

What to Expect

The experience as a caregiver is not often talked about. It can be challenging to know; what is common, what questions might need to be asked and how to plan.

ROLES & RELATIONSHIPS

- It is **common to have difficult or mixed emotions** as you and your relationship changes with the person you are caring for to include your caregiving role. You might feel both glad to be able to help them but unsure, lonely or sad about supporting them too.

Some examples of new roles a caregiver may have include:

- **PHYSICAL** - Helping to dress, toilet or bathe the person you are caring for
- **SOCIAL** - fatigue may limit ability to manage noise or company and you are now a source of social interaction for the person you are caring for

Sometimes just acknowledging these new roles helps caregivers and the people you are caring for to navigate this change.

YOUR WORK

- It can be common for caregiving to **affect your employment**. For example:
 - caregivers may need to take time off work to go to medical appointments
 - may need to respond to calls during a work day
 - may get sick more often
- Sometimes caregivers **look to make changes to their work environment** to fit their caregiving needs, however, not all types of employment can offer flexibility. Many family budgets or structures can't handle a reduction in hours or change.
- Sometimes work offers respite to your caregiving responsibilities. Look to do what is best for you and your family. **Try to work creatively with other family members to balance needs.**
- Talk to your employer as you are able. **Aim to be upfront with care professionals and employers that you interact with about your situation and needs.**

MANAGING MEDICATION

- You may need to help the person you are caring for with multiple medications. To do so safely, it is recommended that you and family members and friends:
 - **Always use the same pharmacy for prescriptions** for the person you are caring for. The pharmacist can track and monitor medications to prevent drug interactions and medication errors
 - **Maintain a list and track all medications** for visits with health professionals and in case of emergency; this also can help prevent overmedication by different doctors

FINANCIAL

- If you are a full time caregiver for someone, you may qualify for the federal benefit for caregivers. www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/caregiving
- Explore different benefit plans that might be available to the person you are caring for such as Ontario Works, CPP or employment plan(s). {Link to What You Need to Know sheet}
- Ask if **benefit plans** provide benefits for medication and transportation for recipients as well

Resources - Click on the links & logos below

- {Link to Understanding Illness & What to Expect Tip Sheet}
- {Link to What You Need to Know Tip Sheet}
- {Link to Planning for Conversations with Family, Friends & Professionals}