

# Caregiving doesn't end with long-term care

by Leanne Taylor

As Caregiver Support Coordinator, I often hear people say they are “no longer a caregiver” once the person they had been caring for moves into long-term care. **This is a common misconception.** While caregiving does change, it certainly doesn't end. You continue to be an important person in their care team.

Before entering long-term care, many Nova Scotians rely on unpaid caregivers who support them at home or in the community. Some caregivers live with their care recipient or nearby, while others help from a distance – sometimes even outside the province.

When someone moves into a long-term care facility, **caregivers take on new responsibilities**, often while still managing many tasks they handled before placement. Some things are not covered by the accommodation charge, so caregivers often step in to fulfil these needs. They also remain **the primary contact** for medical decisions and incident reporting. When problems arise, caregivers continue to advocate for their person and play a vital role in the care team, helping others understand the care recipient's needs and wishes.

I recently had the honour of speaking with Jean McComb, a caregiver to her husband who lives in long-term care. Jean emphasized how important it is to **build strong relationships with staff**, and to share information that helps them truly know the person they're caring for. Jean knows she is an active member of her husband's care team, and encouraged other caregivers to stay involved as well. The collaboration between staff and caregivers can be immensely helpful to **ensure compassionate, patient-focused care** and inform medical decisions. Jean also shared that remembering the good times you had with “your person” can make the harder times of caregiving a little easier.

Caregivers contribute many unpaid hours of care within the long-term care facilities, yet their role is not always recognized. **Make no mistake:** caregiving continues, even after someone enters long-term care, and it remains just as important.



## WINTER QUICK SELF-CARE BINGO

SAY “NO” TO ONE CHORE	ENJOY A QUIET MORNING	CELEBRATE A SMALL VICTORY	GET A TREAT	DO SOMETHING RELAXING	ALLOW SOMEONE TO HELP	SING ALONG TO YOUR FAVOURITE SONGS	WATCH YOUR FAVOURITE HOLIDAY MOVIE
GO ICE SKATING	TRY A NEW HOBBY	TAKE A NAP WHEN YOU NEED IT	TAKE A REFRESHING WALK	HUG A FEW PEOPLE YOU LOVE	LOOK AT HOLIDAY LIGHTS	ATTEND AN EVENT IN YOUR COMMUNITY	CATCH UP WITH A FRIEND OVER HOT DRINKS