

**MARCH/APRIL 2016 EDITION**

Newsletter for the

# FAMILY CAREGIVER



## CARING FOR ONESELF WHILE CARING FOR OTHERS

### How do we become a caregiver?

The reality of taking care of a relative in loss of autonomy comes on gradually. We are not automatically prepared for the tasks and responsibilities which often increase as time goes on: months might eventually turn into years without any notice. Without even realizing it, stress and fatigue sets in which eventually lead to exhaustion. How do we remain available without jeopardizing our own physical and psychological health? In this newsletter, caregivers will learn how to recognize the signs of exhaustion and its prevention.

## To Read

- The importance of prevention
- Recognize the signs of physical stress
- The power of listening and support



## WE ARE CAREGIVERS

*«Caring for someone, whether short or long term, requires an adaptation period, both mentally and physically. We all have coping skills that enable us to get through difficult times. During challenging circumstances, it is normal to feel hopeless, angry and frustrated. However, the way we react to our emotions will make a difference in the way we feel. We might realize that we may need help.*

*If I take care of myself, I will be able to take care of the person who needs support.»*

Source : Guide de survie du proche aidant

## In Québec...

There are one million people who provide aid to the elderly, to which 150,000 are themselves elders. The majority of caregivers remain responsible for the same person for at least 5 years.

Source : MSSS2005

## The importance of talking about prevention

The ideal scenario is to take preventative action early on in managing one's life as a caregiver, but it is never too late to start!

It is important to realize that every caregiving situation is different, so we cannot generalize the methods or means of support that will meet the needs of each caregiver.

Every person has the capacity to find their unique solutions. At the moment it might be unimaginable to envision a resolution to a way out of exhaustion. However, it is possible to make changes to one's life.

**Prevention means stopping to think about ones situation and navigate the means to avoid burnout.**

### **TRAINING *Caregiving without Burnout***

We invite you to a series of 8 sessions that will allow you to acquire the necessary skill sets to support your loved one while respecting your personal limits and needs in order to prevent exhaustion.

Training starts **Tuesday, the 10th of May, from 1:30 to 3:30** at our Godmanchester location, 1493, Rt 138, suite 4. No related cost for this training.

**To register**, we invite you to contact Debbie Neumann at 450 826-1243 or at [dneumann@aidantsnaturelshsl.com](mailto:dneumann@aidantsnaturelshsl.com)

## Recognize the signs of physical stress

As a caregiver, there will be times situations can be more demanding than others, maybe even to the point that it could leave you breathless. As long as these circumstance allow you to respect personal limits, do not overwhelm you and enable you to regain a normal life balance, you do not have to worry. If these stressful conditions persist and you do not reach out for needed help, distress can set in. Learn how to recognize the symptoms of stress:

General irritability, impulsivity;

- Frequent urge to cry or flee;

Difficulty to concentrate

- Fatigue and a loss of the joy of life

Anxiety, fear, insomnia, nightmares



headaches and upset stomach;

- Loss of appetite or overeating;

Neglect of these signs can lead to;

- worsen existing diseases

social withdrawal



A recent study conducted among caregivers, where the average age was 68, a sample of 126 women and 74 men, shows that:

- 48% report having health problems they did not have before.
- 63.5% suffer from physical pain.
- 61% have sleep disorders.
- 25% report increased consumption of drugs.

- 59% say they feel alone.
- 70% do not take any leisure time.

## **The power of listening and support**

Never underestimate the power of active listening and individual support. This confidential personalized attention allows caregivers to deepen their reflection process to provide reassurance, a fresh new look at their caregiving situation and the opportunity to find self-motivated solutions.

### **We also offer a variety of different services:**

- **Monthly *Between Caregivers Support Groups* – March 14<sup>th</sup> & April 18<sup>th</sup> in Godmanchester and March 21<sup>st</sup> & April 25<sup>th</sup> in St-Chrysostome**
- **Training: *Caregiving without Burnout* (starting May 10th)**
- **Grief Support Groups**

## **Buy a Daffodil: a simple gesture that saves lives.**

We all know someone affected by cancer. The Canadian Cancer Society, during their Daffodil Campaign, sells fresh daffodils, which is a symbol of hope and solidarity throughout Québec.

Since the 1950s, daffodils arrived in Canadian communities to mark the beginning of Daffodil Month. Today, the daffodil continues to symbolize the strength and courage of those who battle cancer.

The proceeds from the daffodil sales go in aid to support those affected by cancer and their families. It also helps finance research projects that offers support and brings forth valuable information, all in hope to save lives.

As a means to relax, regain one's breath and to simply take time for oneself, we have included a mandala for you to try, enjoy and discover a new way to be! Coloring is not just for kids!

