



**MAY 26, 2021**

**RECOGNIZING CAREGIVER STRESS to  
PREVENT ELDER ABUSE & BURNOUT**

# Disclosure

I have no relationship that could be perceived as placing me in a real or apparent conflict of interest in the context of this presentation.



# Caregivers Alberta

## Caregiving 101

*Presented by: Johnna Lowther  
Director, Programs & Services*





Harjot left work to care for his wife.



# Who are Caregivers?

A caregiver assists a family member or friend with challenges resulting from disability, illness, or aging.



# Ask your self?

- Do you support someone with an illness?
- Do you support someone with a disability?
- Do you support someone who is aging?
- Do you support someone with mental health challenges?
- By driving them to appointments?
- Bringing them groceries?

# Who Cares?

- **Parents** of children with a disability
- **Adult children** of seniors
- **Spouses** of someone with cancer
- **Friends, neighbours** and family



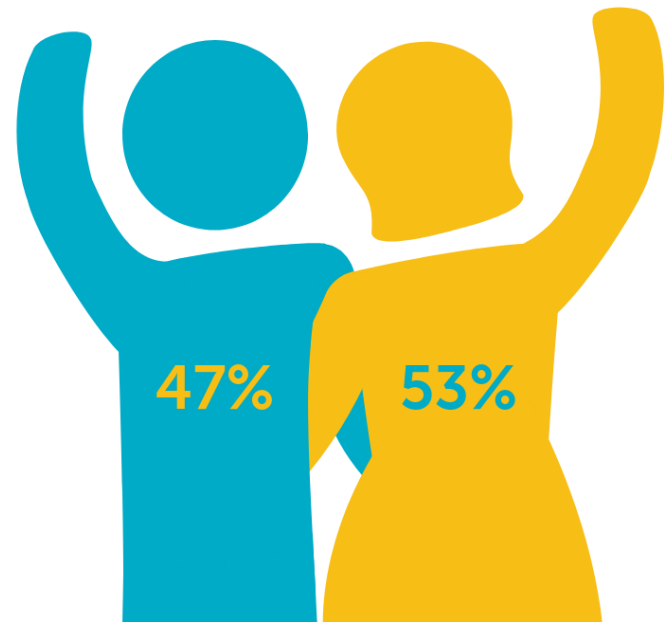
# Think about this!

- How does caregiving affect the caregiver?
- How does caregiving affect the care-recipient?



# Caregivers in Alberta

Almost as many  
men as women  
are caregivers



# Caregivers in Alberta

ALMOST  
1 MILLION

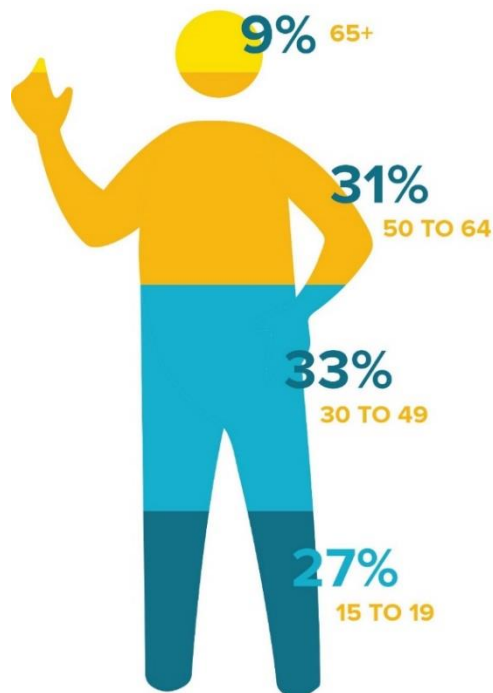


CAREGIVERS

Saving almost  
\$6 Billion/year

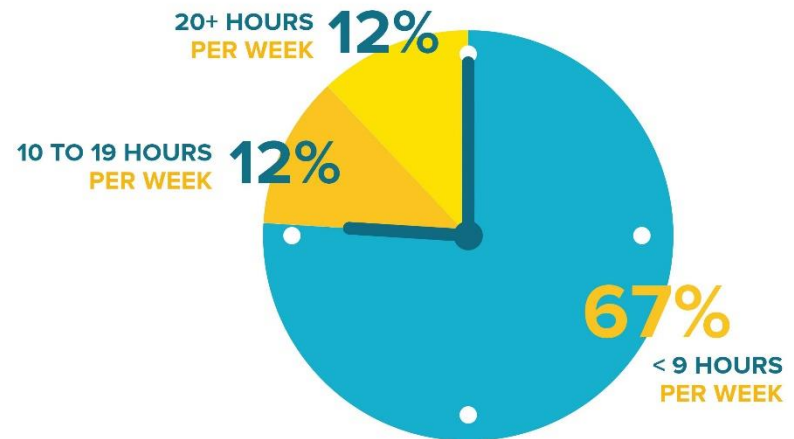
# Caregivers in Alberta

## CAREGIVERS IN ALBERTA ARE ALL AGES



## TIME SPENT

BY CAREGIVERS IN ALBERTA



**27% of Caregivers 15-19  
years old.**



# Caregivers are....

- Pillars of Strength
- Leaders of the family
- Often the glue that holds everything together

But who is taking care of the caregiver?

Who is giving you – the caregiver – the much needed love, care and support that YOU need?

***JUST the  
spouse***

***JUST the  
daughter***

***JUST a friend***

# Caregiver Burnout



# Caregiver burnout is a result of:

- Having difficulty asking for help
- High expectations of yourself and others
- A strong and unrealistic dedication to making things ideal for the person you are caring for
- Difficulty saying "no"
- Consistently sacrificing yourself and your needs for the benefit of others
- Feeling as though you are the only person capable of providing care



# Look for Signs of Burnout

1. Lacking energy
2. Frequently sick
3. Always exhausted
4. Neglecting personal needs
5. Life dominated by caregiving
6. Difficulty relaxing when help is available
7. Acting impatient or irritable
8. Feeling overwhelmed, helpless and hopeless

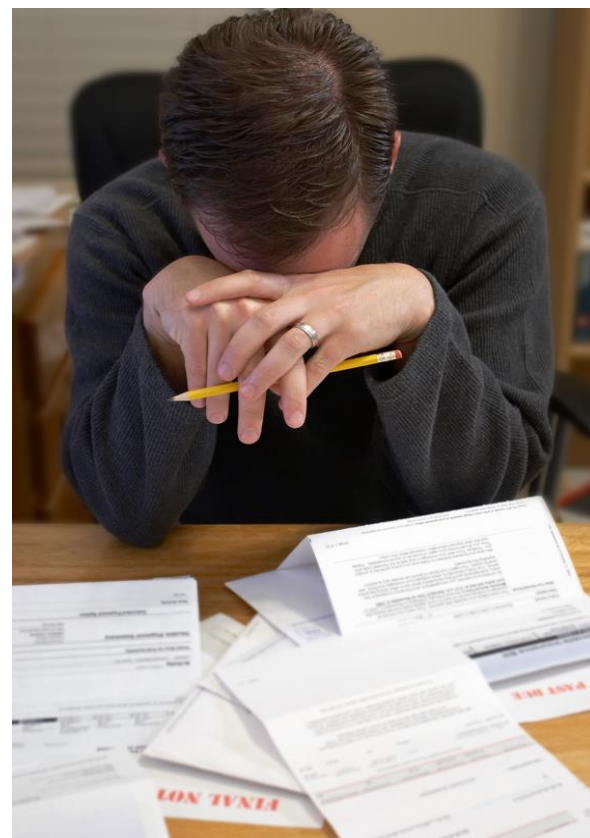
# Mental Health Impact

- Higher Risk of Depression, Anxiety & Stress
- 31% feel overwhelmed, short-tempered or irritable



# Financial Impact

- Lost Wages or job (41% miss days of work)
- Out of Pocket Expenses (61% incur extra bills)
- 43% need financial support or government assistance



# Physical Challenges

## 1 in 2 caregiver report fatigue

- Lost Sleep
- Extra Chores
- Heavy Lifting
- Stress Related Illnesses
- Compromised Immune System



# System Challenges

- Difficulty finding and accessing services
- 1 in 3 report needing information and advice from health care professionals



# Difficult Relationships

- 1 in 2 spend less time with their partner or on social activities or hobbies
- 1 in 4 feel strained relationship with family or friends
- 1 in 6 feel lonely or isolated



# Negative Emotions

- Guilt
- Anger
- Grief/Sadness
- Doubt/Worry
- Isolation



# What are the positives?

- 74% caregivers say caregiving has strengthened their relationship
  - Does reduce their time with their partner, or social activities or hobbies
- Family caregivers are the experts in care.
  - Often feel unheard in healthcare settings
- And how do we help focus on these?





# How We Help

## Mission

To empower caregivers and promote their well-being

## Vision

An Alberta where caregivers are valued, respected and supported

# Our Programs



**Support Line** listens and offers help through information, referrals, navigating the healthcare system, and resources specific to your needs.

**Caregiver Coach** works with caregivers one-one-one to share strategies and tools for managing stress as a caregiver.

**Education Sessions** explore topics relevant to caregivers

**Caregiver Support Community** aims to empower caregivers well-being by providing a supportive group to connect with others

**COMPASS** helps caregivers “take care of themselves”

# Caregiver Coach



The Caregiver Coach is someone you can talk to one-on-one.

They will be a listening ear, help you navigate the system, find resources and teach you how to advocate for yourself.

## How to Reach Them

**By phone:** 780-453-5088 or 1-877-453-5088 (toll-free)

**Email:** [support@caregiversalberta.ca](mailto:support@caregiversalberta.ca)

# Caregiver Support Community

- The Caregiver Support Community is a peer support program that aims to empower caregivers well-being by providing a supportive group where they can connect with other caregivers, have open conversations about the ups and downs of caregiving, and learn about tools and strategies for managing that role.
- **Weekly meetings:** Mondays @ 10AM, Tuesdays @ 6PM and Thursdays @ 1PM.

# Education Sessions

- Education Sessions provide an opportunity to explore caregiver topics, connect with other caregivers, and get to know Caregivers Alberta.
- Guest speakers are often featured. Topics have included: Conflict, Communication, Transitions in care, Managing Stress, and Holistic Wellness
- Multiple virtual sessions are offered on a monthly basis

# COMPASS for the Caregiver

COMPASS helps caregivers balance their own well-being with the challenges of caregiving.

It is a supportive 4-week workshop facilitated by someone who **understands** how difficult caregiving can be.

It discusses dealing with guilt and grief, managing stress, improving communication, navigating the system and planning for the journey ahead.

*With COMPASS,  
**I felt heard** and  
understood.*

*I've learned that I  
**have choices** and  
can say NO without  
feeling guilty.*

*Having someone  
help was the  
difference between  
coping and crashing*

*I struggled for a  
long time, **all  
alone**, with no  
one to turn to.*



# What can YOU do for caregivers?

- Acknowledge them
- Address their experience
- Help them recognize stress
- Watch for signs of burnout
- Provide referrals
- Work with caregivers
- Encourage to find things that bring them joy

# Draw Around Your Foot In Your Mind



# How Can You Help Your Caregivers?

Referral

<https://bit.ly/CaregiversReferral>



# Questions?





# Caregivers

Alberta | CARING FOR  
CAREGIVERS

**Find us at:**

[www.caregiversalberta.ca](http://www.caregiversalberta.ca)

780.453.5088

1.877.453.5088 (toll-free)



[@caregiversab](#)

Thank you for participating & sharing your time and expertise!

**SEE YOU ON CORE!**



***Remember to update your information on 211***

**Contact us at**

***[healthyaging@calgaryunitedway.org](mailto:healthyaging@calgaryunitedway.org)***