



## For Caregivers Only - Caregiving and Self Care Programs

### Intended Audience

For individuals who are providing primary care to a loved one with cancer.

### Program Description

For Caregivers Only is a Wellspring Calgary program designed to inform, nurture and refuel caregivers. The full-day session provides an opportunity for respite, education, the sharing of practical care-provision ideas, and the space for the evolution of mutual support for those providing primary care to a loved one with cancer. Leaders offer a wealth of professional and personal experience and work to provide not only a day of care, but above all recognition and acceptance of the challenging nature of the caregiver's role.

### Benefits and Impact

It is common for caregivers to experience stress and fatigue and to have few opportunities to process their own emotions as they care for a friend or family member living with cancer. This day offers quiet space and support for those who have found themselves in this challenging role.

Benefits of the Caregivers' Day include:

- respite
- information about caregiver role and resources
- experiential learning
- nurturance and emotional support
- opportunity to share personal experiences and learn from other participants

### What to Expect at a Session

In this casual, inviting environment participants join fellow caregivers for a day of rest and relaxation, conversation and connection, practical information and resources, good food and music.

### Participant Comments

*"By the end of the day, I realized I was not alone and I felt I was doing a good job as a caregiver."*

*"In order to be a good caregiver, I must care for myself."*

*"Lots of valid research and development was shared."*

### What the Research Says:

In 2012, Statistics Canada reported that cancer was the second-most common condition necessitating a caregiver(s). Cancer was the top reason for spousal caregiving, and the majority of all caregivers provided care for their parents. In a qualitative study conducted by Richardson et al., 73 family caregivers of head and neck cancer patients indicated common needs included help for practical tasks, help in understanding their loved one's treatment plans, the need to experience empathy from healthcare professionals, and more information about how to access support materials and support groups. The majority of caregivers expressed a preference for face-to-face meetings to allow for greater empathy, understanding, and improved ease in relationship-building. Caregivers who participated in group sessions reported benefits such as improved coping skills, experiencing compassion, learning practical information, and having the opportunity to express their emotions and fears with others who were going through similar experiences. (Statistics Canada. Government of Canada. Portrait of Caregivers, 2012: Highlights. Obtained from: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-652-x/2013001/hl-fs-eng.htm>). (Richardson AE, Morton R., Broadbent E. (2015). Psychological support needs of patients with head and neck cancer and their caregivers: A qualitative study, *Psychology & Health*, 30(11): 1288-1305).

### Program Frequency:

**1 full day** per program  
**1-2 programs** per session  
Winter, spring/summer, fall

**Optimum class size: 15**

### Related Programs:

The Healing Journey  
Tea Group  
Thursdays with Bob  
Visualization and Relaxation