



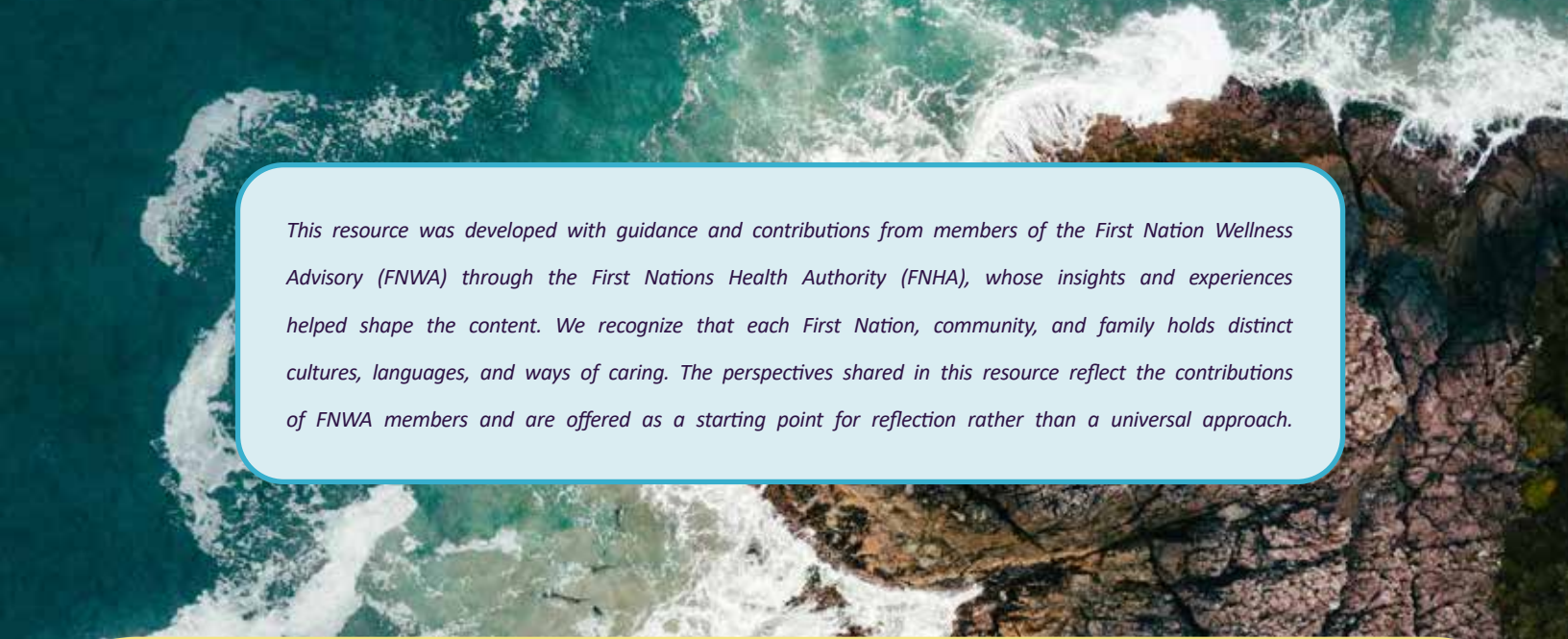
Walking Together:

Care Through Relationship

First Nations Reflections on Caregiving



**Family Caregivers
of British Columbia**



This resource was developed with guidance and contributions from members of the First Nation Wellness Advisory (FNWA) through the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), whose insights and experiences helped shape the content. We recognize that each First Nation, community, and family holds distinct cultures, languages, and ways of caring. The perspectives shared in this resource reflect the contributions of FNWA members and are offered as a starting point for reflection rather than a universal approach.

Care Has Always Been Here

Caring for others is not new.

It has always been part of family and community life. It may look different for each person, and people move through caregiving in their own ways and at different stages. There is no single right way to walk this path.

In First Nations families and communities, care is rooted in relationships. It is shared between grandparents and grandchildren, aunts and nephews, neighbours and friends. While some people use the word caregiver, many simply describe their role through their relationship, like daughter, son, uncle, cousin, or friend. Use the word that feels right to you.

Taking time to reflect on your caregiving journey can be meaningful. It offers an opportunity to notice the knowledge and strengths you already carry, reflect on what you continue to

learn from the person you care for, and see the value of the care you provide. Reflection can also remind you that your own wellbeing matters. Caring for yourself may include accepting support, asking for help when you need it, and remembering that caregiving is not meant to be done alone.

This resource is not intended to teach you how to care. Instead, it builds on the knowledge, experience, and relationships you already have. You are the expert in your own life. These pages simply offer space to reflect, strengthen your circle of care, and connect with resources if and when they feel helpful.

Family Caregivers of BC is here to help. Our Caregiver Support team can talk through the reflections and worksheets in this booklet, answer questions, and connect you with additional support. You can reach us on our toll-free number, 1-877-520-3267. Additional community and caregiver resources are also listed at the end of this booklet.

Why Taking Care of Yourself Matters

Taking care of yourself can help you have the energy and capacity to care for others. Caregiving can feel easier when you have people to lean on and support you. Connection to yourself, your culture, your spirit, your body, and your community can also be a source of strength while caregiving.

Caregiving changes over time. Some days may feel easier, while other days may feel harder. Taking a moment to check in with yourself is about noticing how you are doing, and what you may need today. It is not about judging your experience.

Your needs may change over time. You might notice changes in your energy, sleep, emotions, or daily routines. At different times, you may need more time with family, culture, or the land. At other times, you may need someone to listen, help with everyday tasks, or simply be there alongside you. These needs are a natural part of caregiving.

Taking care of yourself often happens through connection with others, shared stories, community support, and learning from people who have walked this path before. As you complete the next pages, take a moment to notice what is supporting you today, and where you might welcome additional support.



Creating A Circle of Care

Caregiving is not meant to be done alone. Having people to lean on can make caregiving feel more manageable. The people, services, and community connections around you can offer different kinds of support at different times. Taking a moment to recognize who is part of your circle of care can help you see the support you already have and where you might welcome more.

Who is part of your circle of care?	How do they support you or the person you care for?

Your circle of care might include:

- Family members
- Friends or neighbours
- Traditional or Alternative Medicine Practitioners
- Community members
- Biomedical healthcare providers (e.g., doctors, nurse practitioners, social workers)
- Community programs or organizations (e.g., Family Caregivers of BC)

Take a moment to reflect

- Is there someone you could reach out to for support?
- Is there a service or community connection you would like to learn more about?
- What kind of support would make the biggest difference for you right now?

Care is shared. It is not meant to be carried alone.

Support Along Your Path

Your caregiving journey changes over time. Taking a moment to check in with yourself can help you notice what you need and what kind of support may be helpful.

Accepting support can be hard. Many caregivers are comfortable helping others but find it harder to ask for help themselves. Support can look different for everyone. It might be someone bringing a meal, helping with appointments, running an errand, listening, or simply spending time with you.

Asking for support is not a sign of weakness. Everyone needs support at different times.

What is going well for you right now?

What feels difficult right now?

Small steps can make a difference

If it feels hard to know where to start, think about one small thing that could make today a little easier.

This might be:

- a task someone could help with
- a routine that could be simplified
- time for you to rest or recharge
- someone who could check in or spend time with you

What support would feel helpful right now?



“I didn’t know self-care was important until I was burned out.”

**- Reneé Irvine,
Caregiver for daughter**

What Keeps You Grounded?

When you are caring for someone else, your own needs can sometimes become less visible. Making space for yourself, even in small ways, can help you stay connected, grounded, and supported.

Self-care does not look the same for everyone. For some, it may be a moment alone, connecting with others, or doing something that brings comfort and renewal. For others, grounding may come through culture, community, ceremony, and connection to the land.

Grounding looks different for everyone. For some it may come through everyday activities that bring comfort, connection, or a sense of calm. This might include:

- Talking with someone you trust
- Spending time with family or friends
- Going for a walk or being outdoors
- Reading, visiting the library, or learning something new
- Taking a bath or shower
- Getting a haircut or doing something that helps you feel cared for
- Journaling, crafting, or working on a puzzle
- Taking a few moments for mindful breathing

For others, grounding may also come through cultural, spiritual, and community connections, such as:

- Time on the land
- Ceremony or prayer
- Song, storytelling, drumming, or music
- Cultural practices
- Teachings from Elders or Knowledge Keepers
- Traditional medicines

What helps you restore your energy and feel supported?

Sharing What You Know

You know the person you care for best. Sharing what you know can help others provide care that reflects their needs, preferences, and values.

If someone were to support the person you care for, what would you want them to know:

Think about things like:

- What helps them feel comfortable?
- What routines or preferences are important?
- How do they communicate their needs?
- What helps you notice when something is not right?
- Are there cultural practices, traditions, or values are important to include?

A few things I would want them to know:





You Are Not Alone

Need someone to talk with? We are here to listen and walk alongside you.

Many caregivers hesitate to reach out for support because they do not want to feel like a burden. Asking for help can feel difficult, especially when you are used to supporting others.

FCBC Caregiver Support Line:

1-877-520-3267 | Mon–Fri, 8:30 am–4:00 pm PT

Find caregiver resources, learning opportunities, and ways to connect:

www.familycaregiversbc.ca

Caregiver and community supports

Indigenous Caregivers of BC (ICOBC) | 250-857-4969

Sasamans Society | 250-914-2212

NIŁ TU,O Family Strengthening Services | 250-544-1400

Health authority caregiver supports

Local health authority caregiver support and respite services find the full list of resources here:

familycaregiversbc.ca/get-help/other-community-supports

Finding More Support

First Nations Health Authority Mental Health Benefits

www.fnha.ca/benefits/mental-health | 1-855-550-5454

Hope for Wellness Helpline

www.hopeforwellness.ca | 1-855-242-3310

KUU-US Crisis Line Society

www.kuu-uscrisisline.com

Adults/Elders: 250-723-4050 | Child/Youth: 250-723 2040

Tsow-Tun Le Lum Society

www.tsowtunlelum.org | 1-888-403-3123

Mental Health and Information Support Line

310-6789 (no area code)

Seniors Distress Line | 604-872-1234