

Complimentary

FCSS Caregivers Guide



Thank you to all our partners —

this project was made possible with the contributions from these partners:

Project Partners Contact Information



Stony Plain FCSS

107, 4613 – 52 Avenue
780-963-8583
www.stonyplain.com



Spruce Grove FCSS

105 – 505 Queen Street
780-962-7618
www.sprucegrove.org



Caregivers Alberta

10310 – 56 Street,
Edmonton
1.877.453.5088
www.caregiversalberta.ca



Parkland County

53109A Hwy 779
780-968-8400
www.parklandcounty.com



Servus Credit Union

Stony Plain Branch
4904 – 48 Street
Stony Plain, Alberta
T7Z 1L8
780.638.7857
Servus.ca

Caregiver Characteristics

- Do you make phone calls to check in on a loved one? Do you drive a family member, neighbor or friend to appointments?
- Do you make meals for someone?
- Do you help someone with household chores, such as meal preparation, cleaning or grocery shopping?
- Do you assist someone with personal affairs such as paying bills?
- Do you help someone make decisions regarding health care?
- Do you provide hands-on care such as assistance with bathing, dressing or eating?

If you answered **YES** to one or more of these questions, then **YOU** are a **CAREGIVER**.

Recognize your role as a caregiver and take pride in your contributions to a healthy society.

Planning for the Journey Ahead

Reflect on your caregiving journey and plan for the future to avoid the stress of uncertainty.

Caregiving is a journey most of us will take in time. You can avoid the stress of uncertainty by following the CARE plan:

C = Create a conversation around caregiving to help your family and friends in planning for long-term care and even end-of-life issues.

A = Acknowledge your loved one's wishes. Ensure your care recipient that you want to do what is best for them. By having this conversation now you will be better equipped to help them when they need it.

R = Review what is already planned. Ask your loved one if they have legal documents such as a will, power of attorney or personal directives. Find out where these important documents are located.

E = Engage the whole family. Include siblings, your other parent or even your spouse and older children in the caregiving plan.

The CARE plan helps everyone prepare for their role and will help ensure you – as the primary caregiver – do not become burned out or bankrupt when you take on caregiving. By planning ahead you'll avoid stress and strife later.

IMPORTANT LEGAL DOCUMENTS TO HAVE:

- Will
- Power of Attorney
- Personal Directive

Become more confident, gain assertiveness to get what you need, and learn how to ask for help when caring for someone.

Here are some tips on how to ask for help to share the caring with family members:

- **Speak Up**– don't expect friends and family members to know what you need or how you are feeling. Get a dialogue going.
- **Spread the Responsibility** – Try to get as many family members involved in caregiving as possible. Even someone who lives far away can help. One person can take care of medical, another finances, another grocery and errands.
- **Set up a regular check in** – ask a family member, friend or volunteer to call you daily/weekly. This person can help you spread status updates and coordinate with other family members.
- **Say "Yes"** when someone offers assistance – don't be shy about accepting help. Let them feel good about supporting you.

The Emotional Journey

Explore your emotions and put negative feelings into perspective.

Did you know:

- Most caregivers experience burden and well-being at the same time.
- Stress is a symptom or reaction to feelings and unmet needs.
- Most caregivers provide care for more than two years and will require different supports over the course of their caregiving journey.
- Positive feelings about yourself, your caregiving role, and accessing respite and other support services, if needed, will help you to achieve a greater sense of well-being.
- Appropriate humour can provide caregivers with a mental break that can reduce stress.

This powerful message first appeared in Jo Horne's book "Caregiving: Helping an Aging Loved One" (AARP Books, 1985). It is a helpful reminder on bad days that we cannot do everything, that we do not need to feel guilty for taking care of ourselves, and that we deserve support and recognition for the care we provide.

I have the right:

- To take care of myself. This is not an act of selfishness. It will give me the capability of taking better care of my loved one.
- To seek help from others even though my loved one may object. I recognize the limits of my own endurance and strength.
- To maintain facets of my own life that do not include the person I provide care for, just as I would if he or she were healthy. I know that I do everything I reasonably can for this person and I have the right to do some things just for myself.
- To get angry, be depressed and express other difficult feelings occasionally.
- To reject any attempt by my loved one [either conscious or unconscious] to manipulate me through guilt, anger or depression.
- To receive consideration, affection, forgiveness and acceptance for what I do for my loved one for as long as I offer these qualities in return.
- To take pride in what I am accomplishing and to applaud the courage it has sometimes taken to meet the needs of my loved one.
- To protect my individuality and my right to make a life for myself that will sustain me in the time when my loved one no longer needs my full time help.
- To expect and demand that as new strides are made in finding resources to aid persons living with illness, physical or mental challenges in our country, similar strides will be made toward aiding and supporting caregivers.

Learn how stress can lead to burn out, and what you can do to save yourself before it's too late.

Common signs and symptoms of burn out:

- You have much less energy than you used to.
- It seems like you catch every cold or flu that's going around.
- You're constantly exhausted, even after sleeping.
- You neglect your own needs, either because you're too busy or you just don't care anymore.
- Your life revolves around caregiving, but it gives you little satisfaction.
- You have trouble relaxing even when help is available.
- You're increasingly impatient and irritable with the person you're caring for.
- You feel helpless and hopeless.

Once you burn out, caregiving is no longer a healthy option for either you or the person you are caring for. It's important to watch for the warning signs of caregiver burn out and take action right away. Some resources might include seeing your family doctor, accessing homecare and talking to your family or joining a support group.

Regain your identity as a whole person by taking care of yourself first.

As a busy caregiver, leisure time may seem like an impossible luxury. But you owe it to yourself — as well as the person you are caring for — to carve it into your schedule.

- It is recommended to set aside a minimum of 30 minutes a day for yourself. Try reading, working in the garden or playing with your dog.
- Find ways to pamper yourself. Take a bath, get a manicure, and buy fresh flowers or whatever makes you feel special.
- Make yourself laugh. Read a funny book, watch a comedy, or call a friend. Try to find the humor in everyday situations.
- Get out of the house. Seek out family and friends to step in with caregiving so you can have a break.
- Visit with friends and share your feelings. If it's difficult to leave the house, have friends over to visit. Remember it's okay to talk about things that aren't caregiver related.

Emergency Preparedness

Being sure that you and the person you are caring for are ready for a disaster – preparedness begins with you. An emergency preparedness kit will help ensure you and your care recipient needs are met. The kit should contain enough supplies to last for the first 3 days or 72 hours following a disaster.

Does the person you are caring for have these items:

Food and Water: Stock up on fresh water and dried or canned food (and a can opener). If they have pets, stock up on their food and medication too.

Health: First aid supplies. Have a seven day supply of their medications with them. If they use oxygen, have an emergency supply to last three days or more. Ensure they have extra batteries on hand for hearing aids, diabetes monitoring equipment and other medical or mobility equipment.

Other: Battery operated radio, flashlight, utility knife, duct tape, clothing, blankets, candles, matches, family documents (credit card info, birth/marriage certificates/ passports/ copies of insurance papers)

Arrange for friends to check up on them if there is an emergency where you might not be available as a caregiver.

Use salt and sand on driveways and sidewalks in the winter to melt snow and improve traction. For residents who are physically unable to remove snow, assistance may be available by contacting:

- Parkland County - 780 968-8400
- Spruce Grove – 780-962-7618
- Stony Plain – 780-963-8583

211 is the number to dial to access health, human services, community resources, and government assistance people need every day, as well as in times of crisis.

- Basic needs (food, clothing, shelter and financial support)
- Housing and support options for children, adults, seniors and caregivers
- Employment resources
- Parenting support
- Counselling/ support groups
- Health care
- Legal services
- and MUCH more...

If you require homecare, respite or aids to daily living call Community Care Access: 780-496-1300

If you require specific caregiver advice, workshops, support groups, or a caregiver advisor call Caregivers Alberta: 780-453-5088

For local resource information pick up a copy of the Green Book at your local FCSS office.

24 hr & Emergency

Police	911
Ambulance	911
Fire.....	911
Poison Centre.....	1-800-332-1414
RCMP Spruce Grove	780-962-2222
RCMP Stony Plain.....	780-968-7267
WestView Health Centre	780-968-3600
Distress and Suicide Line.....	780-482-4357
Mental Health Help Line.....	1-877-303-2642
Victim Services.....	780-968-7272
Health Link Alberta	1-866-408-5465
Seniors Abuse Helpline.....	780-454-8888

Help for Caregivers

Stony Plain FCSS.....	780-963-8583	www.stonyplain.com/fcss
Spruce Grove FCSS	780-962-7618	www.sprucegrove.org
Caregivers Alberta	780-453-5088	www.caregiversalberta.ca
NeighbourLink Parkland.....	780-960-9669	
Community Care Access.....	780-496-1300	
Parkland Chapter Caregivers Support Group	780-963-4369	
Parkland Head Injury Association	780-913-8062	
Adult Day Support Program	780-968-3737	
24 Hour Information and Referral	211	

See GREEN BOOK (available at your FCSS office) or call 211 for assistance or information on:

- Transportation
- Food Resources
- Legal Services
- Health (Medical/Dental/Mental)
- Respite
- Support Groups (MS/Parkinsons/Dementia)
- Housing
- Financial Assistance
- Addictions
- Bereavement
- Recreation & Leisure