

What is a family council?

The Family Council is a gathering of family and/or network members to discuss one or more issues. It's a good way for caregivers to share their tasks and responsibilities. The family council is an excellent way of building a network of solidarity around the person being cared for. The aim is to divide up the tasks to be taken on by those present, so as to offer a quality of life around the person in need of care. Whether it's through respite care, help with activities of daily living, transportation, telephone calls or any other service for the person being and this in agreement with the caregiver.

Could a family council be a solution in my situation?

Certain warning signs may indicate the need for a family council...



Fatigue and apathy
*I feel exhausted!
don't feel like
doing anything.*



Memory loss
*I forget
appointments
and even forgot
to give her or his
medication.*



Loss of interest
*I don't go walking
with my friend, I
don't cook, etc.*

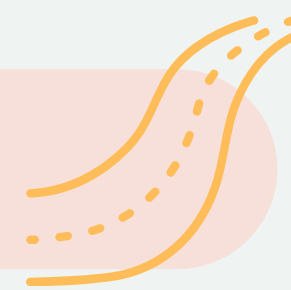


Loss of empathy
*Other people tell
me their problems
and I don't want to
know.*



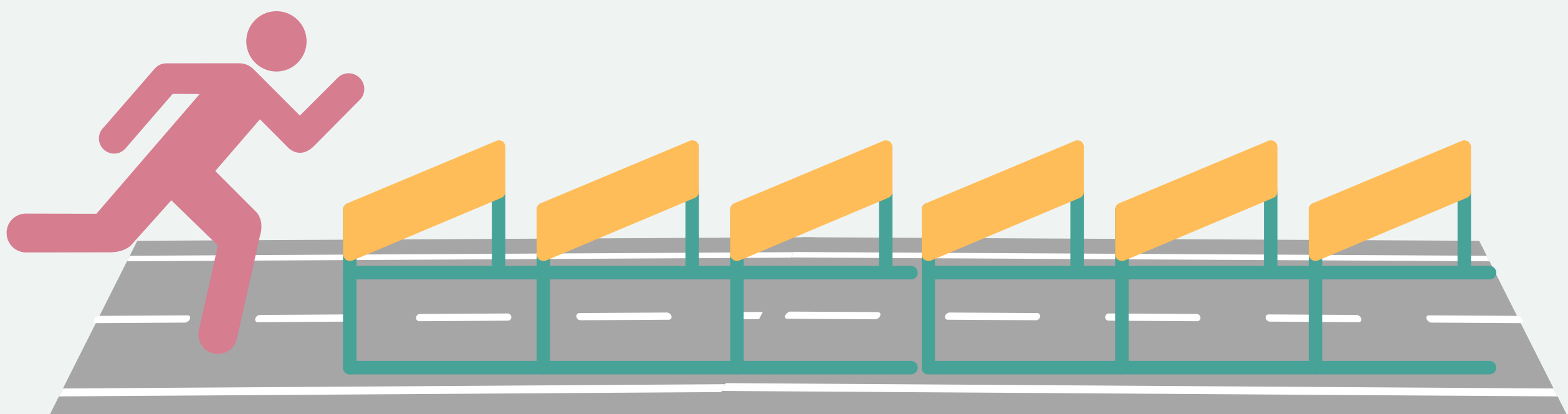
Mental load too heavy
*I feel overwhelmed
and don't know
what to do.*

Obstacles that may occur along the way



We may have the perception that it's not possible to get help.

- Busy lives for the entire family network
- The discomfort of disturbing our children, our siblings, our network
- The physical distance between people
- Time to devote to the meeting (planning it, organizing it, holding it and having a neutral party)
- Unfamiliarity with this mechanism
- Resistance to asking for help
- Fear of conflict with loved ones



What are the advantages of a Family Council?



- Share a common goal;
- Involve loved ones and/or the network in the life of the person being cared for;
- Bring about a better understanding of the reality of the person being cared for;
- Explain and evaluate possible choices;
- Consider the suggestions of all parties;
- Promote solidarity and mutual appreciation;
- Find solutions to difficulties together;
- Strengthen ties between loved ones and/or network members;
- Break the isolation of the caregiver;
- Promote the autonomy of those who wish to get involved.

You will find a complete description of the steps for holding a family council as a bonus tool.

BONUS

The difference between a family council and mediation

Mediation: a solution for persistent conflicts:

Mediation is a process that promotes conciliation, negotiation and sometimes arbitration aimed at resolving conflicting situations. Family mediation concerns couples who choose to separate or divorce by mutual agreement.. Other types of mediation are available through the courts to resolve conflicts between parties (neighbors, colleagues, etc.).

When we need the help of those close to us and/or our network, good communication is an important tool. The family council provides a safe space for sharing, and is generally very supportive. Despite some initial apprehension, the result is a better understanding of the vision of all parties present. L'Antr'Aidant's intervenors will be happy to help you be happy to guide you through the entire process, if required. They can be your allies in setting up and facilitating a Family Council. Contact us!



In Quebec, a pilot project by by IMAQ, the Institut de médiation and Arbitration Institute of Quebec offers a service for seniors who are willing to pay an amount to resolve conflicts amicably. Visit the website at imaq.org/accompagnement-aines-mediation

To find out more about mediation, visit the Educaloi website: educaloi.qc.ca

Planning stages of a family council

- 1 Identify potential caregivers and invite them to the meeting;
- 2 Provide a choice of at least two dates for the family council meeting;
- 3 Choose the formula that best suits your family's situation: in-person, virtual or both virtual meeting or both;
- 4 Choose a neutral location for the event, i.e. avoid the home of a family member if possible;
- 5 Ask a neutral person, such as a counsellor, to facilitate the meeting;
- 6 Establish rules of communication;
- 7 The facilitator must explain the reasons for holding the meeting. These reasons will have been determined beforehand by the caregiver and the facilitator;
- 8 Afterwards, the people present at the family council meeting must be put into context, i.e. they must be given enough information to form an accurate portrait of the situation. Thus, they will be informed of the condition of the person being cared for, the extent of their loss of autonomy and the challenges they face on a daily basis;
- 9 Following this portrait, the caregiver should clearly state his or her needs for help needs, expectations and limitations;
- 10 The facilitator should help the caregiver identify people interested in helping;
- 11 Identify and record commitments in a 4-week calendar. This tool will be a snapshot of what remains to be done and will also serve as a reminder of the commitment. A copy will be given to everyone who commits to one or more responsibilities.
- 12 After identifying the tasks and responsibilities that remain to be fulfilled, a group brainstorm can be held to fill the gaps.