



## Caregivers in Nova Scotia: impact of caregiving on well-being

Making a meaningful difference in the lives of older adults and their families by bridging research, policies and practice

### Caregivers in Nova Scotia

A caregiver is someone who assists a family member or friend with challenges resulting from illness, disability or aging.

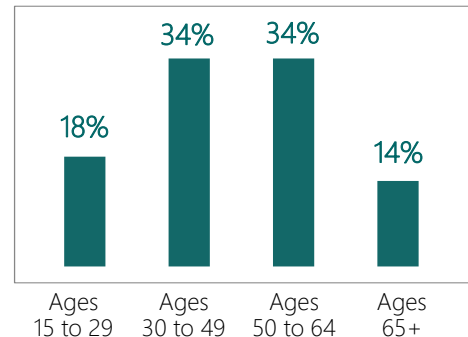
53% are female  47% are male

Nearly **half** of Nova Scotians (48%) have already been a caregiver at some point in their life—that's 378,000 people!





Caregivers in Nova Scotia are **all ages**

There are no national data on caregivers younger than 15.




Most caregivers in Nova Scotia support people living with:

48%  
  
Physical or neurological conditions

24%  
  
Aging-related needs

12%  
  
Dementia or cognitive disabilities

10%  
  
Cancer

6%  
  
Mental illness or addictions



**5 in 6** (84%) care for family members like parents (in-law), grandparents, spouse/partners, siblings and children.

**1 in 6** (16%) care for friends, neighbours, co-workers and others.

Most caregivers live with or nearby the care receiver, but some live at a distance.

**2 in 9**



25% same household

**6 in 9**



64% < 1 hour drive

**1 in 9**



11% ≥ 1 hour drive

### Caregiving impacts caregivers' own health and wellness

**2 in 5**



45% feel **overwhelmed, short-tempered or irritable** because of their caring<sup>1</sup>

**2 in 5**



44% are **tired** and 1 in 4 (28%) report **sleep disturbances** because of their caring

**1 in 6**



16% report that their **health has suffered** because of their caring

<sup>1</sup>Consequences questions are asked only of caregivers who provide care 2 or more hours per week.

## FAMILY LIFE



2 in 3 (66%) caregivers in Nova Scotia are married or partnered. To accommodate their caregiving duties, **2 in 5** say that their **spouse or partner modified their life and work arrangements** (39%) and that **extended family members provided them with help** (41%).



Nearly 1 in 4 (25%) caregivers in Nova Scotia have children under 15 years at home. To accommodate their caregiving duties, **2 in 5** (42%) say their **children helped them**.

While 7 in 10 (71%) caregivers in Nova Scotia say that caregiving strengthened their relationship with the person receiving care, caring may strain other relationships or leave caregivers feeling isolated.

## SOCIAL LIFE

2 in 5



44% **spend less time** with their partner and on social activities and hobbies

1 in 4



23% feel that caring **strained relationships** with other family or friends

1 in 5



19% feel **depressed** and 17% feel **lonely or isolated** because of their caring

## EDUCATION



While most caregivers in Nova Scotia have completed high school (27%) or post-secondary education (52%), some have not yet completed school. **1 in 7** (13%) are still attending school, college or university. Caregiving may impact young caregivers' studies as well as school-to-work transitions; long lasting cumulative impacts are largely unknown.

## Caregivers in Nova Scotia need more supports to sustain their caregiving

2 in 5



45% need **financial support** or **government assistance**

1 in 4



25% need **Home Care** or support for their care receiver

1 in 7



14% need **information and advice** and 9% need **help from health care professionals**

## Nova Scotia caregivers surveyed said

"I have been caregiving for over twenty years and there is no doubt it takes patience and being a strong advocate for good care. Caregiving is harder than I ever imagined it would be. Wait times for nursing care facilities are so long and paying for more in-home care than what publicly-funded continuing care provides is extremely expensive. I often get overwhelmed."