

CAREGIVER CONNECTION



Family Caregivers
of British Columbia
— Let us help —

SPRING 2023

VOLUME 37 ISSUE 2



 **NATIONAL
VOLUNTEER WEEK**
APRIL 16 - 22, 2023
#NVW2023 #WEAVINGUSTOGETHER

Fostering Caregiver Well-Being

Lycia Rodrigues, Caregiver Support Manager, Family Caregivers of BC

Many caregivers become attuned to their care recipient's needs and daily rhythms and as time passes and caregiving tasks stack up, they often lose track of their own inner voice and needs. Family Caregivers of BC offers caregiver well-being activities that aim to support a caregiver's holistic health and resilience. Our trained team of staff and volunteers at FCBC guide caregivers through reflective questions and practices of self-compassion so that caregivers can remember the small, still voice within.

We were delighted to invite caregivers in the Greater Victoria area to join our Victoria Art Therapy for Caregivers group this last winter season. This was the second time our volunteers Matty Cervantes and Sarai Gomez facilitated this caregiver well-being activity within FCBC. Matty and Sarai have worked as psychologists in Mexico, using art-therapy to help people uncover the causes of their mental health difficulties and connect with the origins of their emotions.

The art therapy workshop guides caregivers through imagery, meaningful conversations, and arts-based experiential activities. It provides participants with opportunities to better understand the importance of self-care of

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

BC CAREGIVER SUPPORT LINE:
1-877-520-3267
familycaregiversbc.ca

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self-care and psychological resources to support their overall quality of life and well-being.

Research has shown that the process of art-making can assist in overcoming personal challenges, be a tool to managing stress, help in the healing process, and foster self-worth.

Themes Matty and Sarai have focused on during the art-therapy sessions:

- **Well-being:** the compass of our life. Metaphors and stories guide us to our wellness pathway.
- **Emotional well-being:** brings colours and textures to experience self-confidence and self-understanding.
- **Self-care and self-compassion:** pathways to healing.
- **Movement and resilience:** a colourful and powerful journey fostering self-worth
- **The tree of life:** imagery and the power of symbols.

Here is what caregivers have shared about their experience participating in the art therapy sessions:

“Feeling not so alone in this process helps in quiet yet strong ways. A feeling of hope, which is harder to feel these days. I’m very grateful.”

“I greatly appreciated the chance to be creative with other caregivers.”

Another FCBC offering that aims to spark one’s inner voice is our Virtual Journal Writing Workshop for Caregivers. In this workshop, participants are engaged in a structured writing process that is private and self-reflective. Each of the 90-minute writing sessions includes a brief meditation and 3-5 writing segments.

This winter was the fourth year that our volunteer Bill Israel, a certified facilitator of Intensive Journal, led this virtual workshop within our FCBC caregiver support program. We greatly appreciate the support that our volunteer Gabi Townsend has offered during these sessions to support Bill.

A few comments shared by caregivers about their experience participating in the Journal Writing workshop:

“Thank you for teaching me the skills to dig deeper and write for healing and strength.”

“The Journal Workshop has created in me a brave heart, to record and reflect on what my body and mind already know. As a caregiver, it has given me inner wisdom, from my own experiences as a caregiver, and in turn, made me a more compassionate and confident care-partner.”

We are looking forward to offering more caregiver well-being opportunities again in fall 2023. Please check our [website calendar](http://www.familycaregiversbc.ca/calendar) (www.familycaregiversbc.ca/calendar) for details to register. Stay tuned for our May 2023 Caregiver Awareness Month where we highlight important topics and themes for caregivers, as well as activities that will benefit your wellbeing.

Follow along on social media during our May Caregiver Awareness month (#CaregiverAware) and National Volunteer Week in April (#NVM2023 and #Weavingustogether).





Editor's Note

Kate Landreth, Education & Learning Lead, Family Caregivers of BC

May is Family Caregivers Month in B.C. and it is an opportunity for Family Caregivers of BC to spread awareness of the caregiving role and highlight caregiver topic and themes through our website and social media. Caregiving is a very common experience, but many caregivers do not identify as one. They often see their role in terms of their relationship such as a spouse, parent, adult child, neighbour, etc. Regardless of the relationship you have with the person you are supporting and caring for, it's important that you add 'caregiver' to the list of things you are. Without identifying yourself as a caregiver, it will be much harder to find the right resources and supports that can help you in your role.

FCBC is dedicated to supporting caregivers through support groups and workshops like our art-therapy and intensive journal writing. Our cover article (pages 1-2) written by Lycia Rodrigues shares in detail about these successful FCBC workshops with caregiver testimonials. Our experienced and trained volunteers offer many of our caregiver support programs and all of us at FCBC extend our gratitude and appreciation

for all our dedicated volunteers (page 3). Please see our [website calendar](#) for upcoming caregiver support groups, as well as opportunities to [volunteer with us](#). Look on our website at www.familycaregiversbc.ca.

I have also included information about extended pharmacy services in B.C., with considerations from a local pharmacist (page 4), caregiver contingency planning for those unseen times you may not be able to fulfill your caregiving role (page 5), and an article about appointing an executor for your will written by a B.C. based lawyer (pages 8-9). Spring cleaning your finances is a concept I am exploring and a finance expert discusses impulse spending and a technique to help (page 10).

I encourage you to lace up your running shoes, pop in your headphones and listen to our podcast 'Caregivers Out Loud' while enjoying the sights and sounds of spring!

From my heart to yours,

Kate

Volunteer Appreciation

Stacey Dawes, Caregiver Engagement Lead, Family Caregivers of BC

In honour of our committed volunteers, FCBC would like to give a heartfelt thank you for your time and energy. The compassion and empathy you extend to caregivers is an inspiration and it ripples out into our broader communities and province. Your connection and engagement with caregivers provides them a sense of community. This feeling of belonging gives caregivers a sense of identity, a voice and a safe haven from the hardships of their role.

National Volunteer Appreciation Week is April 16th – 22nd (#NVW2023) and we celebrate all of our volunteers this week and really, all year round! Whether it is through sitting on our Board of Directors, facilitating caregiver support groups or workshops,

engaging with the community through presentations and exhibits, or sharing your voice through surveys, committees and research, we thank you! You spread caregiver awareness, companionship and create a non judgmental space for caregivers to simply be. We appreciate you!

I encourage you to take a moment to consider the volunteers in your community and to extend your gratitude to them: their acts of service and kindness contribute to the wellbeing of our society.

If you are interested in learning more about how you can join our team of volunteers go to our website www.familycaregiversbc.ca or send me an email at stacedawes@familycaregiversbc.ca

Expanded Pharmacy Services in British Columbia

Andrea Silver, Registered Pharmacist and Steven Chauvin, Registered Pharmacist

Information from Government of B.C Website

In November 2022 B.C. expanded the services that pharmacists can offer to help people get the care and prescriptions they need. This article outlines how prescriptions work, what a pharmacist can do for you, and how to renew your prescription (as seen on Province of B.C. website, www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/).

How prescriptions work

- Prescriptions are valid for up to 2 years,
- If it has been 2 years since your prescription was written, it has likely expired,
- If your prescription has expired, you must get a new one from your doctor, nurse practitioner or nurse prescriber,
- Prescription refills of a certain prescription may be filled at the pharmacy before being reassessed by a prescriber, and
- If you have no refills left, your pharmacist may be able to extend your prescription, which means you can continue your medication before being seen by a doctor or other prescriber.

What a pharmacist can do for you

- Renew most prescriptions,
- Adjust the dose or the timing for how you take or use the medication,
- Change the formulation of your medication (for example, from a tablet to a capsule or a liquid), and
- Substitute your medication for a different but similar medication if yours is unavailable or if you are experiencing side effects.

Some things a pharmacist cannot do

- Cannot renew or change cancer chemotherapy prescriptions,

- A prescription for narcotics and controlled drugs cannot be changed, and
- Pharmacists can renew a prescription for narcotics and controlled drugs, but not for more than the quantity originally prescribed.

How to renew your prescription

Talk to your primary care doctor or nurse practitioner about your health and whether you need to continue or change your prescription. Your pharmacist can also conduct an assessment and renew your prescription if:

- Your condition is stable, you need to continue your medication and you have been on the same medication at the same dosage for 6 months or longer with no concerns, and
- Your prescription is still valid and was issued in the last 24 months and the prescriber is still practicing in B.C.

A note from a pharmacist

It is highly recommended that you get to know your pharmacist. Adapting prescriptions (extending or changing) is up to the discretion of the pharmacist. If your prescription was written more than 2 years ago and you are out of the medication, talk to your pharmacist. They may be able to provide you with an emergency supply of medication until you can get a new prescription from your health provider. A pharmacist with your history and experience will be able to assess your situation best and will extend your prescription accordingly.

For supplementary information on this topic visit:

www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/accessing-health-care/pharmacy-services

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 keep you resilient.

Circle "Yes" or "No" for each of the following statements:

- YES | NO I am satisfied with my overall personal health.
- YES | NO I have the skills and information I need to give the required care.
- YES | NO I maintain regular contact with family and friends, and make time to spend with them.
- YES | NO 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 I can communicate effectively with the person I am caring for, as well as others involved in their care.
- YES | NO I am aware of community resources available to help support me in my caregiver role.
- YES | NO I am aware of caregiver support groups (locally or online) and have a supportive network where I can share my challenges and successes.
- YES | NO I make use of respite options available and take breaks from my caregiving responsibilities.
- YES | NO 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 as I can.
- YES | NO I know how to navigate the healthcare system and who to ask if, and when I need help.

What's your score?

Give yourself one point for each "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 may be helpful.

5-7 points: You understand the importance of self-care, but are 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 don't know about resources to help you) or internal (you have trouble asking for or receiving support). Sharing the care is essential to finding enough time and energy for yourself. Choose one "No" statement 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 statements as a guide for creating a self-care plan. Start by learning more about the caregiver support resources available to guide you. Identify resources you're not currently using (family, friends, neighbors, etc.) to share the care and create some 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

Contingency Planning

Adapted from FCBC Caregiver Support Plan: Making it Personal Flipbook

Having a contingency or back up plan in case you become ill and can't provide care is an important tool for caregivers and families to have. Your backup plan will help to ensure the person you care for continues to receive support.

Who can step in if you or other family caregivers can't provide care? Start by looking at all the areas where you currently are providing care and support. Expand your circle of care to include other family members, friends or neighbours who may be able to help. You may need to look at publicly funded services, private care or non-profit organizations in your community. Ask yourself if one person can handle the care or if it can be divided among different people.

Up to date legal and financial documents. Ensure your will, power of attorney and an advance care plan (including a representation agreement and advance care directive) are current. Does anyone besides you know where these documents are located?

Understand financial resources. Take into account the additional costs increased care will require (even if publicly funded). Examples include costs such as private care or help with housework and grocery shopping. Research eligibility for financial tax credits or publicly funded services.

Planning for an Emergency Visit. In a medical emergency where paramedics need to transport you or the person you are caring for from home to hospital, create a "just in case" emergency file. This would include a copy of: medical history, emergency contacts, current list of medications, health care representation agreements and advance care plan. You can also create a packing list of essential items if the care recipient needs to leave their home, or require hospitalization.

Who can step in and care for you, if you become critically ill? Is that person able and willing to care for me? Will they also look after the person I'm caring for?

Document your care plan. Make it very clear what needs to be done. Review your care plan with your backup team. The care plan might include:

- Contact information for key people on the care team and other important services being used.
- Information about the care recipient condition, as well as medical history, allergies and medic alert information.
- A care schedule including regularly planned visits from health care workers and professionals.
- Include information about life history, likes and dislikes, routines, etc.
- Make a schedule of what is done and when and provide enough detail that someone else can take over.
- Current list of medications including dosage and scheduling. Ensure all your medications have refills available and/or discuss with the family doctor about phone renewal as part of your back up plan.
- Directions around bill payments including passwords for computers.
- Directions around emergency care, for example, whether or not you would allow blood transfusions, DNR (do not resuscitate), next of kin, Power of Attorney or Health Care Directive information.

Dear Caregiver Support Line

My partner has recently had a sharp decline in cognition as well as physical mobility after suffering from a stroke. This is preventing them from engaging in any activities outside of the home and I am the one who is doing everything for them. I am in my early fifties and have been looking forward to this time in my life with less responsibilities after our children have left our home. I do NOT want to be a caregiver; however, I am the one in the home with my spouse and the only support they have. I frequently feel resentful and guilty. What do I do?

Sincerely,

Feeling Resentful

Dear Feeling Resentful,

It is great that you have identified these feelings of guilt and resentment, this is often the first step in naming and taming emotions. You may be grieving lost dreams and opportunities, you might be angry at the unfairness of it all and/or you may be resenting your partner for becoming sick and you having to pick up the slack. This is not how you envisioned your life.

We hear how overwhelmed and frustrated you are; it is a huge responsibility that has been thrust upon you unexpectedly. Your partner is now dependent on you and life has changed dramatically. Following a sudden diagnosis, there can be many medical appointments, administrative forms, contacts with community health professionals, communication with family and friends, and physical/mental/emotional support for the care recipient. On top of that, you may be feeling guilt and resentment for not wanting to be a caregiver. It is a lot to deal with.

Here are some practices and resources that may support you in navigating these challenging times:

- Be kind to yourself. This is a difficult time and

having self-compassion can help ease feelings of being overwhelmed. Whatever you are feeling is okay, your emotions are showing you what is

- **Carve out some time for yourself.** In this time of transition, what can support you in the few moments of time you have? What things have helped you in the past? For example, having a cup of tea, taking a bath, watching a comedy show, doing a 5-minute meditation, or taking a walk with a friend.
- **Identify and connect with supportive people in your community.** How can your circle of support (friends, family, colleagues, community members) help you, such as having them help with certain house tasks, organizing a meal train, picking up groceries, or sharing a cup of coffee and listening to your experience empathetically.
- **Learn about the diagnosis, prognosis and what needs your partner will have.** Will they stay stable? Will this be a phase? Will this be short-term? What kind of care needs will they have? What kind of a living environment is suitable? Understanding your situation and planning ahead can help to diffuse heightened emotions.
- **Explore your own values and needs in your relationship and identify what level of care you can provide.** A counsellor and/or a caregiver coach can assist you in becoming clear on your needs and values. They can also help with strategies on how to move forward, for yourself, your partner and your family.



Appointing an Executor in Your Will

Amy-Alexandra Jaworsky, Wills, Probate and Residential Real Estate Lawyer, Island Law Office

What is an executor? An executor is the trusted person you appoint in your will to carry out the instructions in your Will after you pass away. In the past it was customary to refer to a male person as an “executor” and a female person as an “executrix” but it is very common now to use the term “executor” regardless of gender. You may also hear the term “personal representative” which means the same thing. Your executor is the person expected to step in after you pass away to safeguard all your property, handle your funeral arrangements, make sure your debts are paid, file your tax returns and handle the distribution of your assets to your beneficiaries in accordance with the instructions set out in your will. It is an important job with a lot of responsibility. Choosing the right executor will go a long way to ensuring the instructions in your will are carried out as efficiently as possible. **(Continued on Page 9)**



Join a Community Caregiver Support Group

Family Caregivers of BC has in-person and virtual support groups to help you find community support and meet your needs as a caregiver. 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	Delta	Maple Ridge	Port Alberni	Smithers
Burnaby	Gabriola Island	Mayne Island	Port Coquitlam	Summerland
Campbell River	East Kootenay	Nanaimo	Princeton	Surrey
Chilliwack	West Kootenay	Nelson	Prince George	Terrace
Comox Valley	Kamloops	North Vancouver	Quadra Island	Vancouver
Coquitlam	Keremeos	Oliver	Richmond	Victoria
Cowichan Valley	Lake Country	Pender Island	Salt Spring Island	
Cranbrook	Langley	Penticton	Sidney	
		Pitt Meadows		

Who should I appoint as my executor? It is quite common for a person to choose their spouse or their adult child to be their executor, but you can also appoint a trust company, a lawyer or a notary to be your executor. Which one to choose depends on your circumstances, the complexity of your affairs and your family dynamics. Some questions to ask yourself when appointing your executor which may help you decide are:

- are they over 19 and expected to live longer than you?
- do you trust this person to carry out your instructions?
- are they organized and good with paperwork, keeping records and wrangling details?
- do they have the time in their schedule to carry out the tasks? (administering an estate is a considerable amount of work)
- is your estate likely to be complicated to administer? (a more complex estate may be better suited to having a trust company or professional person as an executor)
- are you comfortable asking this person to take on the burden of the job?
- will they do the job impartially? Do they get along with the other beneficiaries? (conflict between beneficiaries is not unusual because the stress of the death can bring up hard feelings from the past and make the administration of the estate more difficult for the executor, particularly if they are also a beneficiary)
- are they a Canadian resident? (this is not mandatory but there may be potential tax consequences for foreign executors)
- do they live relatively close by or are they willing to travel to carry out the tasks? (this is not mandatory but may be helpful for convenience)

Does my executor get paid? No matter who you choose to be your executor, that person is entitled to be paid for acting on your behalf. If the Will does not specify the amount, then the payment is set according to the legislation at a range between 1%-5% of the gross value of the estate plus a yearly management fee of not more than 0.4% of the average market value of the assets.

Where do I go if I want more information?

- Peoples Law School website: <https://www.peopleslawschool.ca/choosing-executor/>
- Clicklaw: [https://wiki.clicklaw.bc.ca/index.php?title=Choosing an Executor](https://wiki.clicklaw.bc.ca/index.php?title=Choosing_an_Executor)
- Consult a trust company or a lawyer for more information about acting as your executor

Amy-Alexandra Jaworsky of Island Law Office is a Victoria lawyer practicing in the areas of wills, probate and residential real estate.
amy@islandlawoffice.ca / 250-858-0344



Impulse Spending: Understanding TEMPO to Keep Your Finances On Beat

Anne Arbour, Director of Strategic Partnership and Education at Credit Counselling Society

Have you ever bought something you didn't plan to? Most of us have. Maybe it didn't seem like a big deal at the time, or maybe that impulse spend came with a dose of guilt or stress as an unwelcome 'bonus gift with purchase'. If unplanned spending becomes a regular habit, that could spell longer term trouble for our financial health and emotional wellness.

What can we do? The key is to understand our personal trigger(s). Keep the word TEMPO in mind:

Time

Is there a certain time of day or the week when you find yourself spending more impulsively? When our energy is low or we're rushing to complete an errand, we don't always make wise choices. Finding a time of day or week when we have more energy or more time can put us in the right frame of mind to avoid impulsive buying decisions made in the moment.

Environment

Is there a particular environment where you find yourself spending more than you intended? It could be a sporting event or the amusement park gift shop or the souvenir stand on vacation. If you can't avoid your trigger environment altogether, giving yourself a firm cash spending limit, or leaving your cash and cards at home, can help.

Mood

Whether it's happy, bored, stressed or exhausted, our mood can play a role in our tendency to engage in some unplanned retail therapy. A great solution can be finding alternate activities that give us the same emotional satisfaction, like baking, exercising, or meditating, for example.

Place

Many of us have a particular place, maybe the electronics store or the shoe store, where self-control can be difficult to summon. Avoiding these places isn't always possible or practical, in which case, giving yourself a spending limit with cash, or leaving your money and credit cards at home can be helpful strategies.

Occasion

Do you find yourself regularly overspending for holidays and other celebrations? Try setting a realistic budget and saving the funds beforehand as a line of defense against this trigger.

The last thing to know is that while you're busy looking after someone else, there are free, confidential, accredited resources ready to look after you and your financial wellness.



Anne Arbour is the Director of Strategic Partnerships and Education at the Credit Counselling Society, a not-for-profit service dedicated to helping consumers manage their credit, debts and budgets, and financial wellness.



DISEASE/CONDITION SPECIFIC CAREGIVER SUPPORT

ALS Society of BC www.alsbc.ca/	1-800-708-3228	Here to Help (Mental Health) heretohelpbc.ca (no area code; free available 24 hours)	310-6789
Alzheimer Society of BC alzheimer.ca/bc/en	1-800-667-3742	Huntington British Columbia Resource Center 604-822-7195 chd.med.ubc.ca/home/hsc-resource-centre/	
First Link Dementia Helpline	1-800-936-6033		
BC Brain Injury Association brainstreams.ca	604-984-1212	MS Society of Canada mssociety.ca	1-800-268-7582
B.C Schizophrenia Society bcss.org	1-888-888-0029	Parkinson Society B.C. parkinson.bc.ca	1-800-668-3330
BC Cancer Agency bccancer.bc.ca/contact		Stroke Recovery Association of BC strokerecoverybc.ca	1-888-313-3377

PROVINCIAL SUPPORT RESOURCES

Anti Fraud Centre antifraudcentre.ca	1-888-495-8501	Crisis Centre BC Crisiscentre.bc.ca	1-800-SUICIDE 1-800-784-2433
BC211—non-medical www.bc211.ca		Family Caregivers of British Columbia familycaregiversbc.ca Caregiver Support Line (toll free)	1-877-520-3267
BC Association of Community Response Networks bccrns.ca / info@bccrns.ca		Find Support BC findsupportbc.com	
B.C. Health Authority General Inquiry Lines Fraser Health 1-855-412-2121 Interior Health 250-388-2273 or 250-980-1400 Island Health 1-888-533-2273 Vancouver Coastal Health 604-263-7377 Northern Health 250-565-7317		First Nations Health Authority fnha.ca HealthLinkBC—medical— healthlinkbc.ca Call 811 any time 24/7 to speak with a nurse.	1-866-913-0033
B.C. Ministry of Health www.gov.bc.ca/health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthtopics and enter “caregiver in the search field Visit www.patientsaspartners.ca for the free self-management activities 		Pain BC painbc.ca	1-844-880-PAIN 1-844-880-7246
B.C. Palliative Care Benefits www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharme/outgoing/_palliatibe.html		Nidus Personal Planning Resource Centre nidus.ca / info@nidus.ca	
BC Seniors Guide gov.bc.ca/seniors-guide PDF Available in English, Chinese, French, Korean, Vietnamese, Punjabi and Farsi, Hard copy available	1-877-952-3181	Seniors First www.seniorsfirstbc.ca SAIL—Seniors Abuse and Information Line Vancouver Metro 604-437-1940 Toll Free 1-800-437-1940	
		UBC Pharmacists Clinic pharmsci.ubc.ca/pharmacists-clinic	604-827-2584

We Can Help Right Now!



BC Caregivers Support Line 1-877-520-3267
Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Toll-free, here to support you!



**Family Caregivers
of British Columbia**

— Let us help —

info@familycaregiversbc.ca

www.familycaregiversbc.ca

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