

CAREGIVERS ALBERTA



A caregiver assists a family member or friend with challenges resulting from illness, disability or aging.

Caregivers Alberta

Caregivers Alberta grew from the ashes of caregiver burnout. In 2001, a group of caregivers banded together to support each other and founded the Alberta Caregivers Association, now Caregivers Alberta. We are the province's only grassroots organization exclusively dedicated to helping caregivers maintain their well-being.

Caregivers Alberta aims to empower caregivers and promote their well-being. We do this by:

- Providing group and one-on-one supports that help caregivers connect with others, navigate the system and look after themselves while providing care.
- Increasing communities' capacity to support caregivers by educating professionals, promoting networking and referrals, and sharing the programs we develop.
- Advocating for policy changes that will make a difference in caregivers' lives.

Our vision is an Alberta where all caregivers are valued and supported.

Caregivers Alberta believes our organization and its activities should be driven by caregivers. Two large consultations (Shining a Light, 2003; Yours, Mine & Ours, 2010) identified strategies and actions to support caregivers. These consultations have shaped the direction, programs and initiatives of Caregivers Alberta.

Community Development Approach

Caregivers Alberta believes caregiving is too big an issue for one organization. Rather than trying to serve all caregivers directly, we build community capacity by providing facilitator training, program materials, and promotion and evaluation support to other health and community agencies. This approach means that partner organizations can offer effective programs with proven outcomes without the need to invest scarce time and resources into development.

Caregivers Alberta also increases community capacity by providing case consultations, networking and education opportunities for professionals and service providers

With grant from the Government of Alberta for 2013-2016, Caregivers Alberta has used this community development approach to expand caregiver supports across Alberta.



Principal Programs

COMPASS for the Caregiver: COMPASS is 9-module workshop that promotes self-care attitudes and practices among caregivers. The program helps address common stressors- difficult emotions, guilt, grief, resentment, conflicting family relations and social isolation. COMPASS has been offered in communities across Alberta through local partnerships.

Caregiver Information Sessions: These drop-in sessions provide a safe place for caregivers to develop skills needed to manage the demands of caregiving and connect with others in similar situations. Information Session facilitator guides and participant handouts on more than a dozen topics are available to community partners.

Caregiver Advisor: The Caregiver Advisor is a professional who provides one-on-one support and information for caregivers across the province. The Caregiver Advisor also consults with health professionals and community service agencies to help them identify resources and support their caregiving clients.

Caregiver Connection Centre: The Centre provides a safe place for caregivers to relax, access an extensive resource library and connect with others. The centre has regular drop-in hours and is available to caregivers as a meeting space.

Caregiver Navigator: The Caregiver Navigator is a one-day facilitated program that provides training to help professionals and providers support family caregivers. The Navigator project provides broader understanding with regard to the challenges caregivers face and how to effectively support caregivers in professional practice.

Caregiver Support Team: The Caregiver Support Team (CST) is an interagency collaboration that promotes cooperation and information sharing among caregiver-serving organizations. The team meets monthly for education and networking.

Work & Care: The Work & Care project provides resources to employers that have employees who are caregiving. Caregivers Alberta provides training to employees and management, and offer a portal of resources at www.workandcare.ca.

Moving Forward

Over the past 5 years, the Caregivers Alberta has seen a distressing increase in demand for its services and supports

We know that caregiving is not a single-issue service sector: it bridges health, economics, family services, social services, culture, community sources, and law. Using Caregivers Alberta's community development approach, we will continue to expand our partnerships with different branches of government, non-profit organizations and private industry to bring support to caregivers across Alberta.