



Family Caregivers
of British Columbia

— Let us help —

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DEAR CSL: BOUNCING BACK FROM A DECLINE OR SETBACK

By Wendy Johnstone, for the Caregiver Support Line Team



Dear CSL: I'm caring for..

.. My wife who is living with Alzheimer's Disease. She is very functional and maintains a high level of independence. But it feels like some cracks are starting to show. Three months ago she fell and hit her head hard resulting in a big decline in her memory. We had an appointment with the Geriatric Outreach Team and they did a cognitive assessment and her scores showed a noticeable drop from her previous assessment. I feel devastated about this news, and it feels like such a setback for us. How do I "bounce back" from this setback?

Yours Truly,

Tigger Wanna Be

Tips for Managing Changes

- Breathe
- Take time
- Use intention
- Set priorities
- Ask for help

Moving Through Setbacks in Caregiving

AS CAREGIVERS, WE DO ALL THAT WE CAN TO HELP SUPPORT OUR LOVED ONES TO REMAIN INDEPENDENT AND WITH THE BEST QUALITY OF LIFE POSSIBLE.

It's hard to see our loved ones change as a disease progresses or as a result of an unexpected event. Unfortunately, setbacks happen, and we often can't predict or control them. We can try to respond to setbacks in ways that minimize the stress they cause us and our loved ones. We hope these ideas help support you in moving forward from your setback in caregiving (or in general from life's setbacks!)

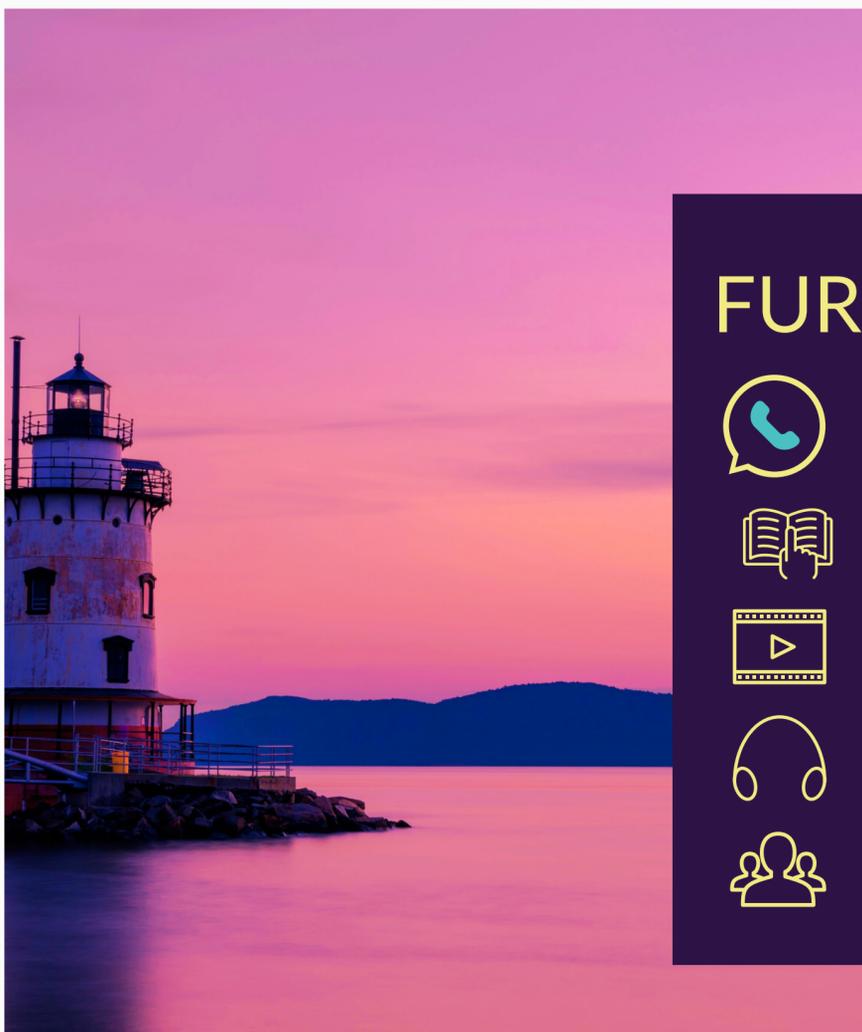
BREATHE: Breathing is one of the best ways to give us pause, perspective, and time to think. One idea that emerged from our team is hitting the BREATHE app on a smartphone or smart-watch for one minute. For some, it's counting 10 breaths in and out, or meditating for a few minutes

TIME: Give yourself time to feel. It's okay to take time to grieve a change or loss in the caregiving relationship. Be mindful of your feelings, and encourage yourself to acknowledge that life is imperfect. Hold space and comfort for yourself in difficult times. It's a fine balance. Research shows the importance of not staying too long with negative thoughts.

INTENTION: Using intention is a great way to coach ourselves through challenges. A personal mantra or supportive reminder helps nurture us. When feeling overwhelmed, try saying a phrase like, "This is hard, and it feels hard for me. I'm doing my best right now. What can I do for myself in this moment?" Setting an intention clarifies what is most important for the moment. It gives us permission and time to step back, check in with ourselves before taking on an interaction or task. [Here*](#) is a great resource for setting intentions. See below for a link.

PRIORITIZE: Setbacks often mean we need to revisit priorities or change ways of doing things. Find a quiet place to list your priorities, or talk through the implications with a friend, or our Caregiver Support Line. This can help you understand what it means for you and your loved one. Break down tasks into manageable pieces to address one-by-one. Look at what you can or can't do in light of the change.

ASK FOR HELP: Don't be afraid to reach out for support from family, friends, health professionals, or community agencies like FCBC. Many caregivers have been, or are currently, in similar situations. They can offer ideas on how to manage your setback.



FURTHER RESOURCES:



Call our **FREE Caregiver Support Line:** 1-877-520-3267



Visit the [Caregiver Learning Centre: Read](#) for more articles.



View some of our webinars and videos in [the Watch section](#).



[Listen to a podcast](#) to learn more about self-care and well-being.



Join our [Free Virtual Support Groups](#).

*Resource: <https://www.familycaregiversbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Setting-Intentions-April-2020.pdf>