

Coping with the Ongoing Losses of Caregiving

Caring for someone we love often brings changes we never expected. While many people associate grief with death or a terminal diagnosis, caregivers often experience grief long before that, in small, ongoing ways as health shifts and roles evolve. These kinds of losses can be subtle, and yet they can shape daily life in profound ways. Some caregivers notice changes in:

	Independence: Days begin to revolve around someone else's needs or schedule.
	Privacy: The home may feel busier with care providers or appointments.
	Future plans: Hopes for travel, retirement, or routines may look different than once imagined.
	Finances: Savings or work plans may shift to support caregiving.
	Relationships: Shifts in relationships when caring for a spouse, parent, sibling or friend.
	Leisure time: Social outings or personal hobbies may become harder to fit in.
	Work or career: Adjustments, big or small, may need to happen in order to meet care needs.

Strategies to Support Your Caregiving Journey:

Emotions can show up in different ways. There is no "right" way to feel and navigate these losses, but caregivers have shared a few things that have helped them feel less alone.

	Talk & connect with others: Speaking with someone you trust or join a support group with FCBC or the Alzheimer Society can offer relief, validation, and a safe place to share experiences.
	Reflect and honour changes: Journaling, reflective writing, or acknowledging what has changed can create space for self-compassion and help process grief.
	Learn about caregiving grief: Learning about the emotional side of caregiving can help normalize feelings and soften the load.
	Find small moments for yourself: Sitting in silence for a few breaths before starting the day, taking a warm shower and letting the water run over you, or listening to one calming song from start to finish.
	Accept help when offered: Letting others support you can be a meaningful turning point in the caregiving journey.



Explore These Mindfulness Techniques:

- Mindful movement**
Gentle yoga, walking in nature, swimming, or similar activities.
- Intentional breathing**
Techniques like square breathing, triangle breathing, or simply observing the breath.
- Meditation and grounding**
Guided meditation, supportive imagery, body scans, or the 5-4-3-2-1 grounding technique.

Try this Square Breathing Exercise

Square breathing is a simple, calming technique that helps slow the nervous system. By creating a rhythmic breathing pattern, it signals safety to the body.

Follow these steps:

- Breathe in for four counts
- Hold for four counts
- Breathe out for four counts
- Hold for four counts

