

MENTAL HEALTH CAREGIVERS – CAP SANTÉ MENTALE

MY CAP JOURNAL TOWARD MYSELF

The self-management tool for mental health caregivers is a space to reflect on your well-being and move forward at your own pace.

For me, **and it changes everything!**

- Reflecting on my current situation
- Recognizing my emotions, needs and limitations
- Identifying my strengths, resources and self-management strategies
- Building my personal toolkit
- Reflecting on my journey

Choosing myself also means taking care of the people I love.

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My Journey in This Journal

I can follow the suggested order or choose the section that best suits my current needs.



Observing my current reality

A moment to pause and put into words what I'm going through right now.



Recognizing my emotions, needs and limitations

Gain a better understanding of how I feel and what I need.



Identifying my strengths, resources and self-management strategies

Identify what is already helping me move forward.



Building my toolkit and wellness plan

Gather what is good for me, in my own way.



Reflecting on my journey

Take a moment to look back on how far I have come.



At my own pace

This is not a performance journal. There is no right or wrong answer.

Every journey is unique. I can take as much time as I need.

It is not necessary to complete all the pages in order.

An Introduction to My Journal

Supporting someone living with a mental health disorder can be a journey filled with challenges, questions, lessons and sometimes conflicting emotions.

Caregivers may feel anxiety, helplessness, fatigue or guilt, but also pride and hope, while developing a great capacity to adapt.

This journal is designed to provide a space where I can take a moment for myself.

A space to:

- Reflect on my reality;
- Better recognize my needs, emotions and limitations;
- Identify my strengths;
- Find out what helps me;
- Develop my own strategies to maintain my balance.



Take away

This is not a performance journal. There is no right or wrong answer.

Every journey is unique. I can take as much time as I need.

It is not necessary to complete all the pages in order.

CHAPTER 1

My Current Reality

Take a moment to reflect on what I'm experiencing and better understand my role as a caregiver.

How do I use my journal?

This journal is a companion tool that helps me reflect on my experience as a caregiver. I can use it:

- Alone, in a moment of my own;
- In addition to using CAP Mieux-Être;
- When meeting with a professional or a peer support provider from an association;
- To keep track of thoughts and strategies that help me.

Some questions will be more relevant to me depending on my current situation.

The goal isn't to find all the answers right away. The goal is to **understand myself better and recognize** small actions that can contribute to my well-being.

My way

I want to use this journal:

- ☐ A few minutes every day
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ When I need to
- ☐ With the help of a significant person
- ☐ Otherwise: _____

My Current Reality

In this section, I will first take a moment to observe what I'm experiencing. I can answer solely the questions that seem relevant to me today and come back to the others later.

When it comes to my role as a caregiver, what has been on my mind the most?

What is my biggest challenge right now?

What motivates me to use this journal?

My role

Supporting someone living with a mental health disorder can be a different experience depending on your role. I can be a:

- parent
- spouse
- sibling
- friend
- member of the extended family
- significant person

Regardless of my role, my experience deserves to be recognized.

What does this role mean to me (challenges, responsibilities, obligations, etc.)?

What is one thing I'm proud of as a caregiver?

➡ After that...

I took a moment to reflect on my situation and my role as a caregiver. I can now turn my attention to myself: How do I feel? What do I need? What are my limitations?



CHAPTER 2

My emotions, needs and limitations

Becoming aware of what I'm experiencing can help me better understand my needs and recognize what contributes to my well-being.

My emotions

Emotions are part of our human experience.

When someone we love is struggling with their mental health, it's normal to experience a range of emotions, sometimes even conflicting ones. There is no such thing as a "right" or "wrong" emotion.

Recognizing my emotions

Some tools can help you identify, clarify and break down your emotions into different levels of intensity.

→ **See the emotion chart on the next page.**

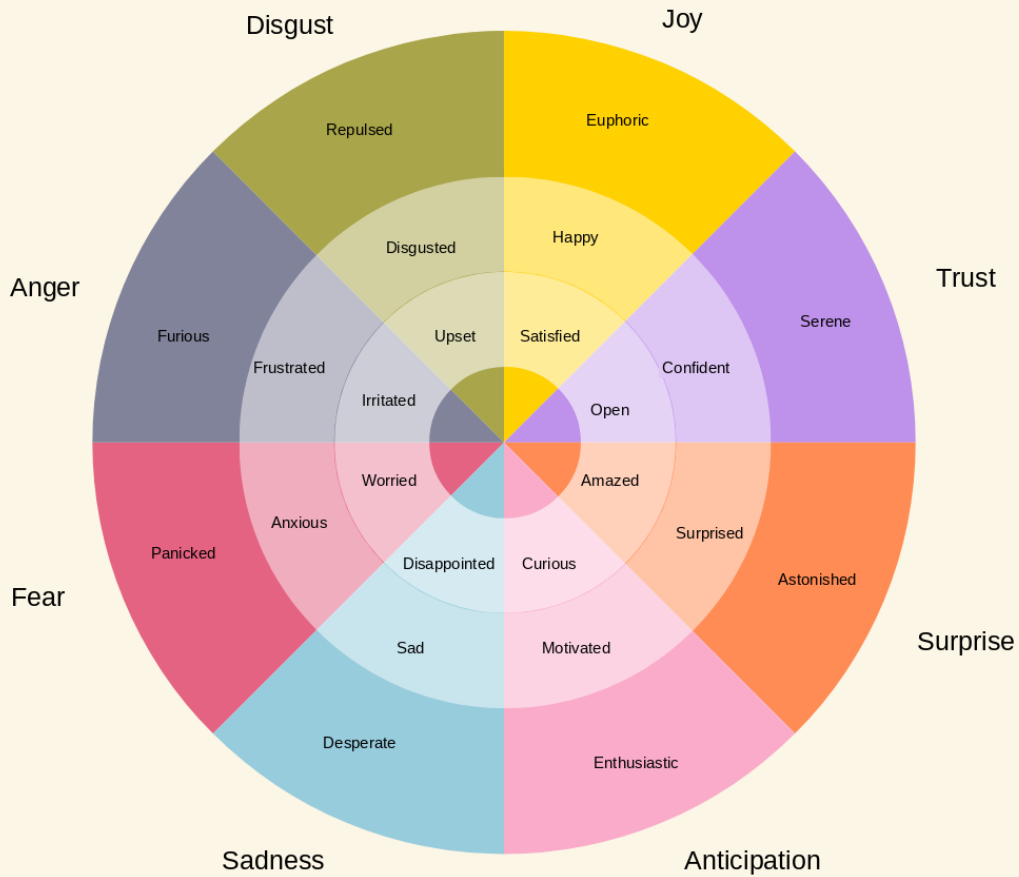
Why recognize my emotions?

Putting words to what I feel can help me better understand my reactions, recognize my needs and choose strategies that work for me.

 My additional resources – CAP Mieux-Être

→ [Apprivoiser ses émotions \(in French\)](#)

→ [Mon rôle \(my role\)](#)



Based on Plutchik, R. (1984). Emotions and imagery. *Journal of Mental Imagery*, 8(4), 105–111.

Based on the wheel above, what emotions do I often feel as a caregiver?

The role of emotions

Emotions are not a sign of weakness or a lack of self-control. Every emotion can convey important information about what we are experiencing.

If I feel mostly...	Maybe I need to...
Fear	breathe, slow down, ask for support
Anger	walk, write, take a break
Sadness	call someone, do something comforting
Guilt	distance myself from the situation, take care of myself
Surprise	take a few minutes before reacting
Anticipation	plan a concrete step
Trust	take note of it and continue what I'm doing so I can replicate it
Joy	enjoy the moment, share it with someone
Pride	congratulate myself, celebrate this small step

What do my emotions tell me about my needs?

 **My additional resources – CAP Mieux-Être**
 → [An article on emotional intelligence \(in French\)](#)

After that...

Recognizing your needs also means acknowledging that your resources, energy and time are not unlimited. For example, I may want to be there for my loved one while acknowledging what I can actually offer. Where does what belongs to me end, and where does what belongs to the other person begin?

My needs

When supporting someone living with a mental health disorder, it's common to prioritize the needs of your loved one over yours.

However, acknowledging your own needs is not a selfish act. It's a way to preserve your energy, balance, and ability to remain present for the other person.

The different needs as caregiver

I need to act quickly

I need to understand

I need to know

I need to talk about it

I need to get involved

Based on the topics outlined above, what do I need most today?

In my opinion, what could help me answer that question, even with a small gesture?



Take away

My needs are important. Taking care of myself doesn't diminish the love I have for my loved one. On the contrary, it allows me to move forward more effectively with them.

The importance of setting boundaries

As a caregiver, I may sometimes want to do everything, understand everything or control everything. Over time, many caregivers realize they can't handle everything on their own.

Setting boundaries means taking care of yourself, your relationship and the other person.

Three steps to setting boundaries

1. Identify situations where boundaries need to be set
2. Communicate your boundaries with your loved one
3. Maintain these boundaries over time

Where do I start?

Recognizing what belongs to me

It can be the way I communicate, the boundaries I set, how I react to difficult situations, and so on.

A boundary that I would like to better recognize or set in my supporting role:

What belongs to my loved one

It can include my loved one's choices and decisions, the pace at which they change, their personal journey, and so on.

What is not my responsibility?

Setting boundaries doesn't mean giving up on the other person.



My additional resources – CAP Mieux-Être

→ [Mettre ses limites \(setting your boundaries\)](#)



After that...

Recognizing my boundaries also means learning to better recognize what is within my reach. What are my strengths? What resources are available to support me? What helps me move forward?



CHAPTER 3

What helps me move forward: my strengths, resources and strategies

Recognizing your strengths, resources and sources of support helps you reconnect with your ability to take action.

In difficult times, it can be easy to focus only on the challenges. Yet, each person has strengths, abilities and resources to help them get through the toughest times.

My strengths as a caregiver

I see myself in the following qualities:

- ☐ I am a good listener
- ☐ I am persistent
- ☐ I am compassionate
- ☐ I look for solutions
- ☐ I can ask for help
- ☐ I adapt to change
- ☐ I am patient
- ☐ I am able to learn new things
- ☐ Other: _____

A strength that I often use without necessarily realizing it:

My resources

It's important to remember that being a caregiver doesn't mean you have to support your loved one all by yourself. Support plays an important role in well-being.

The people who support me

Someone who listens to me:

Someone I can laugh with:

Someone who can help me through tough times:

Resources that can support me

Organizations or resources that I know about and use:

A resource I'd like to explore:



My additional resources – CAP Mieux-Être

- [Consult the resource directory \(in French\)](#)
- [Quelles ressources peuvent m'aider \(in French only\)](#)
- [The various mental health professionals in Quebec \(in French\)](#)

My self-management strategies

Small actions that can make a difference. Self-care involves developing strategies to take better care of yourself on a daily basis. Often, it is the small, repeated actions that contribute most to a sense of balance.

Some self-management strategies

A self-management strategy is as simple as...



Based on the strategies above and my own experience, what are my personal self-management strategies?

Take away

Change often begins with a small step. A small action today can contribute to my well-being.

After that...

I have now identified some of my strengths and the resources I can rely on. I can think about what I want to keep with me for when I need it.

Building my personal toolkit

Over the pages, I may have taken the time to reflect on my reality, recognize my emotions, needs and limitations, and identify my strengths, resources and the strategies that can help me. I can now bring together what makes me feel good and helps me move forward.

- ## Personal notes

My boundaries

My needs

My essential resources

My strengths

My resource people

My self-management strategies

My personal wellness plan

Self-care is a process that evolves over time. My personal wellness plan is designed to help me maintain my balance, especially during challenging times.

This isn't about adding another obligation to my daily routine. It's about recognizing what makes me feel good and making room for it.

For my body (e.g., sleep, diet, physical activity, rest):

For my mind (e.g., thinking, relaxation, learning, meaningful activities):

For my relationships (e.g., asking for support, maintaining connections):

CHAPTER 5

Reflecting on my journey

Take a moment to acknowledge how far I have come, what I have learned and what I want to continue doing.

A reflection on my journey

I'm taking a moment to pause and look back on how far I have come. What did I discover about myself? What made me feel better or helped me move forward?

When I look back to the beginning of my journey, I realize that...

A strength I have discovered within myself:

One thing I want to continue working on:

 Take away

The journey isn't always a linear process. There may be breakthroughs, periods of stagnation and more difficult times. Every step is part of the journey.

Conclusion

I acknowledge that I have taken this moment for myself.

My journey continues. Supporting someone living with a mental health disorder can take a lot of energy and flexibility. But on this journey, my own well-being also deserves a place.

Every thought, every question asked, every request for support and every small step represents a way forward.

I don't need to have all the answers today. The important thing is to keep looking for what helps me, at my own pace.



A reminder

What are the signs that tell me I need to take better care of myself?

- ☐ I feel more tired.
- ☐ I am more worried.
- ☐ I don't have patience.
- ☐ I am self-isolating.
- ☐ I neglect my own needs.
- ☐ I have a hard time letting go.

Need support now?

1-844-768-7664

To speak with a qualified professional and be referred to a resource near you.

Continue your journey with CAP Mieux-Être

CAP Mieux-Être is here to help you:

- Better understand your reality;
- Find appropriate strategies;
- Access resources;
- Develop your self-management skills;
- Move forward in your journey to support your loved one.



CAP Mieux-Être can also help me:

- Understand how to communicate with my loved one;
- Handle difficult situations;
- Cultivate self-compassion.

Keep going by contacting our helpline and referral service

Associations in your area can lend an ear and offer personalized support provided by qualified professionals.

Helpline and referral service

1-844-768-7664

capsantementale.ca

“Taking care of yourself doesn’t mean distancing yourself from your loved one. It’s about giving yourself the means to move forward with them, without losing sight of yourself.”

— CAP santé mentale

Special thanks to our partners

