

# WHERE TO BEGIN

## *An Introductory Planning Guide for Caregivers*

As an unpaid caregiver you give essential care to a family member or friend. You may assist someone, either at home or in a care facility, who has a physical or mental health condition, is chronically ill, frail, or is of advanced age.

You are not alone: One in three Nova Scotians is a caregiver. Caregivers save the Canadian healthcare system more than \$31 billion a year.

The aim of this guide is to assist you and your care recipient to identify your needs as you begin the caregiving journey, or as the caregiving journey changes. The Partners In Care Checklist on the following pages will help you organize his or her care and your caregiving responsibilities, now and in the future.

This guide is also for **you**, the caregiver. It is very important that you look after your own physical and emotional well-being. We encourage you to:

- ❖ **Understand** that you are an essential partner in care alongside healthcare providers.
- ❖ **Recognize** the value of the care you give.
- ❖ **Accept** that your role may be physically and emotionally challenging, but you may find unexpected rewards along the way.
- ❖ **Connect** with other caregivers in your community to reduce isolation, to build courage and confidence, to laugh with, and to draw strength from.
- ❖ **Be proactive.** A written plan will help you decide 'where to begin' your caregiving journey. Caregivers Nova Scotia is here to help you.

If you have any questions about this Guide or would like more information about our services, support groups or educational workshops, please contact us:

902.421.7390 | Toll-free: 1.877.488.7390 | [Info@CaregiversNS.org](mailto:Info@CaregiversNS.org)

# Caregiver Check-In

Few of us have training as a caregiver yet we demand high standards from ourselves as we carry out new tasks and responsibilities. Often, the result is self-doubt, negative self-talk and increasing levels of stress. We deserve good health for own enjoyment, AND it enables us to provide better care to our care recipient.

Take some time to think about the questions below.

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
❖ Do I feel confident about being/becoming a caregiver?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
❖ Have I involved family members or friends in my loved one's care?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
❖ Am I able to balance caregiving with other responsibilities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
❖ Am I comfortable asking for or accepting help from others?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
❖ Do I understand my care recipient's medical condition?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
❖ Do I have the information and skills I need for:		
◆ Safe lifting, transferring, or bathing?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
◆ Managing and giving medications?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
◆ Programs and services that can help us?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
◆ Financial and legal aspects of caregiving?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
❖ Have I thought about ways to manage stress?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
❖ Do I take care of my own health by getting regular check-ups, eating well, and exercising?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
❖ Do I take time out for myself to do the things I enjoy?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you have answered "no" to any of these questions, please call Caregivers Nova Scotia at 1.877.488.7390. Our FREE programs and services can help.

Caregiving situations change. If you are well prepared and answered "yes" to many questions above please remember to check in with yourself by reviewing this question list from time to time.

You don't have to do this alone.

# Partners In Care Checklist

We often have full lives when caregiving comes along, so fitting in new responsibilities may be a challenge. There are never enough hours in the day so something's got to give! Now is the time to set new priorities, think about boundaries, and get organized.

The checklist below is designed to help you and your care recipient begin to organize his or her care, and decide who can assist you. Indicate which of the activities on the left can be done by the care recipient, or which require the caregiver's assistance or that of a healthcare provider or someone else, by marking the appropriate bubble. There is space for your own notes on the right.

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	Care Recipient	Caregiver	Healthcare Provider or Other	<u>Additional Information</u>
<b>Personal Care</b>				
Bathing/hair care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	-----
Dressing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	-----
Foot care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	-----
Mouth care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	-----
Toileting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	-----
Obtain personal supplies for incontinence/ostomy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	-----
<b>Nutrition</b>				
Planning a special diet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	-----
Grocery shopping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	-----
Meal preparation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	-----
Operate kitchen appliances safely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	-----
Doing the dishes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	-----
Safe food handling & storage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	-----

**Health Needs**

Arrange and attend medical appointments

Care Recipient	Caregiver	Healthcare Provider or Other
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Additional Information

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Organize and take medications

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Document medications / keep medication record

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Obtain referrals to specialist clinics

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Home oxygen

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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**Inside & Outside the Home**

Changing the bed

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Cleaning the bathroom

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Laundry/ironing

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Vacuuming and dusting

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Washing floors and windows

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Cutting grass

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Shovelling snow

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Taking out the garbage

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Organize/carry out household repairs and maintenance

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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**Financial Matters**

Paying bills

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Banking

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Preparing income taxes

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Budgeting

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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**Social and Emotional**

CR = Care Recipient

CR is socially active or has visitors often

Yes  No

CR is content

Yes  No

CR has someone to talk to other than you

Yes  No

**Mobility & Ability Accommodation**

CR drives own car

Yes  No

CR accesses regular buses or specialized transit

Yes  No

CR accesses taxis

Yes  No

CR uses/needs a cane, walker or mobility scooter

Yes  No

CR manages stairs

Yes  No

CR needs grab bars, bath chair or raised toilet seat

Yes  No

CR needs home reorganized or renovated for wheelchair use

Yes  No

**Living at Home Safely**

CR needs frequent contact or supervision

Yes  No

CR is at risk for falls

Yes  No

CR needs more interior and exterior lighting

Yes  No

CR needs amplified or large numbered phone

Yes  No

CR needs contrasting paint on door frames and stairs

Yes  No

CR needs doorbells, fire alarms, or smoke detectors with flashing lights

Yes  No

Additional Information

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## Living at Home Safely

CR = Care Recipient

CR is at risk of wandering or getting lost

Yes  No

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CR needs security devices, locks & alarms

Yes  No

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CR needs an emergency or Personal Response service for 24/7 medical help

Yes  No

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CR needs an emergency contact list

Yes  No

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## Legal Matters

Is there an up-to-date Will?

Yes  No

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Has an Enduring Power of Attorney been appointed?

Yes  No

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Has a Substitute Decision-Maker been appointed?

Yes  No

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Has a Personal Care Directive been completed?

Yes  No

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## Caregivers Nova Scotia offers **FREE** programs and services

**Phone & Email Support** – Need to talk about your caregiving challenges with someone who is objective, non-judgmental, and will honour your privacy? Our caregiver support lines are open Monday through Friday from 9:00am – 4:30pm. All of our staff are, or have been, unpaid caregivers.

**Peer Support Groups** – We offer confidential caregiver support groups in 20 locations throughout Nova Scotia. Our groups focus on you, the caregiver, and how you are coping with your caregiving role. We know that caregivers understand each other when no one else can.

**Educational Workshops** – We provide free workshops on a variety of topics.

- Caregiver Stress Management
- Safe Medicines for Seniors & Caregivers
- Brushing Up on Mouth Care
- Advance Care Planning for Seniors & Caregivers: Getting Started

**Resources** – We have developed a number of resources for caregivers.

- The Caregiver Handbook is 94 pages of resources, tools and information including useful charts, lists, templates and schedules to help caregivers and care recipients.
- Our website **www.CaregiversNS.org** has been praised by many as being easy to use with quick access to many items.

Our Caregiver Support Coordinators cover all of Nova Scotia.  
Call our toll-free line at **1.877.488.7390** and  
let us help you with your caregiving journey.