

Exploring the



Behaviours in Dementia Toolkit

Practical & Evidence Informed

5 Reasons self-care is essential for care partners

Caring for someone with dementia can be rewarding. Yet most care partners will experience stress and distress along the way.

Conflicting feelings of isolation, grief, compassion, joy and overwhelm are common. A caring role can increase risk for depression and chronic illness, and lead to emotional and physical exhaustion. It is very important for care partners to protect their own mental and physical health.

Taking care of yourself is one of the most important things you can do for the person you are caring for.



Regular breaks help maintain your physical and mental health.

If you get worn down, caring will become more difficult. Signs you may be experiencing distress include fatigue, low energy, lack of interest, interrupted sleep and apathy, or a loss of interest in life. **Even a short period of rest and relief can enable you to continue to provide good care.**

Caring for yourself will directly improve quality of life for the person you are caring for too.

Care partner distress, and/or poor interactions between the person with dementia and the care partner can increase behaviours in dementia. **You bring more compassion, humor and energy into the caring relationship as a healthy care partner.**



The needs of people living with dementia increase over time, meaning you will need more time and energy.

Care partners take on new and multiple roles as those living with dementia experience loss and changes in abilities. **Taking action to restore and build your physical and mental strength will increase your capacity to manage the future.**

Reducing personal stress will enable you to be a care partner for much longer.

The cumulative stress of a caring role can manifest in various ways, affecting both your physical and mental health. **Finding support to understand the attitudes, beliefs and misconceptions that form barriers to self-care can prevent burnout,** which is the inability to continue as a care partner.



Maintaining family and social connections will help you feel less alone.

It's easy to feel isolated when your time is consumed by care. **Connection with supportive family and friends, or other care partners, may offer new energy and strategies for caregiving based on shared experiences.**



8 Million

Canadians identify as a care partner.

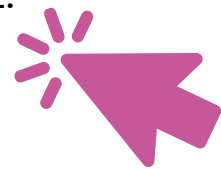
You are not alone. The important role of care partners is increasingly recognized and supported across Canada. One-on-one emotional support, peer support groups, health care system navigation and free educational resources are available for care partners.

With support, people with dementia can lead active and fulfilling lives for many years after their diagnosis. **Having a physically and emotionally healthy care partner is vital to manage dementia and live well with dementia.**

Self-Care Resources

Click on the links below to explore examples of self-care videos, tips and guides from the Toolkit.

- **Caregivers: Self-Care Helps You Cope**
Baycrest
- **10 Tips to Avoid Caregiver Burnout**
Care Channel
- **Practical Insights for Busy Caregivers: Staying Happy**
Caregiver Exchange
- **Self-Care Tips at Home in Stressful Times**
Fountain of Health
- **Caregiver Self-Care Tool**
National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly (NICE)
- **Caring for Yourself and Your Loved One While Living with Dementia**
Native Women's Association of Canada
- **Recognizing and Managing Caregiver Stress**
Sage Link
- **Help for Care Partners of People with Dementia**
Alzheimer's Disease International



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CCSMH
Canadian Coalition for
Seniors' Mental Health

Free online library for health care providers, care partners & families supporting people experiencing behaviours in dementia.

www.BehavioursInDementia.ca

