



# Self-Care

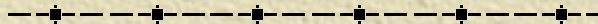
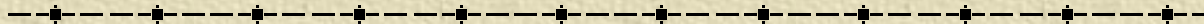
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What does it mean to you?

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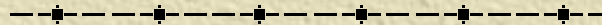
# Part II

Workshop for family caregivers,  
Mental Illness Awareness Week, 2010.



# Acknowledgements

✦ The author wishes to acknowledge and to thank Alberta Health Services, Mental Health Promotion for sponsoring Mental Illness Awareness Week 2010 in Alberta.



# Acknowledgements

✦ The author provides these materials for personal and professional use. The materials may be freely copied but not sold.

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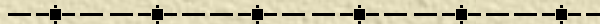
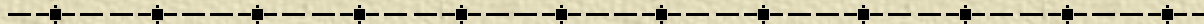
✦ Direct any inquiries to:  
[maureenosis@shaw.ca](mailto:maureenosis@shaw.ca)

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# Handouts

✦ All handouts and materials from this workshop are posted on my website.

[www.maureenosis.com](http://www.maureenosis.com)



# Self-Care

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## ✦ Reflect

- ✦ You know that you have to take care of yourself if you want to take care of anyone else.
- ✦ Supporting someone with a mental illness is challenging - and you need to find balance.
- ✦ Review the handout – have you adopted self-care strategies? (p. 2)

# Self-Care

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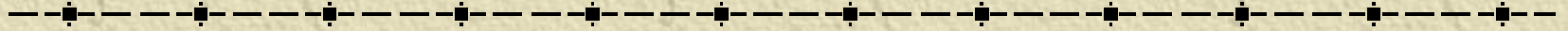
- ✦ Have you developed supportive relationships for yourself – within your own circle of family and friends, or within support groups?
  - ◆ It is not OK for you to neglect your needs.

# Self-Care

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- ✦ Are you able to be more focused on the present and let go of worries about the future or regrets about the past?
- ✦ Do you have hope for yourself and your ill family member?

# Self-Care



✦ Have you learned to grieve?

# What is grief?

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- ✦ Grief is a natural response to loss.
  - ✦ There is no right or wrong way to grieve.
  - ✦ Grief can result in mental, emotional, physical, and social reactions.

# Grief

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## ✦ Mental/emotional reactions

- ✦ Anger
- ✦ Guilt
- ✦ Anxiety
- ✦ Sadness
- ✦ Despair

## ✦ Physical

- ✦ Sleeping problems
- ✦ Changes in appetite
- ✦ Illness

## ✦ Social

- ✦ Altered feelings about work
- ✦ Wanting to withdraw

# Grief

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- ✦ “There are normal periods in between, where a young woman emerges.”
- ✦ “It is like my son’s life stood still — his friends are going onto university or finding jobs, having wives, families and mortgages.”
- ✦ “You go on feeling the loss over & over again.”

S. Ozgul. Parental Grief & Serious Mental Illness. A Narrative. Australia & New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy. <http://www.anzjft.com/pages/articles/537.pdf>

# Self-Care

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✦ Have you learned to accept and adapt to “living with” a chronic mental illness?

# Families “with depression”

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- ✦ You might feel like you are living in the “shadow of depression.”
- ✦ You might
  - ◆ Feel like you are not living your own life.
  - ◆ Struggle to find balance and to avoid feeling depressed yourself.

Stjernsward, S. & Ostman, M. (2008)

Whose life am I living? Relatives living in the shadow of depression.

International Journal of Social Psychiatry, 54(4) 358-369.

# Families “with schizophrenia”

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- ✦ You may feel frightened when a crises, such as a psychotic episode occurs.
- ✦ You may wonder where and how to get urgent help.
- ✦ You may have dealt with police, justice system, and emergency department.

Handbook for families

[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/mh-sm/pubs/schizophrenia-schizophrenie/index-eng.php](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/mh-sm/pubs/schizophrenia-schizophrenie/index-eng.php)

# Families “with anxiety”

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- ✦ You might feel like everyday living is too complex.
- ✦ You might be confused between symptoms and personality.
- ✦ You might wonder how to tell the difference between anxiety and physical symptoms.
- ✦ You might worry about embarrassment.

# Living with a “difficult” personality

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- ✦ You might feel like you are “walking on eggshells.”
- ✦ You might wonder why the behaviours vary; for example, might be worse with stress.
- ✦ You may become weary of the chaos and stormy daily living.

# Families “with addiction”

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- ✦ You might wonder whether the addiction is the problem – or the addiction is the symptom.
- ✦ You might worry about relapse.
- ✦ You might have found support:
  - ◆ e.g., Al-Anon.

# Families living “with dementia”

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- ✦ You might wonder how long you can carry on being the caregiver.
- ✦ You might feel alone; social isolation is common, especially for senior caregivers.
- ✦ You might be bewildered by the changes in behaviour from morning to evening or from day-to-day.
- ✦ You might be fearing the decisions about long-term care.

# Self-Care

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✦ Have you learned to

◆ *Love the person, hate the disorder*

# Self-Care

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✦ Do you accept that you are not to blame?

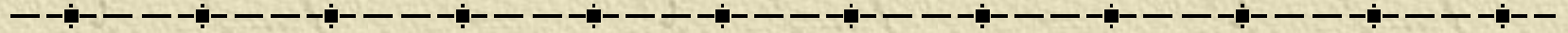


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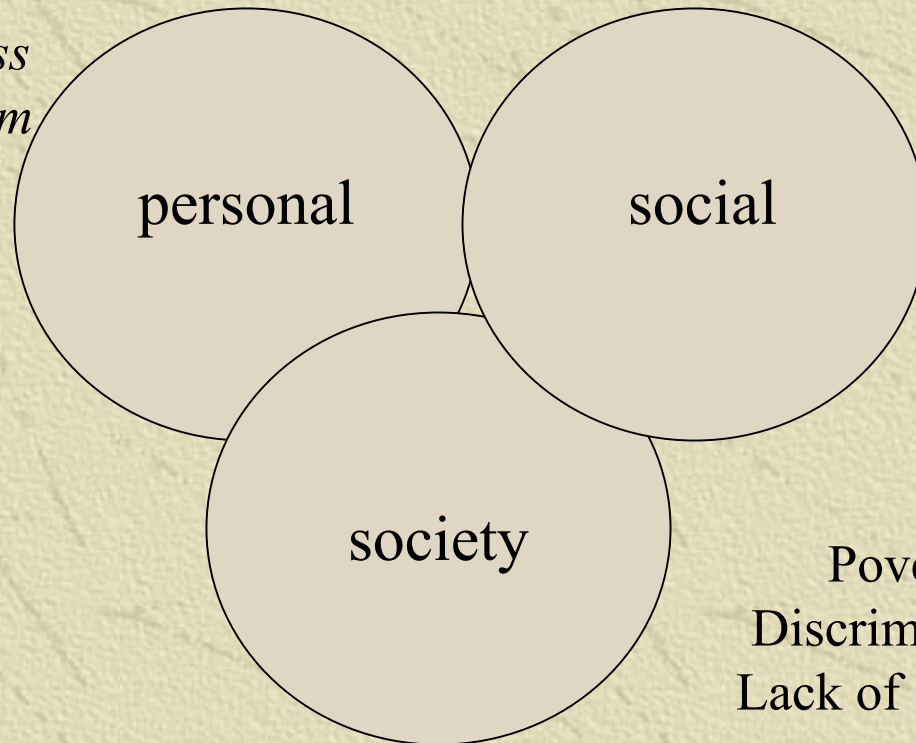
## ✦ What causes mental illness?

- ✦ Complex interaction of genetics, biology, environment, and experience.

# What causes mental illness?



*Genetics*  
*Physical Illness*  
*Low self-esteem*



Violence  
Neglect

Poverty  
Discrimination  
Lack of services

# Self Care

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✦ Have you learned to protect yourself from unhelpful advice?

# Self-Care

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- ✦ Have you kept and developed your sense of humour?
- ✦ Do you have friends that lift your spirits?
- ✦ Do you look for one moment of joy every day?

# Self-Care

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- ✦ Self-care = all the actions you take each day to promote your own mental, physical, and emotional health.
- ✦ Review the handout and reflect on the “10 Tips for Family Caregivers.”

# Ten Tips for Caregivers

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1. Caregiving is a job and respite is your earned right. Reward yourself with respite breaks often.
2. Watch out for signs of depression and don't delay in getting professional help when you need it.

# Ten Tips for Caregivers

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3. When people offer to help, accept the offer and suggest specific things that they can do.
4. Educate yourself about your loved one's condition and how to communicate effectively with doctors.

# Ten Tips for Caregivers

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5. There's a difference between caring and doing. Be open to technologies and ideas to promote your loved one's independence.
6. Trust your instincts . Most of the time they'll lead you in the right direction.

# Ten Tips for Caregivers

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7. Caregivers often do a lot of lifting, pushing and pulling. Be good to your back.
8. Grieve for your losses and then allow yourself to dream new dreams.

# Ten Tips for Caregivers

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9. Seek support from other caregivers. There is strength in knowing you are not alone.
10. Stand up for your rights as a caregiver and a citizen.

National Family Caregiver Association  
[www.nfcacares.org/pdf/10\\_tips.pdf](http://www.nfcacares.org/pdf/10_tips.pdf)

# Caregiver's Bill of Rights

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I have the right:

- ✦ To take care of myself. This is not an act of selfishness. It will give me the capability of taking better care of my loved one.
- ✦ To seek help from others even though my loved one may object. I recognize the limits of my own endurance.

# Caregiver's Bill of Rights

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I have the right:

- ✦ To maintain facets of my own life that do not include the person I provide care for, just as I would if he or she were healthy. I know that I do everything I reasonably can for this person and I have the right to do some things just for myself.

# Caregiver's Bill of Rights

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I have the right:

- ✦ To get angry, be sad, and express other difficult feelings occasionally.
- ✦ To reject any attempt by my loved one (either conscious or unconscious) to manipulate me through guilt or anger.

# Caregiver's Bill of Rights

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I have the right:

- ✦ To receive consideration, affection, forgiveness and acceptance for what I do for my loved one as long as I offer these qualities in return.

# Caregiver's Bill of Rights

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I have the right:

- ✦ To take pride in what I am accomplishing and to applaud the courage it has sometimes taken to meet the needs of my loved one.

# Caregiver's Bill of Rights

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I have the right:

- ✦ To protect my individuality and my right to make a life for myself that will sustain me when my loved one no longer needs my full time help.

Alberta Caregivers Association

[www.albertacaregiversassociation.org/billofrights.html](http://www.albertacaregiversassociation.org/billofrights.html)

# Self-Care is Unique

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- ✦ “Two people can look at the same thing and see something totally different.”
- ✦ You need to find the things that work for you: perhaps the “Ten Tips for Family Caregivers” and the “Caregivers’ Bill of Rights” will give you some new ideas.

# Discussion

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✦ What is the best thing you have learned about taking care of yourself?

# You are Not Alone

Workshop for family caregivers  
Mental Illness Awareness Week 2010.

- ✦ Part I: You are not alone
- ✦ Part II: Self-care for caregivers
- ✦ Part III: Achieving Balance

All materials are available at [www.maureenosis.com](http://www.maureenosis.com)