1. GIVE YOURSELF CREDIT.

WELCOME YOUR EMOTIONS. Know that you are doing the best you can in one of the toughest jobs there is. It's okay to lose patience, feel angry or sad, or feel off-balance at times. Learn about 'Living Lessons' and go to *www.eolcaregiver.com/about-us.aspx*

2. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.

LOOK AFTER YOUR HEALTH. Remember to eat a healthy and balanced diet, keep physically active, get enough sleep and do activities that you enjoy. Learn and pay attention to signs of burnout and stress. 'Try the Caregiver Stress Meter'.
www.caregiverstress.com/stress-management/signs-of-stress/caregiver-stressmeter

FIND TIME FOR YOURSELF. It's not selfish to focus on your needs when you are a caregiver—it is an important part of the job. Reward yourself with breaks, even if it is just a short walk. For more ideas on how to take a break, check out *www.ccc-ccan.ca/content.php?doc=27*

3. BE YOUR OWN ADVOCATE.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AND USE THEM. Talk to your human resource department or union representative. Your options can include extended health benefits, employee assistance programs and government funded supports. To find out more about family caregiving leave in your province, check out *www.bcli.org/sites/default/files/AppendixA.pdf*

MAKE YOUR NEEDS KNOWN. Talk to your employer and share your needs related to caregiving. Make it clear that you are committed to your job and want to find ways to stay productive. Educate your employer on the issues that family caregivers face and what your employer can do to help. *Share our infographic!*

4. START NOW TO PLAN AHEAD.

HAVE A CONVERSATION WITH YOUR LOVED ONE. Making decisions for a loved one can be overwhelming. Planning for medical decisions without knowing what might happen isn't easy, but it's the responsible and compassionate thing to do.

Advance Care Planning is a process of thinking and talking about your loved one's wishes for health care. The 'Speak Up' resources will help you get started:
http://advancecareplanning.ca/making-your-plan/help-others-make-a-plan.aspx

5. ASK QUESTIONS, GET ANSWERS.

EDUCATE YOURSELF AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. Understand your loved one's health condition, how the illness will progress and what physical and behavioural changes you can expect. This will help you know what to expect and prepare.

Choosing Wisely Canada uses plain language and patient-friendly materials to help you ask the doctor the right questions and together make the best choices about your loved one's care.
Go to *www.choosingwiselycanada.org/materials*

The Canadian Virtual Hospice provides support and personalized information about palliative and end-of-life care.
Go to *www.virtualhospice.ca/en_US/Main+Site+Navigation/Home.aspx*

The Canadian Cancer Society has resources to help you care for a loved one with cancer.
Go to *www.cancer.ca/en/?region=on*

6. UNDERSTAND YOUR FINANCIAL OPTIONS.

CAREGIVING CAN BE FINANCIALLY CHALLENGING. It is hard to predict all the costs that you might experience as a family caregiver. Prepare early so you can better deal with this financial burden. Try this 'Caregiving Planner' to learn the potential impact caregiving has on your time and financial resources.
Go to: *www.rbcroyalbank.com/retirementresearchcentre/calculators/index.html*

As a caregiver, you may be eligible for help from the Government of Canada. Service Canada offers information to help you prepare for this role.
Go to *www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/lifeevents/caregiver.shtml*

7. BUILD A SUPPORT SYSTEM.

FIND AND ACCEPT SUPPORT FROM OTHERS. You do not need to be on this journey alone. There is great strength in knowing that others are there for you. Asking for help is a sign of strength, not of weakness. The 'Information for Caregivers' portal provides an interactive map of Canada linking to federal, provincial and some municipal resources on financial information, care options, powers of attorney, health, mental health and dementia.
Go to *www.seniors.gc.ca/eng/sb/caregivers/index.shtml*