



State of caregiving in Canada (2012 v 2018): Workload intensifies and well-being declines

RAPP bridges research, policies and practice to make a meaningful difference in the lives of older adults and their families

Caregiving demands growing

We compared Statistics Canada General Social Survey data from 2012 and 2018 to see how caregiving to family members, friends, and neighbours with long-term health problems, disabilities, or functional limitations has changed over time. Overall, the workload intensified, and caregiver well-being declined.



Caregivers provided more care:
26% provided 10 or more hours per week of care in 2012, increasing to 35% in 2018

More caregivers lived with their care receiver,
increasing from 27% in 2012 to 38% in 2018



Fewer had a choice in whether or not to provide care,
decreasing from 57% in 2012 to 42% in 2018

75%

of caregivers are stressed in 2018,
increasing from 66% in 2012

Caregiving taking a greater toll on well-being

Significantly more caregivers reported that caregiving negatively impacted their well-being in 2018.



More caregivers reported that their overall health suffered,
increasing from 19% in 2012 to 29% in 2018

More caregivers feel overwhelmed,
increasing from 35% in 2012 to 43% in 2018



More caregivers feel depressed because of caregiving,
increasing from 20% in 2012 to 26% in 2018



Caregiving taking a greater toll on relationships

Significantly more caregivers reported that caregiving negatively affected their relationships in 2018.



Fewer caregivers reported that caregiving strengthened their relationship with their care receiver, decreasing from 71% in 2012 to 44% in 2018

More caregivers reported strained relationships with other family and friends, increasing from 27% in 2012 to 33% in 2018



More caregivers felt lonely or isolated because of caregiving, increasing from 18% in 2012 to 24% in 2018

More support needed to sustain family caregivers

Among family caregivers who wanted more help, significantly more needed specific supports in 2018:



Financial support or government assistance, increasing from 44% in 2012 to 68% in 2018



Home Care or other supports, increasing from 29% in 2012 to 40% in 2018



Information and advice, increasing from 15% in 2012 to 39% in 2018



Help from health care professionals, increasing from 16% in 2012 to 37% in 2018

Methodology

Findings are based on a comparison of public use microdata files of Statistics Canada's 2012 and 2018 General Social Surveys (GSS) conducted with respondents aged 15+ living in the Canadian provinces who provided care to family and friends with a long-term health condition, physical or mental disability, or aging-related challenges during the 12 months before each GSS survey. Results are weighted to the population. All differences reported were statistically significant.