

The Beacon

Spring/Summer 2019

Volume #12



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May is Caregiver Awareness

The facts. One in three Nova Scotians provides some form of unpaid care to a family member or friend. Seventy-five percent of all the care provided in the home is given by unpaid caregivers. It is estimated that caregivers save the Canadian healthcare system \$66 billion annually. Without support from caregivers, most people would be unable to remain where they want to be – at home.

Caregiving can be complex -- rewarding, but also demanding and stressful. To continue to function effectively, caregivers need information, education, and support.

We have a number of events happening this month including a webinar with Family Caregivers of British Columbia and Caregivers Alberta.

Join us in recognizing caregivers throughout May. Our website and social media are updated daily.

- Angus Campbell
Executive Director



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



Caregivers
Nova Scotia
for friends and family giving care

3433 Dutch Village Road
Halifax, NS B3N 2S7

Tel. 902.421.7390
Toll-free 1.877.488.7390
Info@CaregiversNS.org
www.CaregiversNS.org

Living at Risk

by Cindie Smith



I have many clients who express fear and frustration with healthcare providers who fail to see the risk of an aging parent living independently. As a caregiver, I have felt that fear. Am I missing something? Is there a resource that could make the care recipient's life safer? How can they be so calm knowing that disaster is imminent? It's kept me awake many nights too, frustrated by a healthcare system that doesn't seem to recognize the danger all around.

As a caregiver myself, I struggle to remember that there are some things we simply cannot, and should not, control. I understand that we live in a time when awareness of autonomy is increasing; you can't just step all over someone's wishes because they are old, ill, or frail, even if greater demand on the caregiver results from a fall, a fire, or medication error. I've also considered that part of the rising tolerance of risk is that there are fewer hospital and long-term care beds and that the economics of health care is likely a contributing factor. The system simply cannot meet the needs of everyone, so people are triaged and those with the highest need are served first.

Alice is a long-distance caregiver to her 100-year old mother. She shared with me her worries over her mom living independently in her small house, with the bedroom on the second floor accessible only by narrow and steep stairs. Although frail and experiencing some cognitive decline, Mom can state the risk and the consequence of the risk of living on her own. Mom is feisty and

sharp in both wit and in criticism of those who try to tell her what to do.

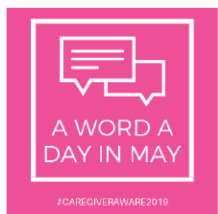
It's taken a while, but Alice has made peace with the likelihood that Mom will have a catastrophic fall. Alice acknowledges that if there is a fall it may mean death. In fact, she hopes that Mom would not linger with a life-long injury because out of her element she would suffer.

Instead, Alice chooses to shift her focus. Every day that her mother gets to live by her own standards and wishes is a 'bonus day' and one to be celebrated. Rather than waking up to a day filled with worry over something she cannot control, Alice holds the worry at bay and celebrates the end of the day when no catastrophe has been reported. It's another day that Mom has lived under her own terms and didn't die.

Atul Gawande, in his book *Being Mortal*, writes: "I am leery of suggesting the idea that endings are controllable. No one ever really has control. Physics and biology and accident ultimately have their way in our lives. But the point is that we are not helpless either. Courage is the strength to recognize both realities. We have room to act, to shape our stories, though as time goes on it is within narrower and narrower confines. A few conclusions become clear when we understand this: that our most cruel failure in how we treat the sick and the aged is the failure to recognize that they have priorities beyond merely being safe and living longer; that the chance to shape one's story is essential to sustaining meaning in life ..."

#CaregiverAware2019

by Carlye Stein



We're doing a special campaign on social media to celebrate Caregiver Awareness Month called "A Word-a-Day in May". The staff came up with a list of words related to caregiving and caregivers—it was hard to capture caregiving in just 31 words! We're going to post a word a day along with a definition, a word origin, a phrase, or an image. You can tell us what these words mean to you by responding to any of our posts or sending us an email—we'd love to hear from you.

#CaregiverAware2019 Facebook Frame: This year's frame incorporates the graphic developed for the National Caregiver Week campaign which takes place May 5-12. This Campaign is the first of its kind in Canada; organizations from across the country including Caregivers Nova Scotia, Caregivers Alberta, Family Caregivers of BC, The Powerhouse Project (which supports young caregivers in Ontario) and The Change Foundation, among many others, have come together to help raise awareness and recognition of caregivers and caregiving on a national scale.

You'll be able to add the Caregivers Nova Scotia Facebook frame to your profile picture beginning May 1st. You can see an image of it to the right.

To add the frame to your personal Page or to your organization's Page:

1. Go to www.facebook.com/profilepicframes
2. Click your profile picture in the bottom left and select your personal Page or your organization's Page
3. Find our frame by entering #CaregiverAware2019
4. Click on the frame in the results to use it. You can reposition it if you need to.
5. Click Use as Profile Picture

Once you have added the frame, you can turn it on for a day, a week, or for the entire month of May. Be sure to add #CaregiverAware2019 to relevant posts on social media throughout May to keep the conversation going. And don't forget to visit our website for even more new content throughout the month!



Elmsdale Retreat

by Cindie Smith

The eighth CNS Caregiver Wellness Retreat was held in Elmsdale on March 19 to great success. Thank you to everyone who made the day possible.

Our original New Horizons for Seniors Program grant was for eight retreats for 200 caregivers. We are pleased to report 217 participants and cost-savings due to the generosity of community partners. We are now able to offer two more retreats.



← Karen Bissonnette and Cherry Whitaker provided therapeutic touch sessions.

↓ Kate Scallion spoke with the group about how the body reacts when experiencing intense, prolonged stress ... and how to reverse the effects.



↑ Caregivers enjoyed a foot soak as Rob Cameron from the Shubenacadie Meditation Group led them on a guided meditation.

The New Canada Food Guide

by Maggie Roach-Ganaway



Through the years it has undergone numerous changes, but the intention has remained the same: to educate Canadians to make healthy choices that both meet their nutritional needs and help reduce the risk of chronic disease related to poor nutrition.

There are many great things to consider with the new Canada Food Guide. It looks not only at food choices but also at how to enjoy cooking meals at home while sharing time with others. It puts the focus both on enjoying the company of other people and on the importance of meal planning. There are also plenty of ideas and recipes to help you along the way. Recommendations and recipes can be found at food-guide.canada.ca/en/.

Dr. Heather Keller, a Canadian Frailty Network funded researcher, points out one area that may be lacking in the new Canada Food Guide, however - that is, information specifically for people who may be frail or living in institutions. In a recent article for iPolitics, Keller stated that the amount of protein suggested may be insufficient for vulnerable adults living with frailty whether at home, in hospital, or a nursing home. The recommended food volumes may need to be adjusted for this population to get the right amount of protein they require to keep them strong and healthy.

This past year has been transformative for me, as I have made the choice to get healthy by changing my diet and increasing my exercise. This decision was based on the fact that as my age increases so does my risk of weight related diseases. With a family history of type II diabetes, I knew that I had to make better choices to avoid the risk of developing diabetes myself.

When the new Canada Food Guide was released earlier this year, I was happy to see the changes that had been included. It also confirmed that I was on the right track.

When the Food Guide was first introduced in 1942, the intention was to promote good nutritional health by guiding food selection for Canadians of all ages.

Got Feedback?



We're listening.

Give opinions and provide feedback on services, newsletter, programs, ... everything CNS.

Please contact us.

1.877.488.7390 or www.CaregiversNS.org

The Extraordinary Sustainable Egg

by Jennifer Briand

Of all food items, the egg is the one that I could never do without! It is versatile, and it's used in almost all areas of cooking. With eggs, anyone can cook a meal that is both quick and delicious. And that speed of preparation is perfect for caregivers, as we don't always have a lot of time to prepare meals. The egg is also full of protein and vitamins and provides a healthy food choice, which is so important. You can also recycle the egg shell into your soil or compost.

When my children were young, we decided to raise our own chickens (from chick to laying hen). This provided much entertainment! The children discovered they too could be responsible for their own food—and, of course, that eggs and chickens do not really come from the grocery stores.

I also learned a lot. As I could see the difference in the egg quality depending on the variety of foods our chickens ate, the chicken/egg combination taught me that you really are what you eat. With that in mind, we made sure 'the girls' had a wholesome diet.

We all learned that fresh eggs are amazing, and that they make your baked goods even better. I also learned that the fresher the egg, the harder they are to peel when boiled. You may want to keep that in mind for the following recipe.

Over the years, our dear friend Kody would bring along his Devilled Eggs for many a holiday meal or summer barbecue. His theory is that simple ingredients allow the egg to shine. Everyone must agree, for he always leaves with an empty dish!

Thanks Kody! And of course, all chickens ('the girls'), for making this recipe possible!

Kody's Devilled Eggs

INGREDIENTS

For 12 Devilled Eggs you will need:

- 6 large eggs
- ¼ cup of Miracle Whip (do not substitute with another mayonnaise)
- 1 tsp dry mustard
- drop of Worcestershire sauce
- paprika, for garnish (can also add parsley or chives)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Place eggs in a single layer and bring to a boil for a minute, then let rest in the hot water for 12 minutes. Rinse under cold water and peel immediately. Cool in refrigerator.
- Cut the peeled eggs in half lengthways. Scoop out the yolks, and put them in a separate bowl. Mash yolks, and add all the other ingredients except the garnish. Season with pinch of salt and pepper to taste. Use a small scoop, or pipe yolk mixture into eggs. Garnish with paprika.



Efficiency Nova Scotia

by Brenda Sangster

Efficiency Nova Scotia describes itself as the administrator of conservation and energy efficiency in Nova Scotia and as Canada's first energy efficiency utility. The costs of its services are included in Nova Scotia Power's electricity rates. Efficiency Nova Scotia is operated as an independent non-profit organization, with regulatory oversight provided by the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board.

What you may not know is that at Efficiency Nova Scotia there are programs for all Nova Scotians.



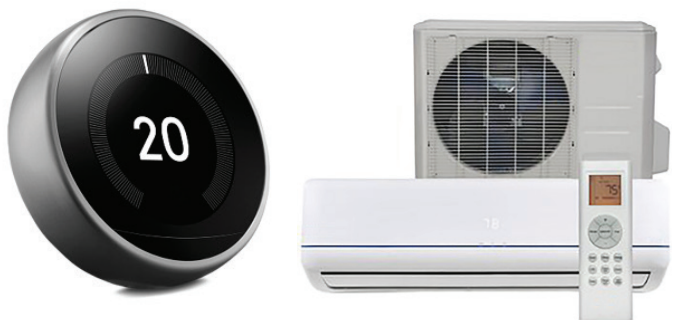
Product Installation – This is a free service available to everyone in NS. Anyone can call and book an appointment and a service provider will install LED light bulbs, power bars, low-flow showerheads, faucet aerators, electric hot water tank and pipe insulation, and provide a clothes drying rack at no cost.

Appliance Retirement – This is a service to remove old refrigerators. Efficiency Nova Scotia will take working fridges or freezers that are at least 10 years old and pay the owner \$30. If you want they can remove old air conditioners and mini-fridges/freezers at the same time and pay the owner an additional \$10.

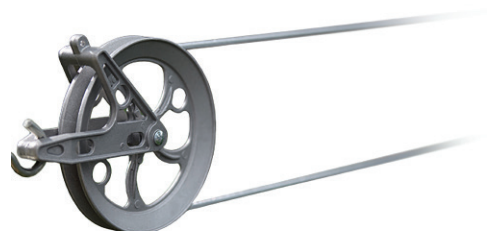
Home Energy Assessment – This is Energy Efficiency Nova Scotia's main program for homeowners. If you are considering any sort of renovations, it would be worth your time to have EENS assess your home for energy savings potential. There are rebates available for insulation, heat pumps, wood and pellet stoves, draft-proofing, solar equipment, and much more. The cost of the assessment is \$99.

HomeWarming Program - For homeowners who qualify, the HomeWarming team provides a comprehensive energy audit and works with you to determine the energy efficiency upgrades that make the most sense for your home. Then the team manages sub-contractors to have the upgrades completed at no cost to you. This program is supported by the Province of Nova Scotia and by Nova Scotia Power.

Instant Savings – This is a retail program where rebates are offered on commonly available products that will help save energy. Rebates on things like smart thermostats, fridges, and clothes washers are available year-round, and rebates on items like motion sensors, programmable thermostats, dimmer switches, some types of LED bulbs, or clothesline kits are available twice every year, in the spring and fall. Nothing special is required to get the rebate, it's deducted at the cash register.



These are only some of the programs that Efficiency Nova Scotia offers. For more information call toll-free 1.877.434.2136 or visit www.energyncs.ca.



Survey Says - Language Matters!

by Lynn Butler

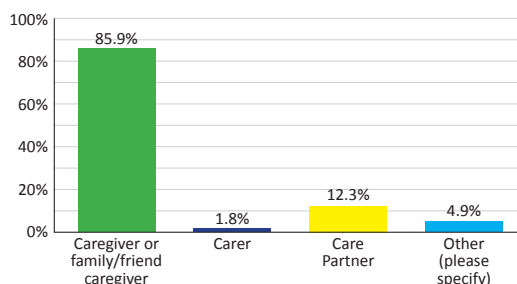
There are various words and phrases that can be used to describe the role of providing unpaid care for a family member or friend. Are some terms more appropriate than others? Does it really matter?

The words we use for the different roles we play in our lives can have negative as well as positive effects both on how we perceive ourselves and on how the world and society perceive us. So, it is important to be aware of and attentive to language, especially with respect to how caregivers wish to describe their role.

At Caregivers Nova Scotia (CNS) we give our membership opportunities to express their opinions on various issues. Recently we conducted a survey of our members to find out their thoughts on language relating to the caregiving role.

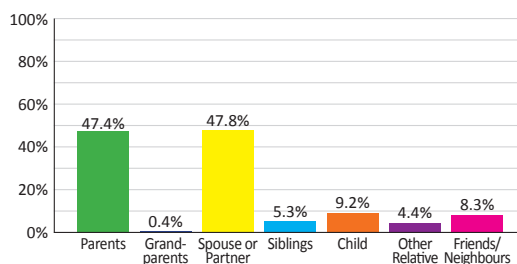
We received 228 responses, from 186 women and 42 men. The results are as follows.

Q1 Thinking about your caregiving experience/situation, which of the following terms do you feel best describes your role?



Eleven people answered that they were both a spouse or child in addition to being a caregiver or care partner.

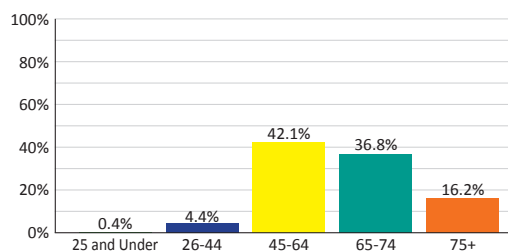
Q2 Who do you give care to?



These results confirm what we have heard on many occasions.

- Our members overwhelmingly self-identify with the term “caregiver”.
- In our sample, very few relate to “carer”, a term which is used in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand.
- The phrase “care partner” is both confusing and

Q3 Please Indicate Your Age Category



misunderstood by many. We have heard, for example, from some healthcare professionals such as nurses and doctors that they believed they were the care partners. One individual commented that they assumed that care partner meant that the caregiver and the care recipient weren’t legally married – were partners rather than spouses.

CNS also believes that it is important to align with terminology used in the federal and provincial governments. The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) offers the Canada Caregiver Credit, Employment Insurance (EI) offers Family Caregiver Benefits for adults and children, and Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) offers the Family Caregiver Relief Benefit. In our province the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) offers the Caregiver Benefit for lower-income Nova Scotians.

Consistency in language is important for three reasons.

- When caregivers do not identify as caregivers, they often will not seek help or resources. Considering that 1 in 3 Nova Scotians is giving some form of unpaid care, and knowing how demanding that can be, it is essential for caregivers to know what supports are available and how to access them.
- Healthcare professionals need to speak with caregivers in a language they understand. Inventing new terminology or adopting phrases from other countries without broad public consultation is merely confusing.
- As a society we need to recognize and support caregivers for the range of care they provide and the responsibilities they handle each and every day – often to their own health and financial detriment.

Having terminology that people easily recognize and that they feel best represents them and the vital role they play is important. Language does matter.

**Care Recipient + Caregiver + Healthcare Team
= Partners in Care**

Year 1 As Valley Support Coordinator

By Jennine Wilson



The end of May will be my one-year anniversary as Valley Support Coordinator with Caregivers Nova Scotia. I am very grateful to have been hired for this position. It has been a year full of learning, connecting with people, and some going down rabbit holes looking for all the services available in the Valley area.

I have a renewed sense that “we are not alone” and of the importance that human connection and sharing have on our well-being. Initially I gained this from my colleagues at Caregivers Nova Scotia, whose mentorship, time, knowledge, and good humour helped me grow into my role. Secondly, I benefited from my contacts with the many community partners who have shared the Valley area services, voluntarily helped me organize and run a full day retreat, provided space for support groups and workshops, and have spread the word that Caregivers Nova Scotia was expanding their services in the Valley.

Collaborating with people to feel more informed and confident by enabling them to prioritize their needs or by providing a phone number, program or information that may ease their journey also has its rewards. However, my number one encounter that heightens this awareness has been the privilege to witness the impact that coming together, sharing experiences, listening and holding space for each other in support groups has. It is a gift I hold close to my heart. I look forward to the coming year, my continued growth, and bringing caregiver workshops to the Valley.

Introducing Roberta Phillips



I'm thrilled to be the new Outreach Coordinator at Caregivers Nova Scotia.

I have 20+ years experience working in the non-profit sector across the country supporting people with a range of disabilities and challenges including people who have suffered strokes and brain injuries, and those who are navigating mental health issues and addictions. I have supported numerous clients from the LGBTQ2+ communities as well as refugees, immigrants, and otherwise diverse and/or marginalized youth and adults.

Having firsthand personal experience supporting family members through terminal illness, I have deep compassion and understanding of what unpaid caregivers face every day while caring for loved ones.

I look forward to contributing to the CNS team and I invite you to contact me if you would like to know more about our programs and services.

Outreach@CaregiversNS.org | 902.421.7390

AGM

Our Annual General Meeting
will be held Saturday, June 22

11:00 am

Nova Scotia Archives,
6016 University Avenue, Halifax.

Please call the office to register
your attendance.



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

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