

May is Caregiver Awareness Month

By Nicole Byers, Caregiver Support Coordinator, South Shore Region

Did you know that one in three Nova Scotians is an unpaid caregiver? When it comes to being a caregiver, it can be thankless work. Many caregivers in Nova Scotia are heavily burdened by feeling alone in their caregiving journey, unsure of where to turn for help and assistance.



with dementia followed by 31% of caregivers caring for someone with a mobility issue. Half of the caregivers said that their care recipient lives in the same household as them. Not surprisingly, when a caregiver and care recipient live in the same home, those caregivers reported providing more support to their care recipient. Among those tasks that care recipients need the most help with were: emotional support, transportation, housework, home maintenance, outdoor work, managing and scheduling

At Caregivers Nova Scotia, our mission is to support caregivers and in order to do that, we first need to understand the needs of those caregivers. In an effort to do this, we partnered with Leger, the largest Canadian-owned polling, market research, and analytics firm to survey 573 caregivers between April 29 and May 16, 2021. This survey yielded some fairly significant results about the caregivers in our province. Approximately 32% of caregivers surveyed are caring for a loved one

appointments, and meal preparation.


Thirty-five percent of the caregivers surveyed cannot leave their care recipient unattended, even for a few hours. Caregivers reported dedicating approximately 40 hours a week to providing care to their loved one. That is the equivalent of a full time job!

The global pandemic has certainly taken a toll on caregivers. Since the beginning of the pandemic, 80% of caregivers surveyed have noticed an increase in one or more household expenses, with food being the highest increase. Feelings of isolation, stress, exhaustion, and nervousness have increased drastically. About 55% of caregivers surveyed reported a decline in their mental health since the beginning of the pandemic. In addition, caregivers' feelings of confidence, support, and comfort have all decreased during the pandemic.

With all of those statistics in mind, it can be hard to believe that so many people take on the role of caregiver. But for those of us who have been a caregiver, we know that it is a journey that you take with a loved one; often the last journey that you will take together. There are highs and there are lows and everything in between. Each day is a new experience and as a caregiver; you never know what that day will hold.

Whatever the challenges of caregiving, Caregivers Nova Scotia has heard time and time again that caregivers feel it is their responsibility and honour to care for their loved one. At Caregivers Nova Scotia, we're focused on empowering caregivers, supporting their efforts, and recognizing the invaluable contribution unpaid caregivers make to both their care recipient and society in general.

So to all of you caregivers out there, thank you. We see you and we're here for you. Reach out to us for support at our toll free number 1.877.488.7390. Happy Caregiver Awareness Month!



Caregivers
Nova Scotia
for friends and family giving care

Survey Report Highlights

Survey conducted by Leger - Polling, Market Research and Analytics Firm obtained through a questionnaire completed by unpaid caregivers on their experience in Nova Scotia during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Sample Size 573	50% Age >60 50% Age <60	72% Female 27% Male	55% HRM 45% Outside HRM	92% Caucasian 7% Non-Caucasian
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Insights into the caregiver experience

<p>70% have at least 2 years experience caregiving, and the average is 7.4 years!</p>	<p>21% said their caregiving responsibilities have affected their employment</p>	<p>35% of respondents can't leave their care recipient unattended</p>
<p>40 The number of hours per week spent giving care by 47% of caregivers providing care for 5 years or more</p>	<p>53% of caregivers who responded are using Continuing Care and home care is the most popular</p>	<p>2X Female caregivers are responsible for almost twice the caregiving hours as males</p>
<p>24% have been asked to perform tasks they are not comfortable performing, number one being personal care</p>	<p>50%+ have noticed a decline in both their own and their care recipients' mental health</p>	<p>25% access at least one support group across the province</p>

"There are only four kinds of people in the world. Those who have been caregivers. Those who are currently caregivers. Those who will be caregivers, and those who will need a caregiver."

Source - Rosalyn Carter | Mental Health Advocate