

Going to school and being a caregiver

Did you know that there are caregivers at every level of study, whether you're in elementary, high school, college or university?

Can you identify yourself as a caregiver?

- “My sister has an intellectual disability, and I'm the one who accompanies her to her appointments with her CLSC caseworker every Monday.”
- “My parents have separated, and one of them is having a very hard time of it and is consulting a professional. Despite this, I've decided to live with him and temporarily stop my dance classes. This way, I have more time to support him in his daily life after school.”
- “My parents are at the end of their ropes, accompanying my grandmother who lives with Alzheimer's. I've offered to take over the shopping, the housework and stay for a few hours, one or two evenings a week. Fortunately, Grandma likes to watch me do my homework.”
- “For the past few months, my best friend has been having suicidal thoughts, phoning me at all hours of the day and night. Last week I even had to call the ambulance because I was so worried.”

But first, what is a caregiver?

A caregiver is a person who:

- Provides assistance to one or more members of one's entourage (whether in the family or not) with a permanent or temporary disability. This may be linked to a mental health problem, a physical health problem, a loss of autonomy, etc.
- Improves the quality of life of a person with whom she has a special emotional bond, by developing knowledge and expertise specific to the situation.
- Is not remunerated for the support and help she provides, so offers her time voluntarily and willingly.

And yes! Student caregivers can also wear many hats and learn to juggle them. Here are just a few of them;

Classes, homework, teamwork, lessons, exams, involvement exams, student involvement, transportation, internships...

The student hat

Providing care, running errands, being available to listen, scheduling appointments, taking care of household chores, communicating with professionals...

The caregiver hat

Work, take care of your social relations, prepare for the future volunteering, getting involved in extracurricular activities...

The hat of everyday life

Did you know that student caregivers :

- Are at greater risk of developing mental health problems;
- Have more worries and/or difficulties related to their school career;
- May develop more physical health problems;
- May experience significant impacts of their caregiving role on their life course.

What about you? Are you facing any challenges related to the different hats you wear as a caregiver?



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That's why it's important for you to recognize yourself as a caregiver and find out about the resources available to you.

Here are some ways to make things clearer:

- First, think about your needs. Write them down on a piece of paper and identify the means you could use to meet them. It's important to get to know yourself. That way, you can find out what makes you feel good and take care of yourself too!
- Identify your allies (people who can really help you). If you're in a bind, you can talk to one of them. Don't hesitate to discuss your reality as a caregiver, balancing school, work, family, friends, homework and other responsibilities... That's a lot! Some accommodations might help.



At school
(teacher, T.E.S....)

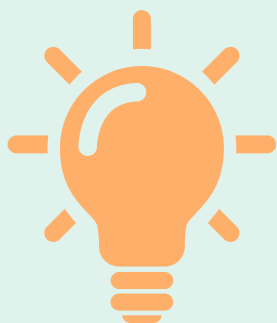


In your community
(organization, support group, CLSC, etc.)



In your entourage
(family, friends, co-workers...)

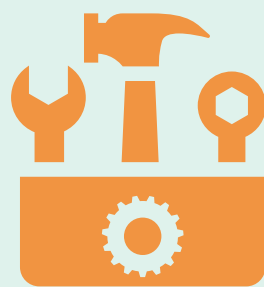
- It's possible to see caregiving as a highly enriching learning opportunity that will serve you well throughout your life. You learn to develop and put forward several important strengths! Here are just a few of them:



Problem solving



Empathy



Resourcefulness



Managing emotions

Are there other strengths and skills that you could identify and reuse in connection with your experience as a caregiver?

In all cases, we encourage you to take breaks and set aside time to vary your activities. A balance between school, responsibilities and leisure time is essential to prevent burnout!

If you have any questions, are looking for information or feel the need to talk about your role as a caregiver, the L'Antr'Aidant team is here to help! Give us a call!