

Kinship care in New Brunswick

1st Edition



Information and support
for people caring for, or
considering caring for, a
child or youth they have a
close relationship with.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

This guide is designed to support kinship care providers, and your feedback helps us make it better.

Please share your thoughts, suggestions, or questions anytime by visiting socialsupportsnb.ca/feedback or scanning the QR code below.



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Caring for yourself while caring for others

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Supporting your mental, physical, and emotional health while caregiving.

Taking care of yourself is an important part of ensuring you're able to provide the best care for the child or youth in your home. Supporting your well-being helps prevent burnout, manage stress, and maintain your ability to respond to challenging situations with patience and care.



Managing stress and burnout

Caring for a child or youth, especially one who has experienced trauma, can be rewarding, but it can also feel emotionally and physically exhausting at times. It's important to prioritize your own well-being so you can continue to provide support and care for the child or youth. Recognizing signs of stress early allows you to take steps to recharge and prevent burnout.

| *What you can do:*

- **Reach out for mental health support:** Explore therapy, counselling or other mental health resources on the Government of New Brunswick [Accessing Healthcare website](#) (or search online for 'Accessing Healthcare in New Brunswick').

Call 9-8-8 for the province's free provincial addiction and mental health helpline.

- **Set realistic expectations:** Remember, it's okay if things don't go perfectly. Focus on doing your best instead of striving for perfection.
- **Take breaks:** Many caregivers say getting a break makes a big difference. Ask your Social Worker about requesting a babysitter or 'respite' to have a break and recharge.
- **Practice mindfulness or relaxation techniques:** Strategies like deep breathing, guided meditation, or taking a walk can help relieve stress.
- **Look after your physical health:** Make time for regular exercise, healthy meals, and routine medical check-ups. Physical health plays a big role in managing stress.
- **Delegate when possible:** Ask friends or family to assist with tasks like cooking, errands, or caregiving.
- **Set small goals:** Break larger challenges into manageable steps, like running one errand or scheduling an appointment, to make tasks feel more achievable.



- **Prioritize personal time:** Schedule regular time for yourself to engage in hobbies, exercise, or activities that bring you joy.
- **Ask for help:** Let others assist with caregiving or household tasks or provide emotional support.
- **Talk to a friend or family member:** Social time and regular check-ins can help maintain strong, supportive relationships.
- **Speak with your social worker:** Share your challenges with your social worker. They can connect you with resources or recommend support tailored to your situation.



Connecting with others with similar experiences

Sometimes it might feel like no one understands what you are going through, but you don't have to do it alone. Speaking with others who understand your situation can offer emotional relief and valuable insights.

| *What you can do:*

- **Attend workshops or events:** Gain new caregiving skills and meet others through training sessions or special events.

While the NB Adoption Foundation's programs support adoptive parents, kinship care providers are welcome! Connect with others who share similar experiences and learn new caregiving skills. For more information, visit the [NB Adoption Foundation's Adoption Support Network website](#) (or search online for 'NB Adoption Foundation Adoption Support Network').



Stories and experiences from our kinship community:

Connection and training provide valuable support.

Many kinship care providers shared that they were unaware of opportunities to connect with others in similar situations. Others didn't realize there were training options available to help manage the impacts of trauma. Accessing the resources below can offer much-needed guidance and a sense of community.

"The children's trauma was harder to deal with than I expected."



On tough days, remind yourself:

- **You are not failing.** It's okay to wish you had said or done something differently; you're learning as you go.
- Every effort you make to provide love and care leaves a lasting, positive impact on the child or youth in your home.
- Feeling overwhelmed doesn't mean you're doing something wrong. This is hard work, and you're human.

