



CAREGIVER PERSONAS IN ONTARIO



THE **CHANGE**
FOUNDATION
ENGAGE, EXPLORE, EVOLVE



THE ONTARIO
caregiver
ORGANIZATION



pollara
strategic insights

SAKI

AVERAGE
AGE 48

Saki is looking after her spouse Mia, who sustained multiple injuries including a fractured leg in a car accident a week ago.

Saki has taken time off work so she can provide the four or five hours of care Mia needs each day. Still, the experience is stressful for Saki because she is not used to caring for someone and Mia is often angry and in pain. In addition to the emotional strain, Saki is worried about their finances while they wait to see if Mia's insurance will cover the expenses caused by her care and lack of income. For the time being, Saki's life completely revolves around Mia's care. Saki is glad she could be there to care for Mia, but she will be glad when this is over.



10+
HOURS
PER WEEK

LESS
THAN
SIX
MONTHS
OF CARING



47%

PERCENTAGE
OF POPULATION



53%

20%

Short term caregiving
for person with
transient/curable
problem (injury/surgery)

WINSTON

AVERAGE
AGE 45

Winston's grandfather John has lost his mobility due to arthritis. The kids got together to make a schedule so that John would have company a few nights a week and everyone agreed to take responsibility for some aspect of John's care. Winston agreed to drive John to some of his appointments and sometimes take him shopping. His grandfather does not live in the same neighbourhood as Winston, so travelling to see John adds to the burden of his care. Winston has a job and a family, and so sometimes he resents the time it takes to help his grandfather but being part of a team has helped to keep it manageable.

1-2
HOURS
PER WEEK

LESS
THAN
ONE
YEAR
OF CARING

 **51%**
 **49%**

PERCENTAGE
OF POPULATION

17%

Limited responsibility/
role for person with
long term or lifelong
health challenge

ROSE

AVERAGE
AGE 59

Rose's mother Dianne just turned 80 and she is suffering from dementia, diagnosed 3 years back.

For now, Dianne is still living in her own home and taking care of herself. Rose helps by managing her mother's finances, expenses and legal affairs as well as taking her for groceries once a week and accompanying her mother to her various medical appointments. She finds the organization of Dianne's various medical professionals to be a difficult task. Rose feels that she is handling the responsibility of her mother on her own, with little help from other family members.

While her children are grown, Rose still feels that she is sacrificing on her obligations to her family, her work and the time she needs to take care of herself. As she is approaching retirement, Rose also worries about the financial burden taking care of her mother has become. Rose is very worried about the future and what would happen to her mother if Rose got sick. At 60, Rose is already having medical problems of her own and she often feels anxious about what will happen to her and Dianne if their health gets worse.



10+
HOURS
PER WEEK

3-5
YEARS
OF CARING



40%

PERCENTAGE
OF POPULATION

15%

Over 50 caring for
older parent with long
term or lifelong
health challenge

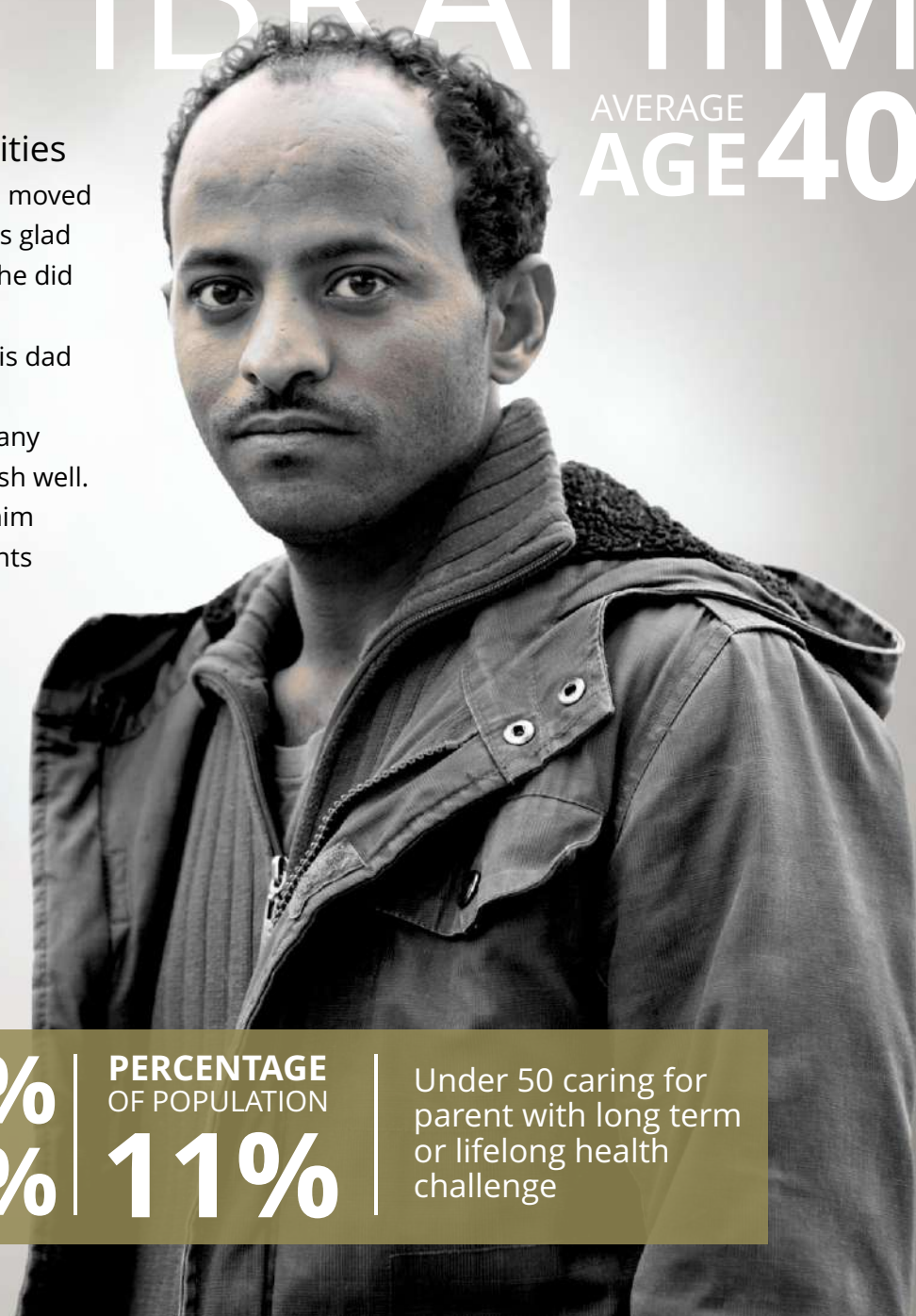


60%



IBRAHIM

AVERAGE
AGE 40

At 39, Ibrahim is juggling his work and family responsibilities while also taking care of his aging father Hasan. Hasan, who just turned 65, moved into Ibrahim's condo last year after he fell in his apartment. While Ibrahim is glad his dad is safe and appreciates this opportunity to bond with him, he feels he did not have a choice in taking on his father's care and the stress of the new responsibilities and another person in the house gets to him sometimes. His dad doesn't require that much care day-to-day and Ibrahim is able to share this responsibility with his wife, Sara. Ibrahim does feel he is responsible for many aspects of his father's life, particularly since his father does not speak English well. The need to keep his father's life, as well as his own, organized leaves Ibrahim feeling stressed. He has a hard time keeping track of the many appointments his father has with doctors, specialists and other healthcare providers, and he feels like he can never relax. He is always falling behind in his work as he sometimes has to take time off to take his father to appointments. He feels he is constantly doing things for other people and is not appreciated for all he does. He finds his father's care has a bigger financial impact than he expected, and he is having to cut back on his spending to afford these additional expenses. He wishes there were financial programs to support him in his current caregiving role.



5-9 | **1-3**
HOURS | **YEARS**
PER WEEK | OF CARING

 **57%**
 **43%**

PERCENTAGE
OF POPULATION
11%

Under 50 caring for
parent with long term
or lifelong health
challenge

MADDY



AVERAGE
AGE 55

Maddy never wanted kids, but she became a kind of mom to every kid on the street where she lives. When her neighbour Petra fell on the ice one winter five years ago, it was Maddy who called the ambulance. Ever since that fall, Petra has been dealing with anxiety. Sometimes, it is so severe she is unable to leave her house. Maddy will stop in to check on her on her way to work and will do small errands for her like shopping. But Petra has mood swings and is not an easy patient, so after her visit Maddy sometimes feels upset and angry all day at work. To add to her responsibilities, Maddy's Uncle Bill had a mild stroke a few months ago. While he is back home and living on his own, his mobility has been compromised and he now needs assistance getting out of the house, as well as with his financial and legal affairs. Bill was born in Poland, and while he learned English when he came to Canada, he seems to have lost his confidence with his second language since his stroke, making it necessary for his family members, including Maddy, to act as a translator. While Maddy wants to continue to help both Petra and Bill, she is finding it increasingly difficult to balance these responsibilities with her own career and personal life.



3-4
HOURS
PER WEEK

5+
YEARS
OF CARING

 **44%**
 **56%**

PERCENTAGE
OF POPULATION

10%

Caring for friend/
extended family
member with long
term or lifelong
health challenge

PAUL

AVERAGE
AGE 65

Paul has been caring for his wife Louise for more than five years, since her multiple sclerosis began to seriously impede her mobility.

While Louise is still able to provide her own personal care, she is dependent on Paul for everything else. It takes several hours every day, but Paul is glad she can stay with him at home and he has the time to take care of her because he is retired. Taking care of Louise is just part of marriage for Paul, and he feels he is managing it well and is content. However, as Paul ages, he does find these responsibilities to be tiring, and they are starting to take a toll on his physical and emotional health. He sometimes is stressed, particularly about Louise's declining health and his ability to take care of her financially. He could use some help to balance his lifestyle; to take care of Louise while still taking time for himself and his other interests, all of which have been put on the back burner.

10+
HOURS
PER WEEK

5+
YEARS
OF CARING



60%
40%

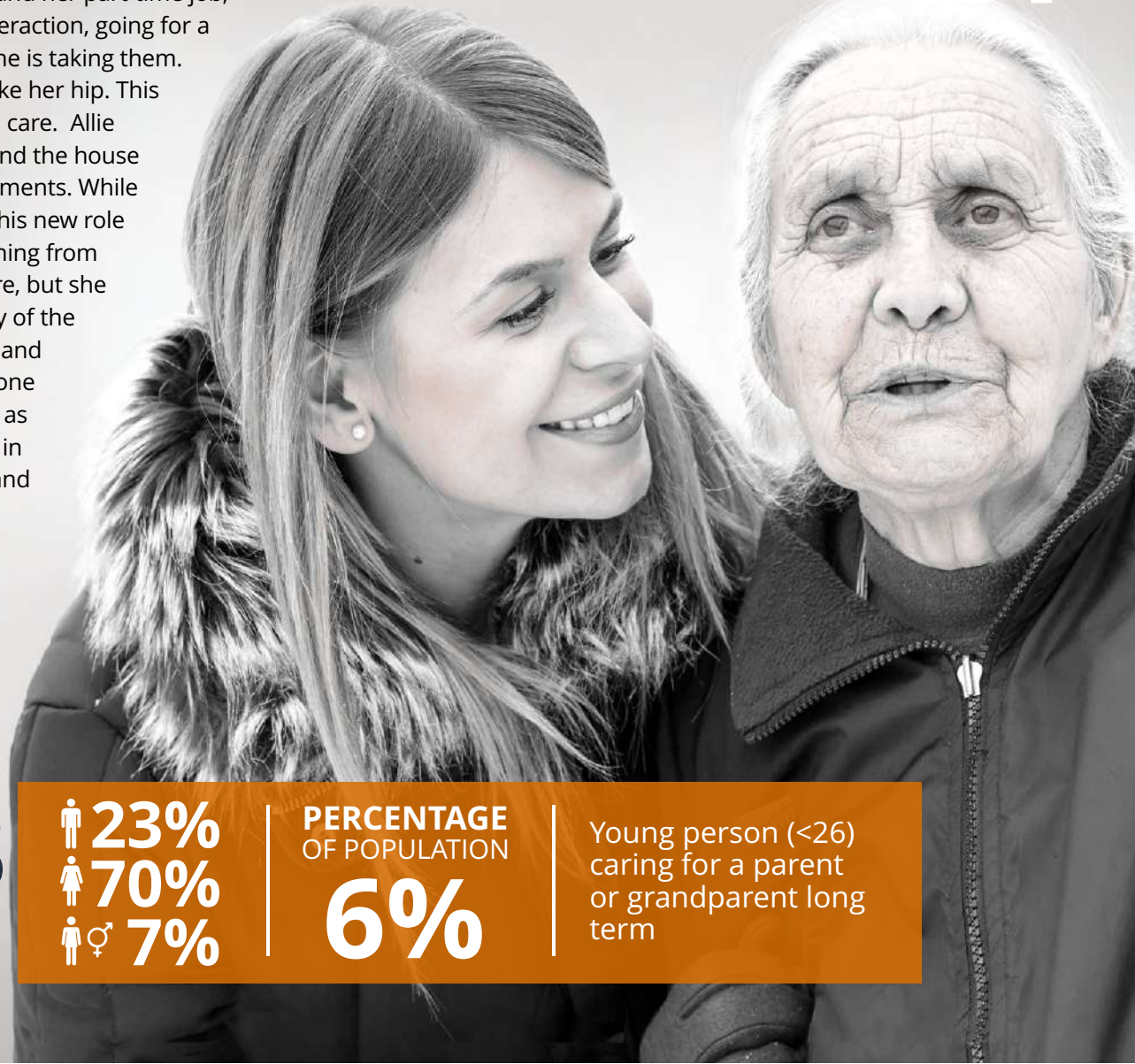
PERCENTAGE
OF POPULATION
7%

Caring for spouse
with long term or
lifelong health
challenge

When Allie's grandmother, Maggie, moved from Armenia to live with her and her family more than 10 years ago, Allie was just 8 years old. She started helping out with Maggie from a very young age and since Maggie barely spoke English, Allie became her go-to person for almost everything. Two years ago, Maggie was diagnosed with an early on-set of Alzheimer's. With her parents both working full time, it was natural for Allie to take on even more responsibilities to care for her grandmother and she was more than happy to do so. Between her classes and her part-time job, Allie would spend time with Maggie to give her more social interaction, going for a walk with her or checking in on her medicines, to make sure she is taking them. But, six months ago, Maggie slipped in the washroom and broke her hip. This injury is not healing quickly, leaving Maggie in need of physical care. Allie now helps her grandmother even more, from getting her around the house and helping her bathe to taking her for physiotherapy appointments. While Allie is used to helping out, she didn't anticipate how difficult this new role would be and finds it intimidating. She has received some training from the home care worker to show her how to provide physical care, but she has had to figure some of it out by trial and error. The intimacy of the care has been hard for her to adjust to. Between school, work and Maggie, she can barely keep up with her responsibilities, let alone enjoy a social life. Allie often feels that she isn't doing as much as her parents and tends to disregard the importance of her role in her grandmother's care. She wishes there was more support and even financial help from the government. She worries about what will happen after she graduates and is even limiting the post-secondary options she's considering so she's not too far from home. Allie thinks it's inevitable that it will take longer to finish her degree, and she will be behind her peers in getting started on her own career.

ALLIE

AVERAGE
AGE 21



3-4 | **1-3**
HOURS PER WEEK | YEARS OF CARING

 **23%**
 **70%**
 **7%**

PERCENTAGE
OF POPULATION

6%

Young person (<26)
caring for a parent
or grandparent long
term

CAITLIN



AVERAGE
AGE 47

Caitlin's son Zach was born with Cerebral Palsy, and she has been caring for him and supporting him his whole life. Now he is 14, and his care is becoming more difficult as he gets older and bigger. While Caitlin is happy to help her son and wants what is best for him, she does sometimes feel frustrated, trapped and has no time for herself, while continuing to feel anxious that she will not always be able to provide her son the kind of care that he needs. Her husband, Jamie, does what he can to help, but caring for Zach has taken a toll on her marriage as well as her own physical health. Caitlin often worries about finances and how to pay for Zach's on-going care. She has virtually no savings and is constantly looking for ways to cut back in all areas of her family's spending. While she would like to get a full time job, instead of working part-time, to help lessen this stress, she does not see how she could fit this in with her current caregiving schedule. These worries sometimes keep her up at night and leave her feeling depressed. Caitlin wishes she had more support for day-to-day activities, especially to help with the physical care of Zach which is getting quite strenuous for her these days, but she has of yet been unable to find external help that she feel confident with. Additionally, she wishes she could have some financial support to help her care for her son.



10+
HOURS
PER WEEK

5+
YEARS
OF CARING

 **43%**
 **57%**

PERCENTAGE
OF POPULATION

3%

Parent caring for
child with long term
or lifelong health
challenge


JEN AVERAGE AGE 40

Jen, along with her brother David, has been helping care for her sister Amelia since Amelia suffered a permanent brain injury in a car accident 20 years ago. While Amelia has her own apartment and can take care of herself mostly, Jen helps with things which Amelia can't handle on her own like banking, taxes, driving and scheduling appointments. Additionally, Jen has to provide some financial support to Amelia to cover some expenses which she otherwise would not be able to pay for. Jen is working and has her own family. As the primary care giver, helping her sister takes a few hours per week, and she does rely on her brother to step in and help. For Jen, caregiving is a fulfilling experience, she is happy to help and can usually balance her sister's needs with her own needs, and those of her family. That said, Jen does experience times when her sister's care leaves her feeling irritable and tired and feels that she has had no choice in this situation.



3-4
HOURS
PER WEEK

5+
YEARS
OF CARING

 **27%**
 **73%**

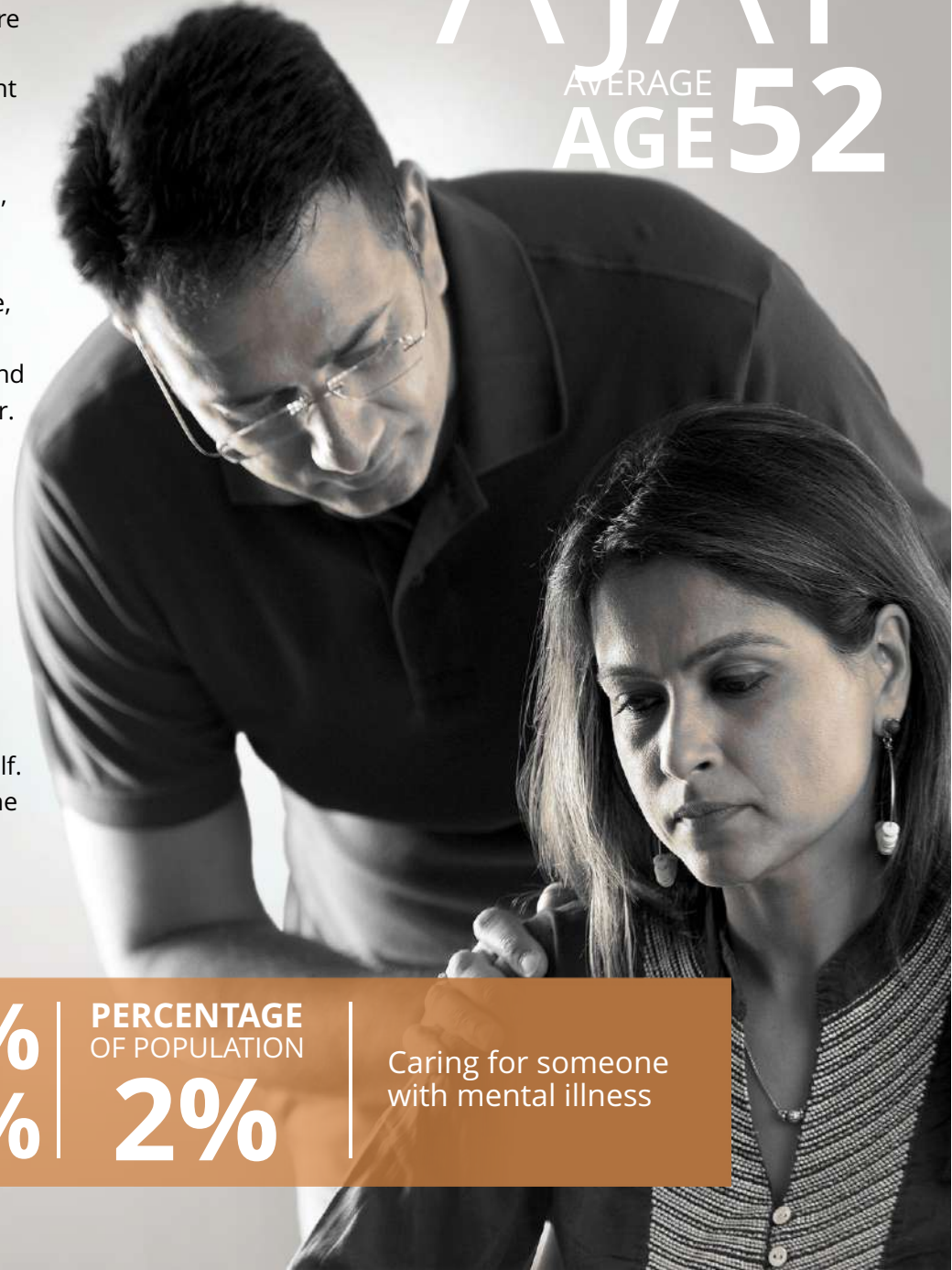
PERCENTAGE
OF POPULATION
2%

Caring for sibling
with long term or
lifelong health
challenge

Caregiving has not been easy for Ajay – he has taken care of his wife Tina for as long as he can remember. Ajay met Tina at University and they instantly felt a bond. At first, the instances of Tina's mental instabilities were minor and infrequent: Ajay wanted to be the person to help her when she was down. However, as the years went on, these occurrences became more frequent and severe. Ajay was finally able to convince Tina to get professional help, and she was ultimately diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder. However, despite this diagnosis, it took time to find the right medications and treatments that helped, and even now it is not providing the relief Ajay had hoped for. There are times Tina can function perfectly well, but when she is having a bad day, she will self-medicate with alcohol and sometimes even prescription drugs. During this time, Ajay needs to drop everything to be there for her as these are the instances when she is most likely to stop taking her meds, stop going to appointments, and isolates herself. Ajay has taken her to emergency when he feels she is in danger. While they sometimes admit her, as soon as she is stable, she is released to Ajay's care with no support or follow up and the cycle starts again. He finds it frustrating and confusing to get information about supports available and he wishes that there was one place he could go for the advice he needs. Due to the negative stigma of mental illness, Ajay is reluctant to talk about it, and has not even told his employer what she is going through. Now, on top of dealing with his own emotions, Tina's emotions and her constantly changing moods, the physical stress of care, and the negative stigma attached to mental illness, Ajay also has to worry about his finances and how to pay for their day to day living. Ajay has been left feeling helpless, short-tempered and depressed himself. He always wanted to study further, have a better career and a family. Secretly he resents that caring for Tina all these years has held him back from obtaining all the dreams he had before he met her.

AJAY

AVERAGE
AGE 52



3-4
HOURS
PER WEEK

5+
YEARS
OF CARING

68%

32%

PERCENTAGE
OF POPULATION

2%

Caring for someone
with mental illness

Name	Percent of pop	Gender (Male/Female)	Employed (PT/FT/SELF)	Average age	Level of Stress	# years caring	# hours per week	Circumstance
1 <i>Saki</i>	20%	47%/ 53%	61%	48	45% Moderate	Less than 6 months	10+	Short term caregiving for person with transient/curable problem (injury/surgery)
2 <i>Winston</i>	17%	51%/ 49%	63%	45	32% Low	Less than 1 year	1-2	Limited responsibility/role for person with long term or lifelong health challenge
3 <i>Rose</i>	15%	40%/ 60%	61%	59	62% High	3-5	10+	Over 50 caring for older parent with long term or lifelong health challenge
4 <i>Ibrahim</i>	11%	57%/ 43%	89%	40	66% High	1-3	5-9	Under 50 caring for parent with long term or lifelong health challenge
5 <i>Maddy</i>	10%	44%/ 56%	53%	55	45% Moderate	5+	3-4	Caring for friend/extended family member with long term or lifelong health challenge
6 <i>Paul</i>	7%	60%/ 40%	33%	65	58% Moderate to High	5+	10+	Caring for spouse with long term or lifelong health challenge
7 <i>Allie</i>	6%	23%/ 70%/ 7% non-binary/ third gender	51%	21	54% Moderate to High	1-3	3-4	Young person (<26) caring for a parent or grandparent long term
8 <i>Caitlin</i>	3%	43% / 57%	70%	47	46% Moderate	5+	10+	Parent caring for child with long term or lifelong health challenge
9 <i>Jen</i>	2%	27%/ 73%	66%	40	21% Low	5+	3-4	Caring for sibling with long term or lifelong health challenge
10 <i>Ajay</i>	2%	68%/ 32%	50%	52	81% Very High	5+	3-4	Caring for someone with mental illness
11 Other	6%	63% / 37%	95%	37	39%			Other



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