

WHERE TO BEGIN

An Introductory Planning Guide for Caregivers

As an unpaid caregiver you give essential care to a family member or friend. You may assist someone who has a physical or mental health condition, or who is chronically ill or frail, either at home or in a facility.

You are not alone: One in three Nova Scotians is a caregiver. Caregivers save the Canadian healthcare system an estimated \$66 billion a year.

The aim of this guide is to assist you and your care recipient to identify your needs as you begin the caregiving journey, or as the caregiving journey changes. The Partners In Care Checklist on the following pages will help you organize their care and your caregiving responsibilities, now and in the future.

This guide is also for **you**, the caregiver. It is very important that you look after your own physical and emotional well-being. We encourage you to:

- ❖ **Understand** that you, alongside healthcare providers, are an *essential* partner in your loved one's care.
- ❖ **Recognize** the value of the care you give.
- ❖ **Accept** that your role may be physically and emotionally challenging, but you may find unexpected rewards along the way.
- ❖ **Connect** with other caregivers in your community to reduce isolation, to build courage and confidence, to laugh with, and to draw strength from.
- ❖ **Be proactive.** A written plan will help you decide 'where to begin' your caregiving journey. Caregivers Nova Scotia is here to help you.

If you have any questions about this Guide or would like more information about our services, support groups, or educational workshops, please contact us:

902.421.7390 | Toll-free: 1.877.488.7390 | Info@CaregiversNS.org

Caregiver Check-In

Few of us have training as a caregiver yet we demand high standards from ourselves as we carry out new tasks and responsibilities. Often the result is self-doubt, negative self-talk, and increasing levels of stress. We deserve good health for our own enjoyment, AND it enables us to give better care to our care recipient.

Take some time to think about the questions below.

	Yes	No
❖ Do I feel confident about being/becoming a caregiver?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
❖ Have I involved family members or friends in my loved one's care?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
❖ Am I able to balance caregiving with other responsibilities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
❖ Am I comfortable asking for or accepting help from others?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
❖ Do I understand my care recipient's health condition?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
❖ Do I have the information and skills I need for:		
◆ Safe lifting, transferring, or bathing?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
◆ Managing and giving medications?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
◆ Programs and services that can help us?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
◆ Financial and legal aspects of caregiving?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
❖ Have I thought about ways to manage stress?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
❖ Do I take care of my own health by getting regular check-ups, eating well, and exercising?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
❖ Do I take time out for myself to do the things I enjoy?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you have answered "no" to any of these questions, please call Caregivers Nova Scotia at 1.877.488.7390. Our FREE programs and services can help.

Caregiving situations change. If you are well prepared and answered "yes" to many questions above please remember to check in with yourself by reviewing these questions from time to time.

You don't have to do this alone.

Partners in Care Checklist

We often have full lives when caregiving comes along, so fitting in new responsibilities may be a challenge. There are never enough hours in the day so something's got to give! Now is the time to set new priorities, think about boundaries, and get organized.

The checklist below is designed to help you and your care recipient begin to organize their care, and decide who can assist you. Mark the appropriate bubble to indicate which of the activities on the left can be done by the care recipient, by you the caregiver, or which require assistance from a healthcare provider or someone else. There is space for your own notes on the right.

	Care Recipient	Caregiver	Healthcare Provider or Other	<u>Additional Information</u>
Personal Care				
Bathing/hair care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	-----
Dressing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	-----
Foot care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	-----
Mouth care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	-----
Toileting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	-----
Obtain supplies for incontinence/ostomy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	-----
Nutrition				
Planning a special diet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	-----
Grocery shopping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	-----
Meal preparation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	-----
Operate kitchen appliances safely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	-----
Doing the dishes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	-----
Safe food handling & storage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	-----

Health Needs

Arrange and attend medical appointments

Care Recipient
Caregiver
Healthcare Provider or Other

Additional Information

Organize and take medications

Document medications / keep medication record

Obtain referrals to specialist clinics

Home oxygen

Inside & Outside the Home

Changing the bed

Cleaning the bathroom

Laundry/ironing

Vacuuming and dusting

Washing floors and windows

Cutting grass

Shovelling snow

Taking out the garbage

Organize/carry out household repairs and maintenance

Financial Matters

Paying bills

Banking

Preparing income taxes

Budgeting

Social and Emotional

CR = Care Recipient

CR is socially active or has visitors often

Yes No

CR is content

Yes No

CR has someone to talk to other than you

Yes No

Mobility & Ability Accommodation

CR drives own car

Yes No

CR accesses regular buses, taxis, or specialized transit

Yes No

CR uses/needs a cane, walker, or mobility scooter

Yes No

CR manages stairs

Yes No

CR needs grab bars, bath chair, or raised toilet seat

Yes No

CR needs home reorganized or renovated for wheelchair

Yes No

Living Safely at Home

CR needs frequent contact or supervision

Yes No

CR is at risk for falls

Yes No

CR needs more interior and exterior lighting

Yes No

CR needs amplified or large numbered phone

Yes No

CR needs contrasting paint on door frames and stairs

Yes No

CR needs doorbells, fire alarms, or smoke detectors with flashing lights

Yes No

Additional Information

Living Safely at Home

CR = Care Recipient

CR is at risk of wandering or getting lost

Yes No

CR needs security devices, locks & alarms

Yes No

CR needs an emergency or Personal Response service for 24/7 medical help

Yes No

CR needs an emergency contact list

Yes No

Legal Matters

Is there an up-to-date Will?

Yes No

Has a Power of Attorney or Enduring PoA been appointed?

Yes No

Is a Substitute Decision-Maker, Personal Care Directive, or Advance Care Plan in place?

Yes No

Caregivers Nova Scotia offers **FREE** programs and services

Phone & Email Support – Need to talk about your caregiving challenges with someone who is objective, non-judgmental, and will honour your privacy? All CNS staff are or have been caregivers. Caregiver support lines are open Monday through Friday from 9:00am – 4:30pm.

Peer Support Groups – We offer confidential, in-person caregiver support groups in 20 locations throughout Nova Scotia. Caregiver Tele-Group Support is a phone-based option for those who can't leave their home. Our groups focus on you, and how you are managing your caregiving.

Educational Workshops – We provide free workshops on a variety of topics.

- Caregiver Stress Management
- Advance Care Planning for Caregivers: Getting Started
- Safe Medicines for Seniors & Caregivers
- Brushing Up on Mouth Care

Resources – We have developed a number of resources for caregivers.

- **The Caregiver's Handbook** is 94 pages of resources, tools, and information including useful charts, lists, templates, and schedules to help caregivers and care recipients.
- **CaregiversNS.org** has been praised by many and is very user-friendly.
- **Transitions in Adult Care (TiAC)** is a one-stop resource on our website to help you and your care recipient navigate the challenges that may arise due to changing care needs.

Our Caregiver Support Coordinators cover all of Nova Scotia.
Call our toll-free line at **1.877.488.7390**. We are here to help.