

Our family and friends don't get it.

It's no fault of their own— the demands of caregiving are almost impossible for them to understand because they haven't lived with it.

Even if we don't feel comfortable talking to our friends and family, we cannot keep our feelings inside. These thoughts and emotions are distinctive to caregiving.

Fortunately, caregivers are uniquely qualified to help one another— we understand the complicated emotions and overwhelming responsibilities because we've been there.

Another caregiver understands

- why I can't just "self-care" by taking a bath—when would I find the time?
- that my mom doesn't want me to hire help
- how much I can *resent* caring for my sister, even though I love her
- what I've given up to show up for caregiving
- what "constant care" looks like
- that five consecutive hours of sleep is a miracle
- secondary-PTSD from caregiving
- that having four arms still wouldn't be enough
- the resentment, frustration, love, loneliness, anxiety, guilt, and fear
- how hard it is to get a job after being a caregiver for so many years
- the pain of watching a loved one suffer
- what it feels like to no longer be asked "How are *you*?"
- that going to the grocery store is like a mini-vacation
- what "running on empty" really means
- how much you feel depended upon
- how frustrating it can be to have siblings visit—
- the education we get from caring
- our capacity to give and love

So thank goodness I know just where to find the people who will understand.

They can be found at a Caregiver Support Group. Caregivers Nova Scotia hosts 20 groups monthly groups across the province. For details, click [here](#).