

# The Stages of Caregiving

No one is born a caregiver. Caregiving is a role that each person learns to play. It is a transition and it takes time. Your journey as a caregiver can be complicated and long, but if you educate yourself on your journey, you can prepare yourself for what comes next and there is a chance that you can make the process shorter and less difficult.

The Stages of Caregiving are:

- Engaging
- Negotiation
- Settling

## Tips:

1. Become a self-advocate
2. Consider your limitations and say NO to caregiving responsibilities you cannot handle alone
3. Develop a network of support for yourself and the patient
4. Educate yourself and other caregivers



# About us

We are a caregiver-led group.

We are family caregivers like you. We share our experiences with you. You share it with other caregivers.

We learn and educate you so you can learn and educate other caregivers.

We are volunteers.

Join us and share your story and insight with us and other family caregivers.

## Contact us at:

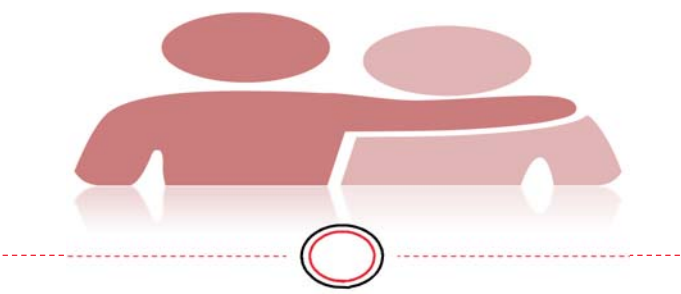
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## Your Space:



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

# Family Caregivers Voice



## Who is a family caregiver?

A caregiver is a family member or friend who, while unpaid, provides emotional, physical, spiritual or financial assistance to an individual who is unable to take care of all or parts of their life.

Educate yourself on your journey!

**8.1 million Canadians** aged 15 years and older provided care to a chronically ill, disabled, or aging family member or friend in 2012. .



## STAGE 1: ENGAGING

### Phase 1: New Normal

You need to try to accept your new role. You need to be willing to prioritize patients' needs. So you need to accept that the patient come firsts, and it will stay this way for some time. You need to be willing to redefine your role and relationship with the patient.

### Phase 2: Adjustment

It is your honeymoon time: You feel emotionally very close to the patient and you say yes to all caregiving responsibilities. This can be translated into feelings of guilt and burden later in the journey as you, like any other human being, have limitations. What you tend to do is to gather as much information as you can on the patient's situation and develop caregiving skills.

#### *Tip:*

You should develop a temporary and permanent support network for yourself and your loved one, the patient.

#### *Add your tips:*

## STAGE 2: NEGOTIATING

You will get into negotiation with other family members/friends and/or the patient for them to take on more responsibilities. You need to be willing to let go of some of your responsibilities and your control.

This can be hard for both you and the patient and might lead to conflicts in your relationship with the patient or your family. This may seem selfish and as a result you may feel guilty, but you are on the right track. What you tend to do is get help from family or friends.

You should seek out other family caregivers; there are things you cannot share with the patient and family, but another caregiver can provide you with a safe place to share.

#### *Tips:*

1. Learn self-advocacy
2. Seek professional help if you feel exhausted, guilty, frustrated, isolated, or have sleep and weight issues. Thoughts of self-harm to oneself or others should be shared with your family doctor or support networks.
3. You should speak with your family doctor or social worker.
4. Remember that caregiver stress is not JUST stress.

#### *Add your tips:*

## STAGE 3: SETTLING

It is time to find balance between your different roles. By the time you reach this stage you have developed a fixed pattern when it comes to your caregiving responsibilities. This stage can become very complex and hard to handle as it is mostly about you and only you. It is a spiritual journey as you need to accept your new life and live it.

By the time you reach this stage, you may feel both physically and emotionally exhausted, so you might lose your balance very easily.

DO NOT WORRY— a strong support network will help you to find your balance soon and fast.

#### *Important things to know:*

1. Your journey is not a linear process; it is full of ups and downs.
2. The definition of stages, the duration of each stage and the length of the entire process depends largely on the patient's diagnosis, stages of the diagnosis, patient personality, caregiver personality, characteristics of patient and caregiver relationship, their family dynamic, their socio-economic status, and the amount of support a caregiver would receive during the journey.

#### *What did you learn?*