

CARE CONVERSATIONS

It's about you and the person you support.



At some point in your life, you may need to provide support to someone you know.

Over 8 million Canadians currently care for someone they know and this number is expected to increase as a result of Canada's aging population. You will likely need to support someone you know who has a physical disability, a mental health challenge, a long-term illness or a degenerative disease. Caring for someone else often means juggling personal commitments, work, family time and care responsibilities.

It is never too early to start planning for your role as a caregiver. You may need to help a parent, child, partner, sibling, friend, neighbour or co-worker. This person will count on your presence and support as they face health and living challenges.

By beginning Care Conversations now, you will be better prepared and able to plan for the future. Don't be afraid to talk about what-ifs. If you plan ahead, you're better prepared to react to a crisis.



This document has been jointly prepared by the Forum of Federal/Provincial/Territorial (F/P/T) Ministers Responsible for Seniors. The Forum is an intergovernmental body established to share information, discuss new and emerging issues related to seniors, and work collaboratively on key projects.

Québec contributes to the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Seniors Forum by sharing expertise, information and best practices. However, it does not subscribe to, or take part in, integrated federal, provincial, and territorial approaches to seniors. The Government of Québec intends to fully assume its responsibilities for seniors in Québec.

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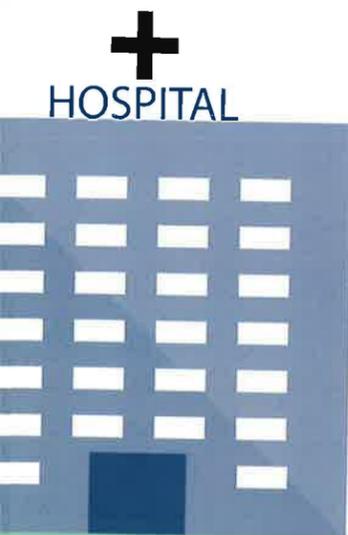
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In Alberta, to access an electronic version of this document or to order print copies please visit the *Caring for caregivers* page at www.seniors-housing.alberta.ca. Other information about supports and services for seniors in Alberta is also available on the site.



Understand how caregiving can affect you

Be realistic. What are you prepared to do and not prepared to do? Note your own preferences and plan for your own future as well.

💡 Understand your abilities and limitations to support someone else.

🔧 *Responding to Stressful Events: Self-Care for Caregivers* (www.phac.gc.ca > search: self-care)

🔧 *Balancing work and caregiving* (www.chrc.gc.ca > search: guide to balancing work)

Know your resources. Being a caregiver can be challenging, but you don't have to do it alone. Build a caregiving support team and ask what support role each person is willing to play.

Understand your role in supporting the person's needs and wishes

Have an open and honest discussion. Start the conversations by sharing how you feel and why you think discussions are important. Ask how the person feels about their situation and the future.

💡 For the first conversation, set a time and place that is quiet, private and comfortable.

💡 Ask yourself: If complications arise, what would we require and what would we need to know?

Know the person's values and wishes. What does the person want today and in the future? Write their wishes down. There are legal documents to help protect the person wishes.

💡 Engage in Advance Care Planning and consider Powers of Attorney.

💡 Discuss legal options—who will make medical and financial decisions if the person is unable?

Identify costs associated with care options. Living with an episodic, chronic or long-term illness or disability can be costly. Assess the person's financial resources available for treatments, living arrangements and other care expenses.

🔧 Budget Calculator (www.fcac.gc.ca > search: budget calculator)

🔧 Canadian Retirement Income Calculator (Canada.ca > search: retirement income calculator)

Understand your role in their health care

Know about their health condition. Ask the health care team questions and get clear answers about the person's health condition, how the illness will progress and what physical and behavioural changes you can expect.

💡 Write down and prioritize questions for the person's doctor and other health care providers.

💡 Remember, your role may change as the person's health and needs change.

Share your information. Take notes and share your observations with the person's doctor and other health care providers (new symptoms or behaviours, injuries, emergency visits, effects of new drugs or treatments, etc.).

🔧 Learn about their Care Options. (Canada.ca/Caregivers)



Caregiving can be a positive experience. Being prepared helps!

Many caregivers find caring for someone to be rewarding and empowering. Positive experiences include a sense of pride for being able to give back, building deeper relationships, discovering new skills and finding increased meaning and purpose in your life.