



Passport to Wellness for Family Caregivers

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

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CareConnect, The Care Guide

Who is a caregiver?

- You, me, your neighbour



- Anyone can find themselves in the caregiving role
- 1 in 5 Canadians are caregivers (20% of the pop)

What is a caregiver?

- A caregiver is a person who is providing informal and unpaid personal care support/help to another person living with challenges due to a disability, illness, an injury and/or aging
- Often this overwhelming experience results in stress, anxiety and fatigue



Who I am

My name is Joan McDonald

My education was in nursing and I left that path to go into business until my Mum got sick. My Mum was an active senior still taking courses at university, folk dancing, traveling until she broke her hip – her inactivity accelerated her heart disease. I was lucky to have been able to care for her.

Emotional Rollercoaster



- I went through feeling of being alone, scared, anxious, angry, hateful, and being in denial and holding my own “pity party”
- *But I wouldn't have changed my decision for anything*
- My path changed again back to nursing and helping seniors and their families through the maze of healthcare which brings me here today

The Care Guide & CareConnect

- Working now with this terrific company “Care Planning Partners” created in 1993
- We produce **The Care Guide** and **thecareguide.com**, a comprehensive guide to senior housing and home care services
- We expanded our services from the demands of our readers to provide a helpline and case management services called CareConnect
- I am the Director of CareConnect

Experienced team with unparalleled expertise and depth of knowledge regarding eldercare issues

experienced

*“CareConnect
understands eldercare
concerns like no one else”*

reliable

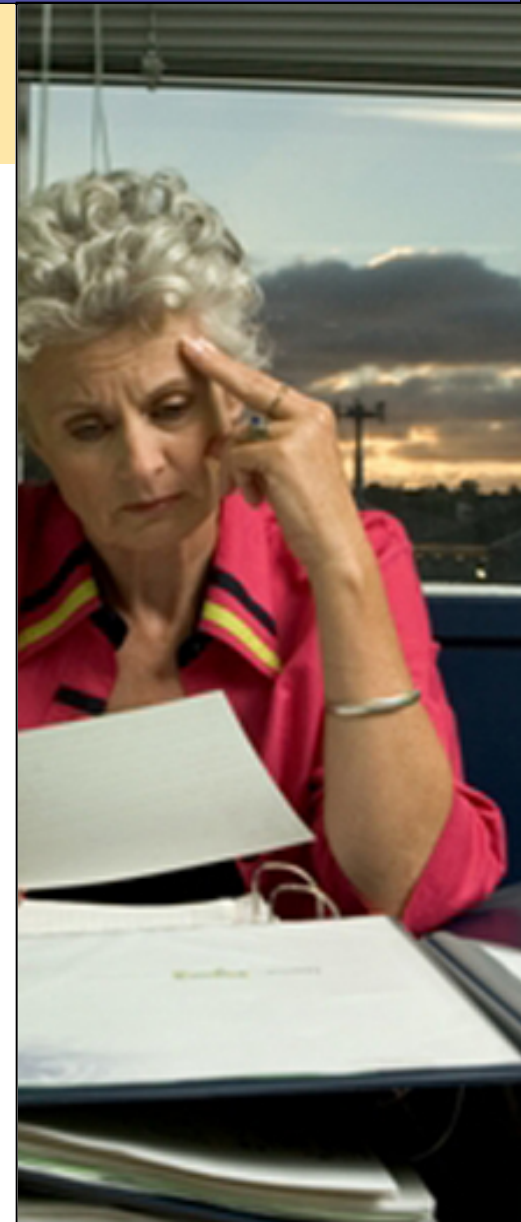
Trust

Let's talk about ...

- The Emotional Journey of Caregiving
- The Physical Demands of Caregiving
- Coping Strategies
- Caregiving Tips

Things to Consider

- Needs – level of care required
- Preferences – wants, desires
- Support Network – help that family and friends can provide
- Eligibility for Services (CCAC)
- Availability – options in the community
- Finances – affordability



PROTECT YOURSELF

Emotional Journey of Caregiving

Many rewards and joys of caregiving:

- Giving back to someone who cared for you
- Enjoy a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction from doing a job well
- Developing new skills, knowledge (e.g. advocacy abilities)
- Increase compassion and personal growth
- Making friends through support groups
- Creating memories
- Finding joy in the present

Case Study

Dave and Susan – 3 yrs ago Susan was diagnosed with Alzheimer's

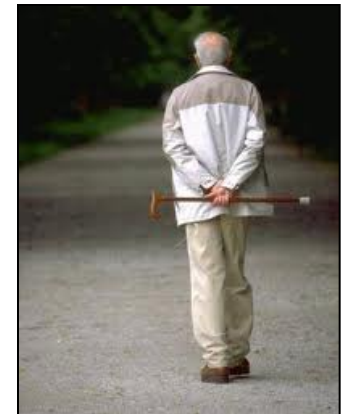
- Increasing loss of short term memory, decrease of language skills
- Susan admits that she does have Alzheimer's
- *Best thing:* both going to support groups,
- Dave finds it so helpful to express his frustrations and guilt

Often feeling *angry* and *frustration* is normal

- Angry about your relationship with older person changing
- Frustrated – inability to meet all needs
- Balancing caring roles and your own personal lives

What to Do:

- Do something positive for yourself – ask for help
- Write a journal
- Exercise
- Talk with someone you trust



Depression



- Caregiver's 2x more likely to be diagnosed with Depression
- Caregiver's 3x more likely to be diagnosed with Depression when caring for a person with Dementia

What to Do:

- Caregivers- important to know *they are not alone*
- People who truly don't live it don't and can't grasp it
- Have support group
- Again *ask for help*

Isolation

- Feeling trapped, resentful
- Having no time for yourself
- Missing your routine

What to do:

- Join a support group
- Have a schedule to get out – go to the senior's centre, play bridge, have lunch with a friend
- Plan a caregiver – so you can be off-duty in your own home
- Plan a respite stay





“I have done the best that I can.”

Case Study

Mary and Joe been married for 40 yrs

- Joe started to get more forgetful, he started to repeat things over and over, bills not paid, everything was a mess
- Joe was not the man I married!
- I don't know how he is going to be to-day or tomorrow
- He says things that are so hurtful – it's a cruel disease
- It took Mary a long time to give herself permission to leave Joe under someone else's care – it was her job

A few Guiding Principles in Managing Dementia

- Behavior – NOT intentional but meaningful
- Keep goals in mind
- Is the behavior a problem?
- Unable to respond to logic
- Routine = comfort
- Success may be about accepting rather than trying to change things

Remember: *you are doing the best you can!*

Protect Yourself: Physical Impact of Caregiving

- Caring for someone can be very time consuming, exhausting and *also* rewarding
- “Physical care of people we love is one of the greatest gifts we give to them and to ourselves”
- Time may be spent helping to get in and out of bed, walk around home or helping to the bathroom
- Tall or short, strong or weaker people can help transfer a person

An Example of Transferring:

- Always tell the person what you are doing *before* transferring
- When lifting someone – have head, shoulders and hips form a straight line rather than twisting at the hips
- Have your feet about 1 foot apart for better stability
- The closer you are to the person you are lifting, the less strain on your muscles
- Try to do a few stretching exercises for your legs, back and stomach muscles before you do any lifting or assisting

Other Assistive Devices:

- **Transfer Boards** which goes under a person so the person can move from the bed to a chair
- **Transfer belts** goes around a person, the caregiver is able to grasp the belt and with a straight back and bent knees, can assist to lift the person up or down from bed to chair and the person is able to pivot
- **Lazy Boy chairs** that lift the person slowly to their feet

The Main Issue with Protecting Yourself Physically is to:

- Learn the *proper techniques*
- Try and get some *exercise* to keep your strength up
- Try and do *stretching exercises before you transfer*

A Few Words About Cost:

- Possible free services provided from CCAC
(Community Care Access Centres)
- Cost of private caregivers or agency staff
- Any benefits from group insurance plans



Government Tax Credits

- Caregiver Tax Credit (CTC)
 - are you providing caregiver assistance to your parents?
 - grocery shopping, meal prep, transportation, ADL (Activities of Daily Living)
 - Under same roof – parents limited income <\$14,000-\$17,000 – CTC
 - if you pay income tax – back file up 10 yrs recap up to \$5000. – save about \$600./yr
 - no medical approval required

Government Tax Credits

- Disability Tax Credit (DTC) www.cra.gc.ca
 - parents markedly restricted – mobility, sight, hearing, mental capacity, ADL
 - if limited income (not paying income tax)
- Credit can be transferred to adult children
 - degree of disability must be approved by Canada Revenue Agency before it can be used
 - completion and submission of the form completed by doctor
 - up to \$10,000/yr – if exceed \$10,001 – not allowed

9 Ways to Make *Caregiving Easier*

1. Don't suffer in silence
2. Don't feel guilty
3. Do join support groups
4. Don't forget to sleep
5. Do find time for yourself
6. Don't neglect your family
7. Learn your options
8. Relief from care giving duties – respite care
 - respite offers temporary substitute living arrangements or special care in the home for seniors or adults with disabilities
9. Don't overlook the benefits



*Thank you for the opportunity to speak
with you today*

*I would like to thank Mary Bart and all
her hard work and dedication*

*I am happy to answer any questions
after this presentation*



Remember: Protect Yourself

careconnect the **careguide**