

# CARING FOR A PARTNER

Caring for a partner can be hard on any relationship. As a caregiver, you may have to cope with the loss of companionship, loss of income, loss of sexual contact and changes in your future plans. At the same time, you may feel less important, since all the attention is focused on your partner and the full responsibility for managing the household, child care and finances, now lie with you alone.

What Can you do to cope?

- Accept help from family, friends and professionals so that you can take a break from one another. This will allow you to do other things with your partner that are not related to caregiving.
- Allow yourself to feel all of your emotions, the good and the difficult one, and share these with each other. Understanding what it is like for the other person will open lines of communication.
- Caregiving should not mean parenting. Encourage your partner to continue to do as much for themselves as possible. This will result in increased confidence, feelings of self-worth, and an improved sense of control over their environment. It will also decrease the number of tasks you must do.
- Seek support if you are having difficulty resolving your concerns. Talk to a friend, join a support group, find out what has worked for others in a similar situation.

Role Imbalance

- In most relationships, responsibilities of life are shared by two people. If one half of the team is down, the other half must shoulder more of the burden – in addition to caring for their loved one. For some, added responsibilities are related mostly to household chores. For others, becoming the head of the household and shouldering all the financial responsibilities is the greater challenge. This can be overwhelming, especially if you also have to deal with a job, or your own health problems.

## KEY TIPS

**Try not to do everything by yourself. Accept help and seek support. Both of you will experience a period of adjustment. Adding caregiving duties to your role will have an obvious impact on your relationship. Allow your partner to offer you support from time to time. Take care of your own needs and health. Try to arrange breaks for yourself. Remember you can only care for others if you yourself are healthy and feeling good.**

## WE CAN HELP

**CAREGIVERS NETWORK FOR EAST KOOTENAY SENIORS**

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