



PRESENTED BY  
FAMILY CAREGIVERS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



Family Caregivers  
of British Columbia

# The Incredible Role of Family & Friend Caregivers

BC Association of Community Response Networks (BC CRN)

January 18, 2022

Presenter: Lycia Rodrigues, MA  
Caregiver Support Manager





Family Caregivers  
of British Columbia

# Who we are

- Family Caregivers of BC (FCBC) is a non-profit charity dedicated 100% to the well being of family caregivers
- 32 years – 1st of its kind in Canada & only 3 provincial organizations across Canada
- Serving across BC since 2010, past 5 years as part of the Ministry of Health's Patients as Partners Initiative
- Three pillars include: caregiver support, education and engagement and collaboration

## CAREGIVER SUPPORT

- Caregivers Support Line - 1-877-520-3267
- Informational, referral & navigation
- Caregiver support groups
- Caregiver Coaching
- Online caregiver resource centre

## EDUCATION

- Resource library: webinars and podcasts
- Newsletters publications, E-news, articles and blogs
- Support group facilitator training
- Outreach to community groups

## ENGAGEMENT & COLLABORATION

- Caregiver engagement quality improvement health policy
- Presentations participation in health committees
- Collaborations: condition specific org; health authorities, Ministry of health research

# Your Learning

## WHAT WE'RE COVERING

- The definition and scope of a family caregiver, including the many roles, tasks and activities the role involves.
- What are some common caregiver needs that emerge from these experiences?
- Where to find resources and supports for family caregivers in British Columbia?



Family Caregivers  
of British Columbia

## The Definition of a Family Caregiver

Family member or friend who provides care and support to someone living with disease, disability or frailty due to aging.

The role of a family caregiver is mutually determined by the people providing care and support as well as those receiving it.



# HOW BIG?



Family Caregivers  
of British Columbia

An iceberg floating in the ocean. The tip of the iceberg is visible above the water, while the much larger, submerged part is below the surface. The text '80%' is overlaid on the submerged part of the iceberg.

80%

**10:1**

For every hour  
the public system  
provides,  
caregivers give 10

6





1,376,155

IN BRITISH COLUMBIA



Family Caregivers  
of British Columbia



"There are four kinds of people in this world - those who have been **caregivers**, those who currently are **caregivers**, those who will be **caregivers**, and those who will need **caregivers**."

- former U.S. first lady,  
**Rosalynn Carter**



# The Caregiver Relationship

"MANY EXPERIENCE TIMES OF PROFOUND CONNECTION, DEEPLY MEANINGFUL AND POSITIVE EXPERIENCES THAT ARE LIFE-CHANGING. BEING A CAREGIVER MEANS CARING BECAUSE OF RELATIONSHIP; FEW PEOPLE REMAIN UNTOUCHED BY THIS DEEPLY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE."

Barb MacLean, Executive Director,  
Family Caregivers of BC

DEPRESSION AND  
ANXIETY

INSOMNIA

HIGH LEVELS OF  
STRESS

**CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITIONS  
TWICE THE RATE  
OF GENERAL POPULATION**

# **IMPACT OF CAREGIVING ON HEALTH**

HYPERTENSION

BACK INJURIES

COMPROMISED  
IMMUNE SYSTEM

# Challenges Experienced

- Overload and exhaustion
- Trying to “do it all” and not asking for help
- Not setting boundaries or saying “no”
- Complex family dynamics; changing roles
- Having difficult conversations
- Lack of a support network - feeling isolated
- Overwhelming emotions and uncertainty
- Ongoing grief/losses
- Financial and legal concerns
- Navigating the healthcare system
- Feeling isolated
- Poor self-care



**Family Caregivers  
of British Columbia**

# Ten Signs of Caregivers Stress

1. Denial – about disease & effect
2. Anger
3. Social Withdrawal
4. Anxiety about the future
5. Depression
6. Exhaustion
7. Sleeplessness
8. Emotional reactions – crying & yelling
9. Lack of concentration
10. Health problems





## Understanding Your Caregiver Needs

- What do I feel are my biggest challenges right now?

---
- What is one thing that would support me right now in my caregiving role?
- I need support with... I need support with... I need support with...



# The Benefits of a Support Plan



Family Caregivers  
of British Columbia

Creating a personal caregiving plan is driven by your needs and is tailored to what will give you the greatest support to reduce emotional and physical stress. It can be a valuable exercise to support you in your caregiver role and is beneficial,<sup>1,2</sup> by:



**Being engaged and informed:** actively planning and managing needs helps support desired outcomes and solutions.



**Having clarity and taking action:** knowing your needs and what supports you improves the chance of successfully moving towards action.



**Balancing time:** creating a support plan for yourself allows space and opportunities to balance your time.



**Having flexibility:** your caregiving role and circumstances may not change but having flexibility and choice with services and supports can empower you and may reduce feelings of burden.




**Allowing better communication:** having a caregiver support plan enables you to clarify with other people what you are trying to do and also what you would like them to do in order to support you.



“It’s never overreacting  
to ask for what you want  
and need.”

— Amy Poehler

A dandelion seed head is positioned on the left side of the frame, its stem extending downwards. The background is a soft, warm gradient of golden-brown and tan, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is calm and contemplative.

# Identifying Caregiver Needs & Strengthening a Network of Support

---



---

Identifying your needs

---

Determine who you can you ask for help

---

Explore how to ask for help and support

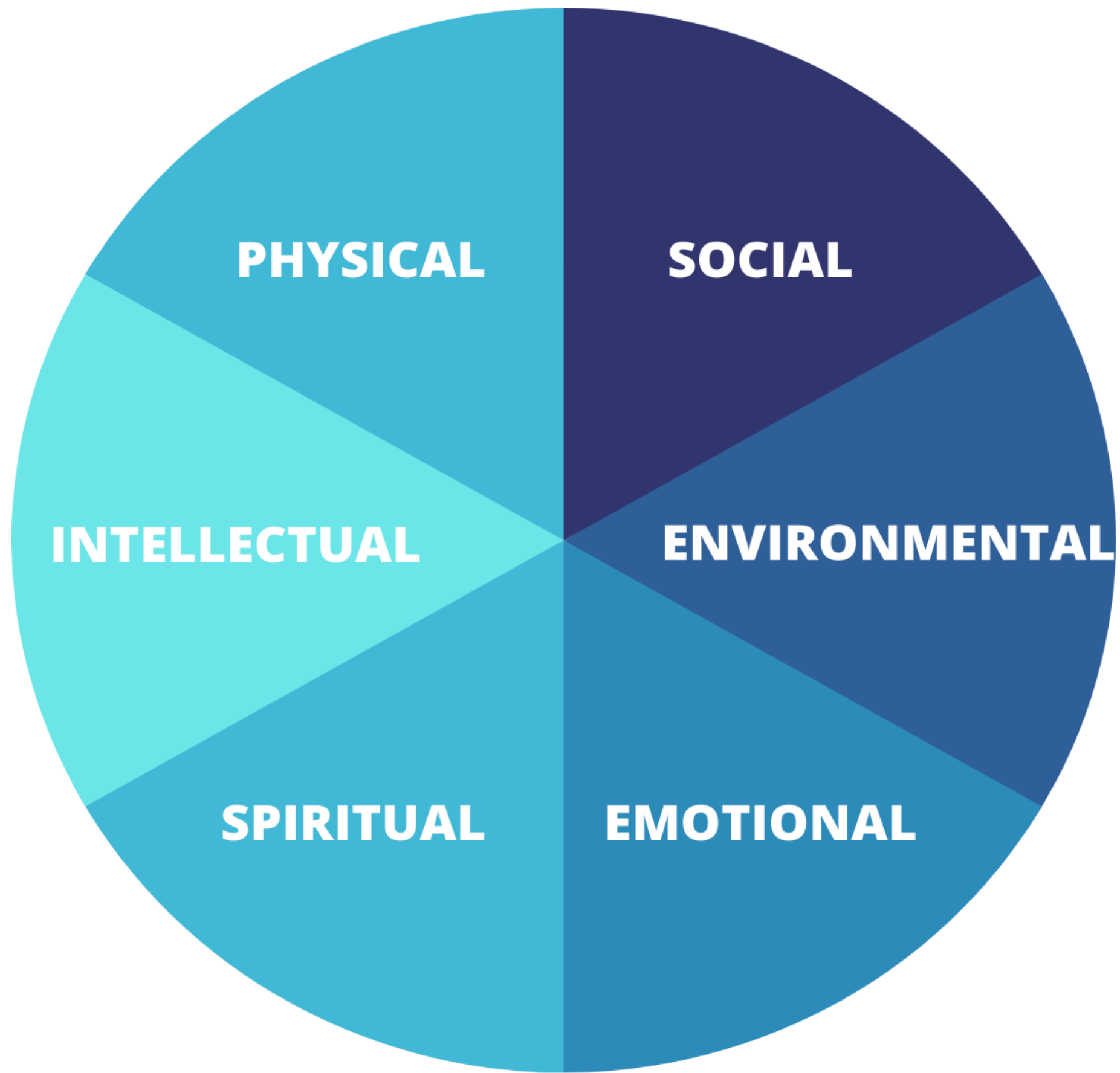
---

Understanding the value of strengthening  
circles of support

## Building a Circle of Care for Caregivers



Family Caregivers  
of British Columbia



Multi-Dimensional  
Approach to  
Wellness

Thinking About  
Caregiver's  
Wellness



# Quick Poll

Do you feel comfortable with the idea of asking someone for help ?



# Connection

A big challenge for caregivers is isolation.

- Caregivers are so busy & consumed by all the things they have to juggle
- Few are available for friends, neglecting their social health

Asking for help is something most caregivers struggle with.

- Value placed on independence makes us worry about being a burden to others
- Caregiving is NOT something that can be accomplished alone...at least not for very long





**How can you ask for help?**

Follow Up on Offers

Get Specific

Be Direct

Appreciate and Validate

Keep Asking



Family Caregivers  
of British Columbia

# Thinking About Circles of Relationships

What are the different circles of relationships that exist within our lives?



Family Caregivers  
of British Columbia



# Benefits of a Circle of Care

- They create social support networks.
- They provide a way to deal with crises.
- Reduce demands on the healthcare system.
- They can address the isolation experienced by caregivers.
- They increase the quality of life for both caregivers and their care recipients.
- They increase community capacity.



# *Connection*

---

I define connection as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship.

*Boni*



**Family Caregivers  
of British Columbia**

# FAMILY CAREGIVERS SUPPORTS & EDUCATION

## Caregiver Toll-Free Support Line

1-877-520-3267, Mon-Fri 8:30am – 4pm

- 1-1 Emotional Support
- Help with navigating the health care system
- Access to support groups
- Referral to community resources
- Caregiver Coaching

## Caregiver Education

- Caregiver Connection Newsletter
- FCBC Monthly Enews
- Caregiver Tips and Tools (webinars, articles, podcast, booklets)
- FCBC Social Media (FB Lives and YouTube Channel)



ONE-ON-ONE CAREGIVER COACHING



JOIN A CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP



# Questions and Discussion



**Family Caregivers  
of British Columbia**