



“I feel burned out”

RESETTING WITHIN YOUR CAREGIVING JOURNEY



What is the Purpose of the SCALE Workbook?

The SCALE Workbook was created to review the material provided during the live or recorded webinar series and to help strengthen caregiver learning. The resources and strategies shared here are designed to support you in your caregiving journey.

How Does the Workbook Work?

Every caregiver journey is different! Whether you're a new or experienced caregiver, the more you know about mental health, the better. Whether you watch the live or recorded webinar series, you can access the SCALE Workbook at any time to help nurture your mental health as a caregiver.

Each SCALE Workbook contains the following sections:

- **Personal Caregiving Story** that reflects the emotion outlined in each weekly title.
- **Webinar Summary & Key Takeaways** to help review each weekly topic.
- **Activities** to encourage you to take actionable steps towards managing difficult caregiving emotions.
- **Self-Discovery Questions** to reflect on the difficult caregiving emotion and actionable strategies.
- **Remember**...one final thought from each weekly topic that can continue to motivate you.
- **Suggested Resources** that relate to each weekly topic. Resources can be watched, read and/or listened to. Some resources are free while some may have a small cost (purchasing is not a requirement for the program).

The Journal Icon

In each webinar slide presentation, you will see a journal icon (as pictured on the right). The journal icon serves as a prompt for caregivers to action on a key activity, question, and resource from this workbook.



TIP

When you see something underlined in blue, press “Ctrl” and click your mouse (or mouse pad) to be taken to the material online. For example, press “Ctrl” and click your mousepad on this: [Ontario Caregiver Organization](#) and you will be taken to our home webpage.



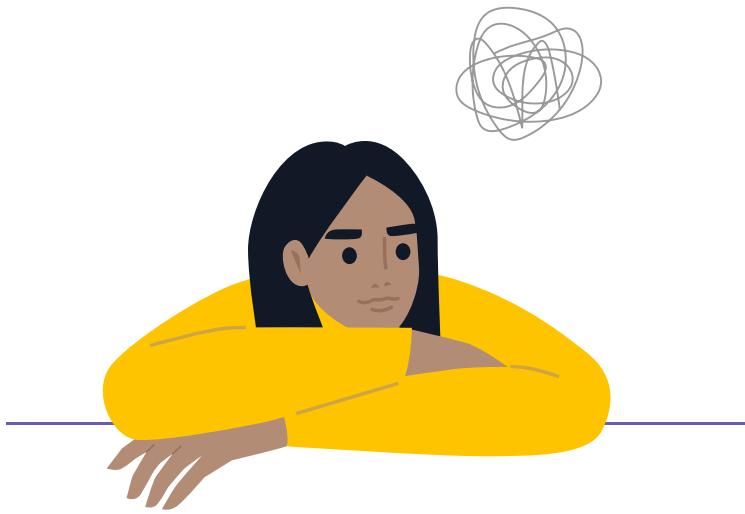
The Caregiver Role

Caregivers are unpaid, ordinary people who provide physical and emotional support to a family member, partner, friend, or neighbour.

Caregiving can include coordinating medical appointments, managing medications, arranging in-home healthcare services, and many other tasks.

A Word of Thanks

A special thanks to all the caregivers involved in creating this meaningful resource and [Creating Connections](#) for partnering with the Ontario Caregiver Organization to create the SCALE webinar series, and for providing practical resources and strategies to support caregivers on their journey.



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PERSONAL CAREGIVING EXPERIENCE

When I first became a caregiver, I thought I was “tough” and could handle the new role without any difficulty. For a while, I tried to prove this to myself. I treated caregiving as a test of my abilities as a mother, wife, and employee.

However, after a few years, I started to notice some changes in my health. I couldn’t sleep at night, had difficulties focusing on my work, and was often sick. I was just feeling really overwhelmed.

After some concerned friends and family forwarded articles to me about caregiver burnout, I realized that what I was experiencing was common for caregivers. It became clear to me that I had to change my approach to caregiving.

I took a step back to reflect on what put me in the position of caregiver. Reflecting on my love for the person I care for gave me the motivation to keep going.

I also made a conscious effort to take care of my own health. For me, this meant going for long walks, cooking special meals, and scheduling massage appointments to relax. Friends and family offered to help more often, and I began to accept all offers of help.

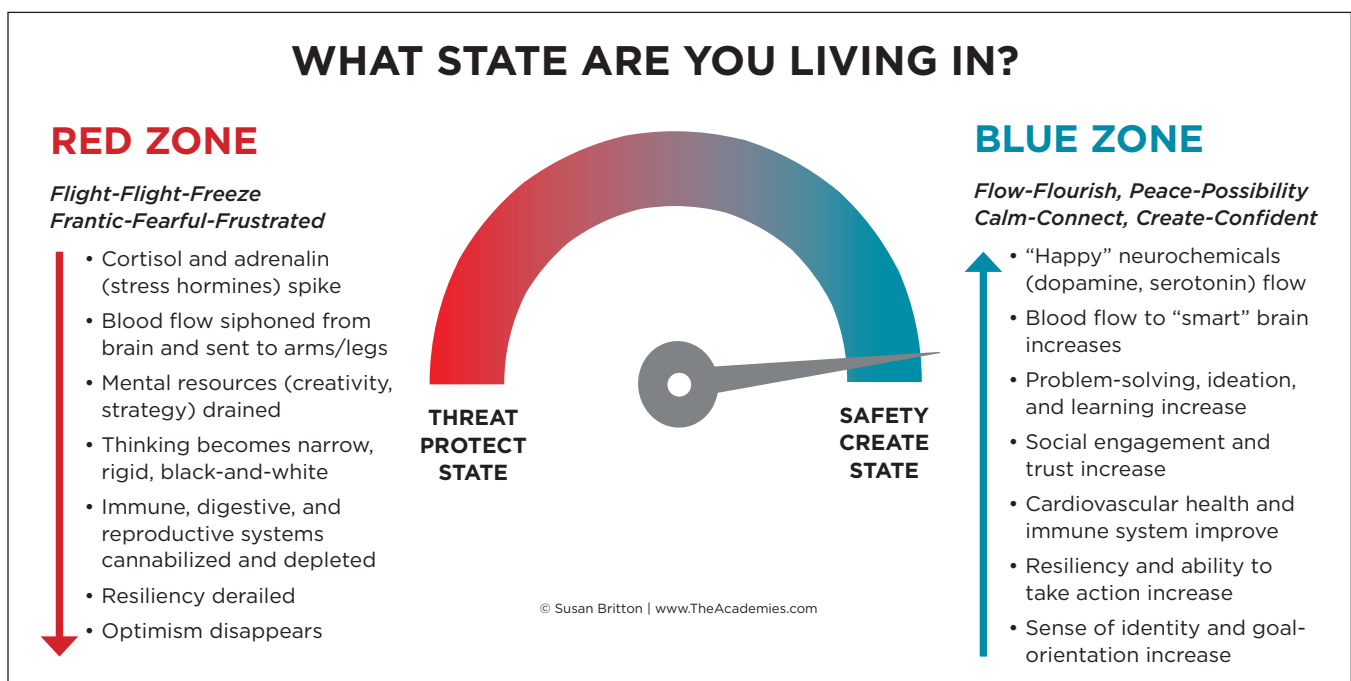
All these things helped me to overcome caregiver burnout and appreciate my role as a caregiver.

Webinar Summary

Caregivers often step into their caregiving role with good intentions but may not anticipate the long-term challenges and emotional toll that can lead to burnout. The first week of the SCALE webinar series, will support caregivers in developing the tools to manage their feelings of burnout and reset themselves to the meaning behind the role they fill.

Key Takeaways

- **Understanding Caregiver Burnout:** Caregiver burnout is a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion resulting from prolonged caregiving without adequate support or self-care, manifesting as fatigue, irritability, and withdrawal from social interactions.
- **Tools for Managing Burnout:** Recognizing signs of burnout, such as changes in sleep patterns or increased frustration, is crucial. Caregivers can use tools like intention-setting to maintain alignment with their core values and reduce feelings of overwhelm.
- **The Importance of Values and Intentions:** Values are the guiding principles that shape our actions and decisions. By setting clear intentions based on these values, you can create a meaningful framework that can help you navigate your caregiving role with more purpose and less stress.
- **Practical Steps for Intention Setting:** Effective intention setting involves identifying personal values and crafting specific intention statements to guide daily actions. Regular practices such as journaling, repeating mantras, or meditating on these intentions can help caregivers stay connected to their values and manage stress more effectively.



Activity #1:

Identifying Stress and Burnout

Take some time to recognize your own signs of stress and burnout so that you can start to take proactive action(s) sooner.

Signs of Stress

An activated stress response is the first sign that you are not getting the physical and emotional support you need. Put a checkmark (✓) beside the sign(s) of stress you experience as a caregiver. You can also add your own sign(s), if not listed below.

Becoming easily irritated or angry	Feeling overwhelmed or constantly worried	Experiencing periods of high blood pressure
Grinding your teeth at night	Having difficulty sleeping	Being forgetful
Feeling heart palpitations	Racing heartbeats	Having trouble concentrating
Having frequent headaches	Unexplained bodily pain	(Add your own)
(Add your own)	(Add your own)	(Add your own)

Signs of Burnout

If you're facing any of the above signs of caregiver stress, please reach out for support. Not addressing these signs can easily lead to experiencing caregiver burnout. Put a checkmark (✓) beside the sign(s) of burnout you experience as a caregiver. You can also add your own sign(s), if not listed below.

Sleeplessness	Irritability	Social withdrawal
Frequent experiences of anxiety	Losing interest in activities and hobbies	Feelings and thoughts of depression
Difficulty concentrating	Being late for work	Procrastinating
Having trouble relaxing, even when help is available	Experiencing a decreased sexual desire	Having much less energy than you once had
Appetite and weight changes	Fatigue	Neglecting responsibilities
Thinking cynically	Noticing you are drinking a lot more caffeine	Noticing you are drinking, smoking, or eating more
Experiencing apathy	(Add your own)	(Add your own)

Care for yourself, so you can care for others – reach out, recharge, to prevent burnout

Activity #2:

Identifying Your Values as a Caregiver

To help reset your caregiving journey, think about your role as a caregiver. Your interactions with your care recipient, the fulfilment of your caregiving tasks and your overall view of this role. Now go through the list of values below.

Decide which values are:

V (Very important)
Q (Quite important), or
N (Not important) to you

Now, go through the ones you marked as V.

Choose 3 (or more) that are most important to you.

Write them out as a note to remind yourself of what you want to stand for as a human being in the caregiving domain of life. For example, Adventure- this value provides me a sense of freedom when I often feel trapped within my caregiving role.

My Top 3 Values

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Values List

In the column on the left, put a **V** for Very important, **Q** for Quite important, or **N** for Not important to you.

V	Example: Kindness: Acting with compassion and consideration towards myself and others in a nurturing manner. (I chose V because kindness is very important to me).
	Acceptance: Being open and receptive towards myself, others, and life's circumstances without judgment or resistance.
	Adaptability: The ability to adjust and thrive in new or changing situations, showing flexibility and resilience.
	Adventure: Actively seeking out and embracing new and exciting experiences that stimulate and engage me.
	Altruism: Selflessly caring for the well-being of others, often putting their needs before your own.
	Assertiveness: Confidently expressing my needs and desires while respecting the rights and feelings of others.
	Authenticity: Staying true to myself and presenting myself in a genuine, real manner.
	Beauty: Recognizing, creating, and appreciating aesthetic qualities in myself, others, and the world around me.
	Caring: Demonstrating kindness and concern for my well-being, the well-being of others, and the environment.
	Challenge: Continuously pushing myself to learn, grow, and improve through new and difficult experiences.
	Commitment: Dedication to pursuing goals and fulfilling responsibilities with persistence and reliability.
	Compassion: Acting with empathy and kindness towards those who are experiencing hardship or suffering.
	Connection: Fully engaging in my activities and being present with others to build meaningful relationships.
	Conformity: Adhering to rules and obligations in a respectful and compliant manner.
	Cooperation: Working harmoniously with others to achieve common goals through collaboration and mutual support.
	Courage: Facing fears, threats, or challenges with bravery and determination.
	Creativity: Generating and implementing original ideas and innovative solutions.
	Curiosity: Maintaining an open and inquisitive mindset to explore, discover, and learn new things.
	Empathy: Understanding and sharing the feelings of others and responding with compassion and support.

	Equanimity: Maintaining calmness and composure, especially in challenging or stressful situations.
	Equality: Treating everyone with the same level of respect and fairness as I would want for myself.
	Fairness: Ensuring equitable treatment for myself and others, making impartial decisions and actions.
	Fitness: Taking care of my physical and mental health to enhance my overall well-being.
	Flexibility: Adapting easily to changing situations and circumstances with an open and accommodating attitude.
	Friendliness: Being amiable and approachable, fostering positive and pleasant interactions with others.
	Generosity: Sharing and giving freely to benefit myself and others without expecting anything in return.
	Gratitude: Recognizing and appreciating the positive aspects of life, myself, and others.
	Honesty: Being truthful and sincere in my interactions with myself and others.
	Humor: Finding and appreciating the lighter, amusing aspects of life.
	Humility: Demonstrating modesty and letting my achievements speak for themselves without boasting.
	Industry: Being diligent, hardworking, and dedicated in pursuing my goals and responsibilities.
	Independence: Making my own choices and relying on myself to achieve my goals and manage my life.
	Intimacy: Sharing personal emotions and experiences openly with close relationships, fostering deep connections.
	Innovation: Embracing creativity and new ideas to drive progress and find novel solutions to problems.
	Integrity: Upholding strong moral principles and honesty and consistently acting in alignment with my values.
	Justice: Striving for fairness and equality, ensuring that all individuals receive equitable treatment and opportunities.
	Kindness: Acting with compassion and consideration towards myself and others in a nurturing manner.
	Loyalty: Showing unwavering support and allegiance to individuals, groups, or causes that you value.
	Mindfulness: Being fully aware of and attentive to my present experiences and surroundings.
	Open-mindedness: Being receptive to different perspectives and ideas and evaluating them fairly.

	Patience: Waiting calmly and persistently for desired outcomes or results without frustration.
	Persistence: Continuously striving towards goals despite obstacles and difficulties.
	Pleasure: Creating and experiencing enjoyable moments and activities for myself and others.
	Power: Exercising influence or authority effectively, leading and organizing with confidence.
	Resilience: Demonstrating the ability to recover from setbacks and persist through adversity with strength and determination.
	Respect: Showing consideration and esteem towards myself and others through polite and positive behavior.
	Responsibility: Being accountable for my actions and their consequences and fulfilling my duties.
	Safety: Ensuring protection and security for myself and others and taking precautions to prevent harm.
	Self-awareness: Being conscious of my own thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, and understanding how they affect me and others.
	Self-care: Attending to my own health and well-being, ensuring my needs are met.
	Self-compassion: Treating yourself with kindness and understanding, especially during times of failure or difficulty.
	Self-development: Continuously improving and advancing in skills, knowledge, and personal growth.
	Self-control: Managing my impulses and actions to align with my values and ideals.
	Skillfulness: Practicing and refining my skills to achieve proficiency and apply them effectively.
	Spirituality: Connecting with and finding meaning in something greater than myself.
	Supportiveness: Offering help, encouragement, and availability to assist others and myself.
	Transparency: Practicing openness and honesty in communication and actions, providing clear and truthful information.
	Trust: Being reliable and faithful, building confidence in my integrity and sincerity.
	Sustainability: Committing to practices that support the long-term health and well-being of the environment and future generations.
	Honoring Tradition: Valuing and preserving cultural, familial, or historical practices and customs that provide meaning and continuity.
	Add your own Personal Value

Activity #3:

Intention Statement Building

Use these templates below to write your own personal intention statement. Write them in your journal or print them out. Place the note on your refrigerator, mirror, or anywhere you'll walk by easily and often. Repeat this as a 'mantra' or meditate on this for 5 minutes a day.

(Example: I will remember to talk to my sister to ensure that my day and my interactions as a caregiver embody my value of connection.)

I will remember to _____
to ensure that my day and my interactions as a caregiver embody my value of _____.

I came into this role because I believe in the value of _____.

I can show up today in that way by _____.

Self-Discovery Questions

The following reflection questions are designed as journaling exercises or prompts for personal introspection. Taking time for self-reflection can help reduce stress and support mental wellness, providing you with space to process your emotions and experiences. If journaling isn't your preferred method, you can still use these questions as a guide by setting aside time to reflect on your caregiving journey. Remember, these questions can be revisited as your caregiving role evolves and as your values shift. Self-discovery is an ongoing process, and these reflections can offer valuable insights along the way.

What are my signs of burnout? (see Activity #1)

[illegible]

What actions can I take to get myself out of the burnout zone?

[illegible]

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

[illegible]

Remember...

Values are the guiding principles we choose, shaping our actions and decisions as we strive to become the caregivers we want to be. Reconnecting to our values is a resource for combating burnout. It helps us to ground ourselves in the knowledge that our day-to-day tasks have a purpose and meaning that no one can take away from us.

Suggested Resources

Videos:

[How to Prevent Caregiver Burnout by CareChannel](#)

[Prevent Caregiver Burnout by Psych Hub](#)

[Tips for Managing Caregiver Stress by Psych Hub](#)

Podcast:

[Time to Talk Podcast: Episode 1: Becoming a caregiver with Mieko Ise](#)

Articles:

[Self-Care in Under a Minute](#)

[Signs of Caregiver Burnout and How to Prevent it](#)

[Caring for Yourself when You Have Caregiver Burnout](#)

Books:

The following books are available in Ontario's public library system, either at your local library or through interlibrary loan.

Linda Abbit, *The Conscious Caregiver: A Mindful Approach to Caring for Your Loved One Without Losing Yourself* (Adams Media, 2017). ISBN: 9781440597732

Josephine Grace, *The Joyful Caregiver: 8 Steps to Prevent Caregiver Burnout* (Morgan James Publishing, 2021). ISBN: 9781631950513

The following resources come with a small cost. Purchasing them is not required for the program. They are offered as additional resources based on caregiver requests. If you're interested, we recommend checking your local library first.

Deanna Carlson, *Caregiver Burnout – Caregiving Through Self-Love* (Independently Published, 2023)

Susanne White, *Self-Care for Caregivers - A Practical Guide to Caring for You While You Care for Your Loved One* (Adams Media, 2022)