes No

4. I can ask for and accept help when it's offered. I know I don't have to, and can't do this alone.

Yes No

5. I am able to communicate effectively with the person I am caring for, as well as others involved in their care.

Yes No

6. I am aware of community resources available to help support me in my caregiver role.

Yes No

7. I am aware of caregiver support groups (locally or online) and/or have a supportive network where I can share my challenges and successes.

Yes No

8. I make use of respite options available and take breaks from my caregiving responsibilities.

Yes No

9. I have gathered information about the progression of my care recipient's disease so I know what to expect and can prepare in advance as best I can.

Yes No

10. I know how to navigate the healthcare system and who to ask if, and when I need help

Yes No

don't know about the resources that exist to help you) or internal (you have trouble asking for and receiving support). Sharing the care is essential to finding enough time and energy for yourself. Choose one statement you responded "No" to work on this week.

Fewer than 5 Points: Without contributing to your own well-being, caregiving quickly becomes overwhelming and unsustainable. Use this list of ten statements as a guide to creating a self-care plan, and start with learning more about the caregiver support resources available to guide you. It will be important for you to identify resources you're not currently using in your social circle, such as family, friends, acquaintances and neighbours, to share the care and create some much-needed space for addressing your own well-being.

Adapted from Robert S. Stall, M.D. (2002) Caregiver's Handbook Buffalo, New York

Find resources to help you on Family Caregivers of BC's website: familycaregiversbc.ca

Need help now? Call our toll-free Caregiver Support Line 1-877-520-3267

What's your score?

Give yourself one point for every "Yes" answer.

8-10 Points: You are already taking several important actions to take care of yourself. Look closely at statements where you answered "No," and consider whether accessing more resources would be helpful.

5-7 Points: You understand the importance of self-care, but you're not always able to take action to support yourself. Consider any barriers you have to self-care, and ask yourself whether these are external (you

The Value of Planning for Yourself as a Caregiver

By Victoria Lougheed

If you Google ‘Caregiver Plan’ or ‘Goal Setting Tips for Caregivers’, you’ll get a lot of ideas to build a caregiving plan for your care recipient. This is important work that will help you have a smooth caregiving experience with your care recipient. But what about YOU? As a caregiver, you have needs, too. If you don’t build ways to meet your own needs, you risk burnout and exhaustion. These can lead to illness and compromise your ability to be an effective caregiver. They can also make you less adaptable to sudden or unexpected changes in your care recipient’s needs.

To avoid these pitfalls, you may want to think about what YOUR requirements are in the caregiving relationship and find ways to make sure you have a self-care plan. You may need to build in accountability measures that encourage you to keep your commitments to yourself. I like to put things in writing, then post them somewhere I can see on a regular basis – like on my fridge. I also try to engage others in my planning so that I am accountable for keeping my plans.

Here are some things to consider. You can also use our [Caregiver Support Plan flipbook](#).

Respite

What are my respite needs? (Getting time to take a walk, go for a coffee date, etc.)

Daily	
Weekly	
Monthly	

Connection

What community connections do I need to make? (Think about who and what helps you feel a sense of belonging.)

Daily	
Weekly	
Monthly	

Build a Hobby

What activities can I do on my own? (Do you enjoy photography, writing, knitting, painting, etc.?)

Daily	
Weekly	
Monthly	

Accountability

What tools can I engage to make sure I keep my Caregiver Plan going through the year? (For example, another person you have to answer to on a regular basis, or an art or fitness class.)

People	
Commitments	
Classes	

Dear Caregiver Support Line

Hiring Private Care

I am writing to you on behalf of my spouse today, who is very concerned about her parents' declining mobility. Their care needs are rapidly increasing, and she would like them to continue living in their own suite. In addition to subsidized services offered through the Health Authority, we are considering hiring private help to assist with their increased care needs. We are not sure how to go about doing so and would appreciate any guidance you could provide.

*Many thanks,
Jennifer*

Dear Jennifer,

Families often use a combination of publicly funded supports, not-for-profit services, and private supports when designing care and support plans for their care recipients. The two most common forms of hiring care are through a home care agency or hiring a private independent home care provider. There are many factors to consider when determining whether to contract with an agency or to hire an individual directly, including:

- the amount of effort you are prepared to invest in the hiring and supervision of a home care support provider,
- the amount of time and potentially specialized services required,
- the importance of consistency in who provides care and,
- the financial resources available.

Before jumping in with both feet, you may want to ask what and how much support is needed. Start by making a list of personal care needs, household tasks, transportation, meal preparation, medication management, companionship, as well as compatibility.



Private Home Care Agency

A local, reputable home health care agency is often the first choice for families and seniors. A private home care agency takes care of many aspects of the process. It completes criminal record checks, screens, and trains the caregiver(s), as well as requires a professional code of conduct. The agency typically sets up a care plan in consultation with all involved and manages all aspects of the care provided. This is especially important when care needs change quickly or unexpectedly. If a caregiver is not able to come to your home, the agency will work to send a substitute caregiver.

If you go this route, we recommend doing some thorough research on existing private agencies in your community. Compile a list of questions to ask agencies you interview. Talk to family, community members, and friends who may have recommendations. Phone several agencies and compare how they fit your care recipients' and your family's needs and values.

Private Independent Caregiver

A caregiver can be hired directly by searching online or in the community. Look for someone advertising their services, or post an online ad yourself. Hiring an individual caregiver requires more upfront time on your behalf for conducting

Continued on page 8

interviews, criminal record checks, developing service contracts, checking references, and insurance coverage. The benefits of hiring a private caregiver directly include potentially lower costs and the ability for your family to choose their direct care provider. The challenges can include difficulties in finding someone to provide the specific care services needed and the need to resolve conflicts, should misunderstandings arise.

If you go this route, we suggest you create a clear job description with a clear set of task expectations that serve as a baseline for developing ad postings, screening online care provider postings, and conducting interviews with applicants. As with a private agency, also talk to family, community members, and friends who may have recommendations. Local senior centers or your local health authority. Ask for the Home and Community Care Department. They may have lists of private health care providers available.

Please consider that whatever route you choose, it is still important for you to engage with the public health system. Don't bypass this step. Circumstances, care needs, and caregiver abilities can change quickly. Health authorities have specific and specialized programs and services to support seniors to remain independent and in the community. It is important to be "in the system" especially if care needs

become more complex and your wife's parents require long-term care. Having this connection is valuable should their circumstances change.

For examples of research and interview questions, as well as initial considerations on service contracts and insurance coverage please consult our FCBC article, "[The ins and outs of hiring private care](#)". Please reach out to the BC Caregiver Support Line at 1-877-520-3267 with any further questions or concerns you might have. We look forward to connecting with you.

Sincerely,

Caregiver Support Team

Additional Resources

[Caregivers Out Loud Podcast #12 – Moving from home to a facility – next steps](#)

Webinar: [Considerations for a Move to Residential Care](#)

[Transitioning to Long Term Care](#)

**“It takes as much energy to wish
as it does to plan.”**

– Eleanor Roosevelt

Planning Care with Your Care Recipient in Mind

Handbook for Caregivers, Fraser Health Authority, April 2005

Revised 2021 by Family Caregivers of BC for publication.

It can be very difficult for someone to accept help, especially if they have never had to do so before. In making the adjustments to new health concerns, the care receiver may:

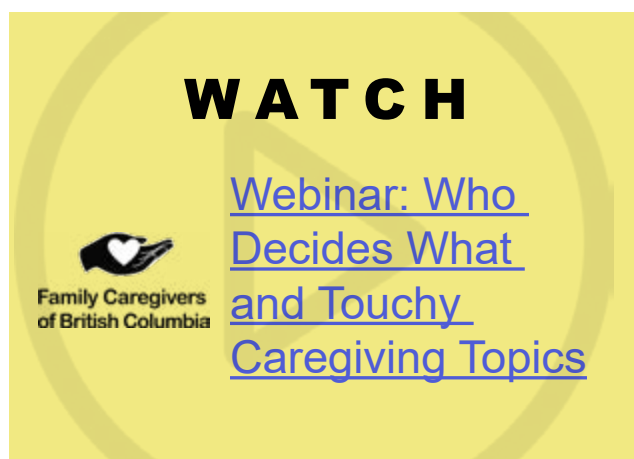
- Experience a sense of losing control over their life and resist offers of care.
- Try to fight what is happening and try to hold on to the life they know.
- Worry about becoming a burden or dependent on their spouse or children
- Refuse to admit they need help or become very demanding.
- Fear that old friends will distance themselves.
- Fear isolation, or gradually become isolated, as they can no longer get around as they used to.
- Experience sadness or anxiety because of a changing self-image.

Changes in health can be very upsetting for the whole family, but, if one understands that everyone is just trying to cope, it may help with the overall caregiving. Some helpful ideas include:

- Setting up a caregiving routine to meet the care recipient's needs and mood. Don't force them to take part in activities if they don't want to but encourage them to join in if they want. Offer activities more than once as they may not engage one day but will another day.
- Building self-respect and not over-helping. It is easy to focus on what a

care recipient can't do instead of what they can do. You may be tempted to take over everything. That will lead to anger and resentment in the short term and increase dependence and helplessness. Encourage them to do whatever they can even if it takes more time and isn't done as well as you would like.

- Finding ways they can help you. You can break tasks down into smaller parts, such as folding laundry but not putting it away. People like to feel that they are contributing something, even if it's advice or companionship. It helps them to feel a sense of belonging and improves self-esteem.
- Including them in care and the conversation. Have the care recipient take part in family decisions whenever possible, especially if the decision impacts them.
- Asking visitors to arrange a time to stop by so that the care recipient can be ready. One or two visitors at a time may probably be all that a confused person can handle. It is important to maintain social contact, but if the care recipient is weak or ill, they may not feel like having visitors.



WATCH

[Webinar: Who Decides What and Touchy Caregiving Topics](#)

Family Caregivers of British Columbia

Ten Tips for New Family Caregivers

By Dorothy Orr, Caregiver Coach
Revised 2021 by Family Caregivers of BC for publication.

1. Get help with tasks and chores early in the illness - your loved one will get used to having other people around the home.
2. Involve other members of your family from the beginning of the illness. Even if you are the only one who sees the changes taking place, pass this on as information only - not as a debating issue.
3. Access all the information you can about the illness and educate yourself as much as possible about its progression - disease-specific organizations, your doctor, and the public library are all good information sources.
4. Recognize and learn to accept that anger, anxiety, and guilt are normal feelings given the situation you are experiencing - they come not only from being tired but also from the losses you are experiencing.
5. Join a support group as soon as you can. You do not need to be alone on this journey.
6. Every change in your loved one means more adaptation and change for you. Acknowledge that this gives you the right to feel off-balance some days.
7. Forgive yourself for not being perfect. Caring for someone with a chronic or terminal illness turns your life inside out.
8. Make friends with your family physician and ask for time to speak with her/him alone, if you need to do so.
9. Get regular physical check-ups, eat a balanced diet, and try to take time out to express sadness, anger, and helplessness. Accept yourself for being human and try to do at least one thing that you enjoy every day.
10. Take one day at a time while planning for the future. Good planning means getting to know and implementing any legal and financial considerations, facility placement issues, or palliative care.

Lastly, BE KIND TO YOURSELF.

Join a Community Caregiver Support Group

Due to COVID-19 please check with the individual support group to know how they are providing support at this time.

Visit www.familycaregiversbc.ca/get-help/other-community-supports to find details on caregiver support groups in your community.



Support groups can be found in the following B.C. communities:

Abbotsford
Burnaby
Campbell River
Chilliwack
Comox Valley

Coquitlam
Cowichan Valley
Cranbrook
Delta
Gabriola Island
East Kootenay
West Kootenay
Keremeos
Lake Country
Langley

Maple Ridge
Mayne Island
Nanaimo
North Vancouver
Oliver
Pender Island
Penticton
Port Alberni
Port Coquitlam
Princeton

Prince George
Richmond
Salt Spring Island
Sidney
Smithers
Summerland
Surrey
Vancouver
Victoria

Disease/Condition Specific Caregiver Support

ALS Society of BC
1-800-708-3228

Alzheimer Society of BC
1-800-667-3742

First Link Dementia Helpline
1-800-936-6033

BC Brain Injury Association
604-984-1212

British Columbia Schizophrenia Society
1-888-888-0029

BC Cancer Agency
bccancer.bc.ca/contact

Here to Help (for Mental Health)
310-6789 (no area code; free available 24 hr)

HSC British Columbia Resource Center
604-822-7195

MS Society of Canada (B.C.)
1-800-268-7582

Parkinson Society B.C.
1-800-668-3330

Stroke Recovery Association of BC
1-888-313-3377

Provincial Resources

Anti Fraud Centre
www.antifraudcentre.ca 1-888-495-8501

BC 211 - non-medical
www.bc211.ca

BC Health Authority General Enquiry Lines
Fraser Health 1-855-412-2121
Interior Health 250-980-1400
Island Health 250-388-2273 or 1-888-533-2273
Vancouver Coastal Health 604-263-7377
Northern Health 250-565-7317

B.C. Ministry of Health
www.gov.bc.ca/health

- Visit www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthtopics and put in the search term "Caregiver".
- Visit www.patientsaspartners.ca for the free self-management activities offered through Patients as Partners

B.C. Palliative Care Benefits
www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharme/outgoing/palliative.html

BC Seniors Guide
www.gov.bc.ca/seniors-guide 1-877-952-3181
PDF available in English, Chinese, French, Korean, Vietnamese, Punjabi and Farsi. Hard copy available in English, Chinese, French, Punjabi

Crisis Centre BC
crisiscentre.bc.ca/contact-us 1-800-SUICIDE
(1-800-784-2433)

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www.familycaregiversbc.ca
Caregiver Support Line: 1-877-520-3267

Find Support BC
findsupportbc.com

First Nations Health Authority
www.fnha.ca Toll-free: 1-866-913-0033

HealthLink BC - medical
www.healthlinkbc.ca
Call 811 anytime 24/7 to speak to a nurse.

Here to Help - mental health
www.heretohelp.bc.ca

Pain BC
www.painbc.ca

The Nidus Personal Planning Resource Centre
www.nidus.ca | info@nidus.ca

Seniors First
www.seniorsfirstbc.ca

SAIL - Seniors Abuse & Information Line
Vancouver - Metro 604-437-1940
Toll Free: 1-866-437-1940 (8am-8pm daily)
Language Interpretation (9am-4pm M-F)
www.seniorsfirstbc.ca

UBC Pharmacists Clinic
www.pharmsci.ubc.ca/pharmacists-clinic

We can help RIGHT NOW



BC Caregiver Support Line 1-877-520-3267
*Toll-free, available Mon/Wed/Fri at 8:30am-4pm and
Tues/Thurs at 8:30am-7pm*



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