

## The Stages of Caregiving: Stage 1 – In the Beginning

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Not many people expect to become a caregiver. Like so many other experiences during our life journey, it just happens to us. And similar to other experiences, caregiving has a time period: a beginning, middle and an end. However, unlike other experiences, every caregiving experience is as unique and individual as every caregiver and the person they are caring for.

Although every person's beginning is unique, there are steps and plans that every caregiver should consider as they begin their new role. If you plan your role as a caregiver, you will recognize and understand your care recipient's emotional, mental, physical, financial, and health care needs.

- Research all your options, gather information and learn about their condition
- Consult with your family, friends, and recipient to consider everyone's feelings and input
- Consider what you need to remain healthy and fulfilled
- Learn about all healthcare options and become familiar with your recipient's healthcare professionals
- Develop a budget

As you begin your role as a caregiver, find the supports that you need, and the solutions that work for you and your recipient's situation.

### WHERE TO BEGIN

An Introductory Planning Guide for **Caregivers**



"My husband was a 'doer', he always looked after our home and family, however, shortly after his diagnosis he lost his mobility. For the first time, he felt vulnerable and really needed me to be there, for him. So I quit my job and made the decision to become his full time caregiver. In the beginning it was so overwhelming!"

The *Where to Begin* guide can help you plan for your care recipient's needs, identify supports, and guide you in your role as a caregiver. Again, most of us don't plan on become a caregiver; it is a new role, a new beginning, which includes rearranging our everyday lives. Once you begin, continue to learn! Learn about your recipient's condition and needs, learn caregiving techniques; consult appropriate organizations, attend workshops, find online resources, read books etc.

You can also learn from other caregivers - join a support group where you can socialize and learn from others, as well as, keep yourself from becoming isolated. Learn how to manage your time. Managing your time includes planning 'me' time; respite time allows you to rejuvenate and look after your own needs and health. You may want to start a journal of your caregiving experiences; it will help you keep track of any issues, changes, and special surprises. Have a backup plan for your backup plan! Always remember that you love someone, and are loved.

To be continued in the next issue of *The Beacon*.



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