



Care for the caregiver

By **Brian Bethell**, IAMAW regional
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An increasing number of Canadians face the responsibility of being caregivers for their aging parents, relatives or friends. It's estimated that 1.7 million Canadians provide at least some informal care to senior citizens with a long-term disability or other physical limitations, and those numbers are expected to grow in the coming decade.

Informal caregivers include family members, friends and neighbours who may provide practical assistance with daily activities and the personal care of seniors. Caregivers play a vital role in the health care system by providing emotional support and financial help, as well as mediating with professional organizations and service providers.

In short, their contributions are substantial and vital in our society.

Yet when you become a caregiver to senior citizens, your life can change considerably. According to research, the average time spent caring for an aging parent, relative or friend length of care is about eight years. The emotional and financial strain can be considerable.

Close to one-third of Canadian caregivers report their sleeping patterns have been negatively impacted over a long-term period. A substantial number also report overall health issues and financial strain associated with the "sandwich generation", many of whom are providing elderly care while still raising their own children.

If you are a caregiver, the statistics may provide comfort in knowing that you're not alone. It's important to remember to take a lot of breaks and time for yourself, and to gather a support network around you. Exercise regularly, get out with friends – whatever it takes to create some kind of balance in your life.

Communicate openly with those close to you and establish a plan based on shared responsibility. Get some solid advice from medical professionals on the

best approach to caring for your parents, relatives, or friends.

Above all, remember that your coordinators are here to provide support or resources, particularly if these personal matters are impacting you or the well-being of those close to you. Please don't hesitate to give us a call.

(Information source: United Way)



Need help?

Your EAP coordinators are here to assist you with any issues that may be impacting you or the well-being of those close to you. Give us a call.

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