



## Enjoying your Companionship Journey without Becoming Exhausted

**Being a volunteer or caregiver comes with many benefits: it allows you to have a positive impact on your community and make new friends, helps you develop new skills, increases your self-confidence, and improves your physical, emotional and mental health.**

However, this commitment also requires a proper understanding of one's own motivations in order to establish clear boundaries. To appreciate this experience without becoming exhausted and to be able to provide loving support and cherish the benefits of the relationship, care providers must also take care of themselves, keep in mind other responsibilities, and maintain a healthy life balance.

In this factsheet, you will find reminders and tools to help you recharge, so that, regardless of your circumstances, your experience will remain positive and enriching.

We wish you pleasant reading and a rewarding companionship journey,

**Little Brothers**

### How to recharge your batteries

#### *Easy self-care strategies*

- Take stock of the activities that make you happy and are already incorporated into your life and continue to practice them;
- Stay in touch with nature, art, music, and beauty;
- Maintain healthy lifestyle habits, such as a balanced diet, proper sleeping patterns, physical activities and hobbies to reduce stress levels;
- Maintain good communication with the elder's family, loved ones and staff.

## How to recharge your batteries

### Caregiver burnout prevention

- Every individual is surrounded by a network of family, friends, neighbours, doctors and specialists, and support workers such as psychologists, social workers, spiritual guides, and volunteers.
- Each member of the network contributes to the well-being of the caregiver as well as the receiver of care through their hearts and their actions, to the best of their ability.



### Good practices

- Identify respective needs and expectations, by agreeing, for example, on the type of assistance to be provided;
- Arrange a visiting schedule that suits everyone and review as needed;
- Create a secure environment by adhering to a routine;
- Trust in the other person's abilities;
- Listen and stay connected to your own emotions;
- Vary your approaches: visits, phone calls, e-mails, etc.;
- Have fun, read together, watch movies or look at photo albums, enjoy a sweet treat;
- Take breaks, go for walks, practice activities that rejuvenate and relax;
- Don't ignore your or your companion's feelings, avoid over-dramatizing, don't forget to bring joy and a sense of humour;
- Celebrate small victories;
- Plan breaks and respite periods with the elder's caregiving network;
- Refer to specialized support groups or services if you feel helpless or the situation changes.



## Attitudes to adopt



- Keep in mind that the quality of your presence makes all the difference.
- Compassion fatigue can occur. Continue to practice activities that allow you to recharge and practice them regularly. Do not feel guilty about taking the necessary time for yourself.
- You are not alone: your supervisor is available to gather information about your companion's health and can provide you with perspective and support for challenges you may encounter. As a volunteer, share your observations!
- As a caregiver, share your observations and questions with trustworthy people and qualified staff in the companion's caregiving network. Take time for yourself.

## Things to be avoided

- Acting like a saviour and forgetting to take care of yourself;
- Claiming to know what is good for the other person and making repeated suggestions;
- Asking indiscreet questions;
- Making promises you cannot keep;
- Missing scheduled visits.

## Additional resources

### Telephone

L'Appui : 1 855-852-7784 or  
<https://www.lappui.org/en/>

### Online

Red Cross, *Psychological First Aid*,  
<https://www.redcross.ca/training-and-certification/course-descriptions/psychological-first-aid/psychological-first-aid>

L'actuel, *The benefits of volunteering*,  
<https://www.lactuel.org/en/volunteer-work/benefits-of-volunteering/>

Volunteer Vibe, *Compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue for volunteers*, [blogue]  
<https://blog.volunteer.ca/compassion-satisfaction-and-compassion-fatigue-for-volunteers/>