

The Beacon

Fall/Winter 2017

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Executive Director's Update

It's been a busy six months since our last newsletter. Caregiver Awareness Month in May (#CGAware2017) was hugely successful. Our website and social media received record visits. Many caregivers shared their stories of challenges and moments of joy.

With the assistance of two Canada Summer Jobs students, we were able to create a YouTube video series. More details can be found on page 7.

In May the Ontario Minister of Health and Long Term Care, Dr. Eric Hoskins, announced the formation of a province-wide caregiving organization. I am pleased to announce that "Caregivers Ontario" will be modelled after Caregivers Nova Scotia. This will be the fourth provincial caregiving organization in Canada.

In collaboration with the Dalhousie Faculty of Dentistry, we have received funding from the Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation to update and deliver the *Brushing Up on Mouth Care* workshop. I thank our community partners who participated in our stakeholder meeting.

We also have some exciting updates coming to our website. Stay tuned!

On behalf of the CNS Staff and Board of Directors I wish you and yours the warmest wishes for the holiday season.

Angus Campbell, Executive Director



Thank you to the Department of
Health & Wellness – Continuing Care Branch
for their ongoing support



for friends and family giving care

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Positivity

By Maggie Roach-Ganaway, Support Coordinator, Cape Breton Region

"Each morning when I open my eyes I say to myself: I, not events, have the power to make me happy or unhappy today. I can choose which it shall be. Yesterday is dead; tomorrow hasn't arrived yet. I have just one day, today, and I'm going to be happy in it." ~ Groucho Marx

I can't say enough about how true this quote is: we all have the ability to lead a happy life. It may be harder for some than for others, but it's still possible.

There are several things we can do to become more positive people and, with a little persistence, we can make ourselves happier and emotionally healthier. Changing your inner dialogue—the silent talks, both negative and positive, we have almost constantly with ourselves—may be the most challenging, as that record has been playing for a long time, but it is also the most likely to produce beneficial change. As author Remez Sasson noted, such inner dialogues "have a snowball effect. The more you conduct them, the more you become chained to them. Negative inner dialogues bring negative results, and positive inner dialogues bring positive results." Setting goals and repeating positive affirmations such as "I can" or "I am able" may help to change the tune of your life.

Visualizing how you would like your life to be has also proven to help you achieve your goals. It gives you something to aim for. Visualizing where or how you would like your life to be is important in achieving it.

Reading inspiring or motivating material is another way to reach a more positive outlook on life. As Groucho Marx expressed it, only you have the ability to choose to be happy, but maybe by reading daily quotes, you will be able to affirm happiness as a way of life.

Socializing with other positive people is another important step. It really does rub off on you when you are around people with a positive outlook. You begin to think that if they can be happy, so can you.

Not procrastinating and finishing what you start will also give you a sense of accomplishment and positive reinforcement for a job well done.

Smiling more has also been proven both to generate more positive emotions and to reduce stress in mind and body. So the more you smile, the better you will feel. Even if you feel you have nothing to smile about, it is important to tell yourself to smile more often.

And one last important thing to remember is never give up trying to be more positive and happy. When life around you seems like it is falling apart and your stress level is on high, try to remember the good times of your life, as this may get you through a tough time.

I will leave the last word to Oprah, as I think she has it right: *"The greatest discovery of all time is that a person can change their future by merely changing their attitude."* ~ Oprah Winfrey



If you would like to receive a colour copy of our newsletter by email, please subscribe by going to our website at www.CaregiversNS.org and sign up at the bottom of any page.



Oh, The Weather Outside is Frightful – 5 Winter Survival Tips

By Jennifer Briand, Support Coordinator, Western Region

When the thermometer dips, as Maritimers we're reminded why we are "such a hardy lot". Let's consider the challenges winter creates for caregivers and their loved ones.

Keep Warm - Cold damp temperatures can lead to frostbite. To ensure the body's temperature doesn't dip too low when you're outside, dress in layers, choosing warm clothing and insulated boots. When it's really cold, wear a scarf over your mouth to protect your mouth and lungs. If it's damp, wear water resistant outer layers including mittens (which are better than gloves for cold).

It's also important to monitor inside temperatures. Those who are ill or have poor circulation often have problems regulating their body temperature. Layering clothing and using heating pads and electric blankets can all help you stay warm, but it's important the heating devices are not too hot and that they have an automatic shut off switch. Conserve heat in your house by keeping windows and doors closed in rooms you're not using. It can also help increase the temperature during bath time.

Keep Safe - Be cautious when going outside, especially when there's snow and ice. Wear boots with good traction, ideally with ice grips that make walking substantially safer. Remember to take off these boots when coming inside to avoid slipping on melted snow. If you are using a walker, make sure it is also dry before you try to use it inside. Some people have an outside and an inside walker to avoid build up of ice, snow, or salt on the walker.

Protect and Moisturize Your Skin - Use good moisturizers as skin can become dry during our long cold winters. Always moisturize exposed skin before going outside. Physicians may recommend a basic moisturizer for cold weather such as Eucerin, which also has a line specifically for diabetics. O'Keefes Working Hands is highly recommended by many northerners; they also have a "hard working skin care" for your feet. It's also important to drink lots of liquids. Hydration can help with poor circulation, dry skin, and other health conditions.

Eat Healthy - There is a reason our Maritime cookbooks are filled with recipes for hardy stews, soups, and steaming beverages. These kinds of food help keep us warm, while providing needed nutrients. Vegetables and fruits from the fall harvest will give us the vitamins and nutrients we need during winter months. Nothing says morning like a hot bowl of porridge with added blueberries from a local farm.

Be Happy - During the holidays our homes are filled with bright lights inside and out. Historically, it has been a Maritime custom to 'keep the light burning' throughout the winter. We now know that some people are affected by lack of light as the days become shorter and darker, and many people are using solar and other light sources to keep the light around all winter. You can also purchase light therapy machines to help with depression over the winter.

During the winter, enjoy both inside and outside activities and hobbies. Keep warm, keep the house well lit, enjoy some background music and a warm cup of nog/tea, and you will survive our Maritime winter!

Acceptance

By Lynn Butler, Support Coordinator, Central Region

Acceptance is a person's recognition of and assent to the reality of an often negative or uncomfortable situation, without attempting to change or protest it. How often as caregivers are we able to simply accept the situation in which we find ourselves, without fighting or trying to change it?

As caregivers there are so many things we'd like to do, but sometimes it proves impossible. We cannot make a person healthy again or take away cancer, Parkinson's, memory loss, MS, heart disease, pain, or anxiety. Much as we may want to, we often cannot make other family members offer to help us in our caregiving or see that they are missing out on opportunities to make memories, heal old wounds, or simply help out during a stressful time. It is sometimes impossible to make those we care for listen to good advice, eat a nutritious diet to manage their diabetes, exercise to help with mobility, move to a more suitable residence, accept home care support, or get their affairs in order.

So, how can we change in order to accept these things that prove to be beyond our control? How can we continue giving care to loved ones who argue or resist at every step along the way? How do we forgive family who will not see what is happening or who just walk away because they cannot deal with the sadness or frustration of a situation?

The first thing we must do is to accept the situation for what it is, right now, at this exact moment. It is what it is and there is no use in

denying, blaming, or being angry. These emotions only prolong our frustration and delay our healing. As soon as you are able to recognize and accept the facts as they are, things will fall into place.

This does not mean it will suddenly or magically get easier or better. What it will mean is that you get to a place where you can stop arguing with your loved one, family, or friends because you have made the conscious decision to allow what is happening to happen.

You might think this is giving in or losing control, but in actuality you will gain control because, instead of fighting everything and

“You must make a choice to take a chance or your life will never change.”

Zig Ziglar, author and motivational speaker

everyone, you can now manage your situation and let go of those things you simply cannot control and manage more effectively those things over which you do

have some amount of control. This can bring about real peace of mind.

Here is where the 3 C's of life—Choices, Chances, and Changes—come in. “You must make a choice to take a chance or your life will never change.” Truer words were never spoken.

Once you make the decision to accept your situation, to be there to walk alongside your loved one, communicating with them, showing your love and affection and helping as much as possible to make each day the best it can be, you will feel liberated. It is said that all change begins with acceptance.

Soup's On!

By Cindie Smith, Support Coordinator, Northern & Eastern Mainland

Many years ago Peter Gzowski declared on CBC's *Morningside* that November is soup month in Canada. It may be more fitting that soup have its own season – November through March – for all those damp and chilly or downright cold days when you just need a cup of comfort. Here are two recipes that might hit the spot.



Beef Barley Soup (yield 10 cups)

Brown in 2 tbsp. olive oil
1 lb. cubed stewing beef; set aside

After the beef is browned and removed from the pan, add ¼ cup of water and deglaze the pan, reserving liquid and brown bits.

Sauté in 2 tbsp. olive oil
½ cup diced celery
1 cup diced sweet onion
3 cloves minced garlic

Add
8 cups beef broth
1½ cups chopped potatoes
¾ cup chopped carrots
½ cup pearl barley
1 tsp. oregano
1 bay leaf
a pinch of crushed red peppers
1 envelope Knorr veggie soup mix
½ cup (or more) red wine

Add in the beef and deglazing liquid and simmer for about 30 minutes. Enjoy!

Creamy Tomato Soup (yield 26 cups)

Sauté in 4 tbsp. butter and 4 tbsp. olive oil
½ cup chopped onion
¾ cup chopped celery
4 cloves minced garlic
2 shredded carrots

After sautéing 8 minutes, add
¼ cup flour; cook another 3 minutes

Add
4 large cans stewed tomatoes
(San Marzano tomatoes are best)
1 small can tomato paste
½ cup of wine (or more)
2 tbsp. maple syrup
8 cups chicken or veggie broth
1/8 tsp. ground cloves
Salt and pepper to taste

Simmer 30 minutes. Puree in a food processor when cooled a bit.

Before serving, stir in
½ cup milk and
½ cup cream



Did you know Caregivers Nova Scotia has a telephone-based support group?

Caregiver TeleGroup Support

is for caregivers who cannot step away from their situation or who are not comfortable in an in-person group setting. We meet on the first and third Tuesdays of each month from 1:30 – 3:30 and it is accessed by dialing a toll-free number. Please contact our office for further details.

Gratitude

By Brenda Sangster, Support Coordinator, Central Region

Winter is upon us. Hopefully, we have enjoyed Thanksgiving with our families and are looking forward to Christmas.

For me, it is the time of year where I think about what I am grateful for. While I am thinking about this, I can't help but reflect on what has been happening around the world—earthquakes, hurricanes, and mass shootings.

Most importantly, I am thankful that I am a caregiver to my mother, Catherine. She has lived a long life; now I have the privilege of being her caregiver.

My mother has loved me unconditionally. She has been there for me when I was sick, gave advice when I needed it, and showered me with gifts over the years. We have enjoyed our trips to Florida, the Dominican Republic, and travels around Nova Scotia. A special memory I have is sitting on the steps at our cottage with her, watching the lightning dancing over the hill as she talked about her childhood. I am so grateful for those memories! I cherish the moments I have with her now, rather than looking at how long the road might be ahead of me.

Staying positive and thankful doesn't always come easy. We have to practice being thankful for many things in our lives, looking at the bigger picture of all of our blessings. It is sometimes hard to feel grateful, and I know personally that I sometimes take things for granted. But I *am* thankful that we have a bed to sleep in, are able to take a warm shower, and that we have a roof over heads and food on our table.

Living with someone who has some type of health condition—whether it is cancer, dementia, or Parkinson's disease—is difficult on a caregiver. And if you can't let go of painful feelings, that's okay; it is very common for caregivers to experience a sense of loss for the way things used to be.

However, when it seems that we cannot cope any longer with the tasks of caregiving and are feeling burnt out, it does help to think about the things for which we can be thankful as a caregiver. Keep in mind that, over time, the person you have looked after has taught you to be more patient, empathetic, resourceful, and forgiving.

If you are to take a moment to reflect, what are you grateful for?

Notice of Extraordinary General Meeting

Purpose: To remove clause #53 Dissolution from the By-Laws as it already exists in the Memorandum of Association.

Wednesday, January 3rd, 2018 at 10:00 am
(snow date January 4th)

CNS office, 3433 Dutch Village Rd., Halifax

Gratitude

by Melody Beattie - goodtherapy.org

Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life.

It turns what we have
into enough, and more.

It turns denial into acceptance,
chaos into order,
confusion into clarity.

It can turn a meal into a feast,
a house into a home,
a stranger into a friend.

Gratitude makes sense of our past,
brings peace for today and
creates a vision tomorrow.

Our New Video Series

By Carlye Stein, Research and Operations Coordinator

Announcing the Caregivers Nova Scotia Video Series

We've done it. We're on video. But before I tell you how to watch, a little background first.

We have provided family and friend caregivers with several different ways to find out about our programs and services: our website, by attending one of our Programs and Services presentations or educational workshops, via referral, by calling us directly, social media, or, of course, this newsletter. However, we wanted to provide caregivers and community partners another, more dynamic, and highly shareable format in which to learn about our free programming and how we help.

Enter Evan Peacock and Eddie Briggs--our two Canada Summer Jobs students whose creative and technical expertise brought our video series to life. The eight short episodes align with our services, e.g. Information and Healthcare Navigation, Resources, Support, and Education. They also include first voice accounts from caregivers about their experiences.

Our staff contributed to the content of the videos as well. When you listen, you'll hear some familiar voices and see some familiar faces.

Please watch and share at youtube.com/caregiversnovascotia. You can also play the videos directly from our [website](#). Thank you!



***Merry Christmas Happy Chanukah
Happy Solstice Joyous Kwanzaa***

***Wishing peace to you and yours
for the Holiday Season.***

The Federal government has just introduced the *Family Caregivers for Children* benefit (formerly the *Parents of Critically Ill Children* benefit) making the funding available to any family member, not just a parent. As well, a new benefit, *Family Caregivers for Adults*, is being introduced December 4th. The following three examples from the Canada.ca website illustrate how this new fund can be used.

Employment Insurance caregiving benefits

FOR CRITICALLY ILL OR INJURED FAMILY MEMBERS

Family Caregiver benefit for CHILDREN*
Formerly known as the Parents of Critically Ill Children benefit
Maximum of 35 weeks

Family Caregiver benefit for ADULTS*
Maximum of 15 weeks

Compassionate Care benefits*
Maximum of 26 weeks

FOR FAMILY MEMBERS WHO ARE FACING SIGNIFICANT RISK OF DEATH

MAY BE COMBINED WITH

* May be shared among any eligible family members.

Example 1 - Emilio has a stroke.

He lives alone and needs care during his recovery. Emilio’s medical doctor completes the medical certificate stating that he is critically ill and requires the care or support of a family member. Emilio’s son Hector takes time off work to care for his father and ensure he gets to his medical appointments.

Hector is eligible for EI and earns \$30,000 per year. He takes 16 weeks off work to care for his father. After the one-week waiting period, Hector can receive the Family Caregiver Benefit for Adults for up to 15 weeks. He will receive \$317 per week for a total of \$4,755.

Example 2- Julie is in a car accident and suffers life-threatening injuries. She undergoes surgery and is admitted to the intensive care unit of the hospital. Julie’s medical doctor completes the medical certificate stating that she is critically ill and requires the care or support of a family member. Doctors have told her family that they expect her to recover within four months. Julie’s husband Patrick and her sister Sylvie plan to take time off work to support her while she is in the hospital and when she recovers at home. Patrick and Sylvie are both eligible for EI and can share the 15-week Family Caregiver Benefit for Adults.

Patrick earns \$50,000 per year and takes 4 weeks off work immediately after the accident. After the one-week waiting period, Patrick receives the Family Caregiver Benefit for Adults of \$529 per week for 3 weeks, for a total of \$1,587. Sylvie applies to receive 12 weeks of the Family Caregiver Benefit for Adults without a waiting period. She earns \$40,000 per year, so her weekly benefit is \$423. In total, she receives \$5,076 over 12 weeks.

Example 3 - Paul’s partner David has been diagnosed with cancer. Paul takes times off work to care for him at home. David’s medical doctor completes the medical certificate stating that Paul is critically ill and requires the care or support of a family member. Paul is eligible for EI and applies for the Family Caregiver Benefit for Adults. He earns \$60,000 per year. He receives the maximum EI benefit of \$543 per week for 15 weeks. In total, Paul receives \$8,145.

Unfortunately, David’s treatments are not successful and doctors expect he will not live more than six months. Paul gets the medical certificate required to claim 26 weeks of Compassionate Care benefits. He receives \$543 per week in Compassionate Care benefits. In total, he receives \$14,118 over 26 weeks. Altogether, Paul receives \$22,263 from Family Caregiver Benefit for Adults and Compassionate Care benefits.

For further information on these programs, please contact your local Service Canada office or go to <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/campaigns/ei-improvements/adult-care.html>