

# THE GRAPEVINE

*North Shore Caregivers Newsletter*



## FEATURED STORY

Life in the Era of Survival-Nomics:  
Let's Bring Back the Ministry of Silly Walks  
by Catherine Bryson

# Life in the Era of Survival-Nomics: Let's Bring Back the Ministry of Silly Walks

By Catherine Bryson

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"Life is never made unbearable by circumstances but only by lack of meaning and purpose."

-- Viktor Frankl (From the book: 'Man's Search for Meaning')

"There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so."

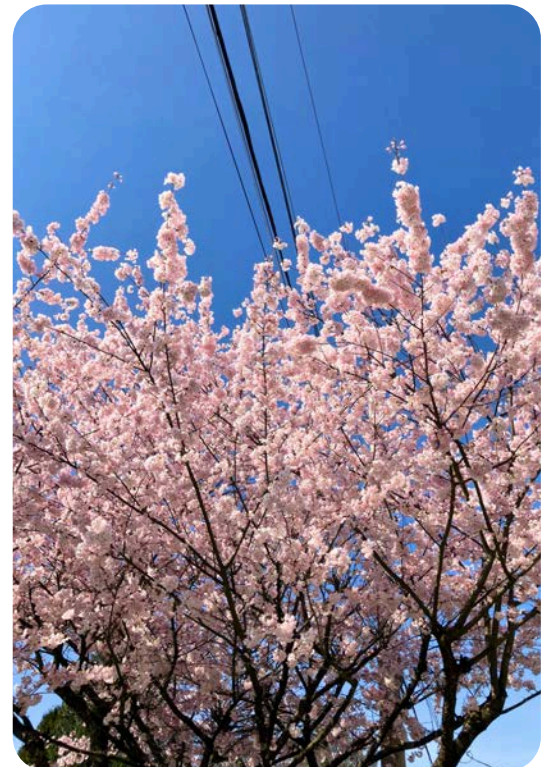
-- William Shakespeare (Hamlet)

These two quotes have guided my journey as a caregiver for many years, which is why I share them with you. What I wish to share with you is applicable not only to caregivers however, but just about anyone.

Life is speeding up these days. The Navajo Prophecy has become a reality. (The prophecy that modern life is like a fast-moving river and we will all have to navigate a rather perilous current.)

Case in point: I observe a poor little squirrel running frantically across the busy street, narrowly escaping an early demise. Sometimes, I'll be honest, I feel like that squirrel. Do you?

Enter Monty Python's 'Ministry of Silly Walks' (see link in Resources). Laughter goes a long way to restore our sanity and our joie de vivre. Personally, I used to know someone who was so funny that I'd laugh for a long time and my jaw would literally ache from using muscles I didn't normally use. What if we brought back that sense of fun, that sense of silliness? All is so deadly serious now in the era of Survival-Nomics, which is my term for a kind of Malthusian lifestyle of struggle in an increasingly precarious environment. Maybe you are the victim of a 'Renoviction', or maybe you've been laid off. In any case, take heart. Because like that plucky little squirrel, human beings were born creative, adaptable and resilient. That's the message of hope.





Another case in point: on the Canada Line, I spotted an index card taped to a pole. On the card, is a handwritten message giving the direction to a local food bank, with the encouraging words: 'All are welcome.'

Not only that but, let's face it, Vancouver is splendid in the Spring with all the blossoms (see photo above). It makes me think of the following short poem:

'Dead my old fine hopes

And dry my dreaming—but still

Iris, blue each spring.'

Ume Shushhiki 1668-1725

And here's another rhyme, while we're at it, this one from the late Leonard Cohen.

'Ring the bells that still can ring,

Forget your perfect offering

There is a crack in everything that's how the light gets in.'

Don't you just love that?

The Japanese tradition of Wabi-Sabi, contemplating the beauty in imperfection, like Mr. Cohen's poem, can be inspirational because then we accept life as it is, warts and all, and furthermore, we ourselves are not required to be perfect or do everything perfectly. We live on Earth, and we are mortals, not gods.

I once heard the following: 'Perfect is the enemy of good.' Wise words.

So, to sum up, what I am saying is: Be the hero (or heroine) of your own story.

And of course, as people have said over and over: you can't be your best as a caregiver unless you care for yourself. Unfortunately, some people get that message too late. But then, it's never too late, is it? Know above all that you are not alone.

There is a Japanese saying: 'In a storm, it is the bamboo, the flexible tree, that can bend with the wind and survive. The rigid tree that resists the wind falls, victim of its own insistence on control.'

I got that quote from page 21 of 'The Caregiver Helpbook' which is the manual used in the Powerful Tools for Caregivers Program, a free program offered by NSCR online. This is my second go at the program as I may need to hear the message more than once.

However, once you find the support you need it will be like the part in the film 'The Wizard of Oz' when everything goes from monochrome to colour in an instant. It is so much better in technicolour! And that's the kind of difference support makes.

We are now in a situation collectively that resembles ancient Rome before the fall of the empire. We must be strong and as the above quote suggests, bend in the wind. But even more important is to try, as E.E. Cummings once said, to: 'Think before you think.' For just as we can be the hero of our own story, so too can we also be the villain. The choice is there for you to make. Each and every day.

Thanks to you all. It is a great honour and privilege to write for you.



### Resources

'Influx of seniors has B.C. cities making changes. Will they be enough?' Lori Culbert  
Vancouver Sun March 20, 2025.

<https://vancouversun.com/feature/how-canada-wins-bc-seniors-surge-services-infrastructure>.

Ministry of Silly Walks

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Ministry\\_of\\_Silly\\_Walks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Ministry_of_Silly_Walks)

Excellent book to read on memory:

'Remember: The Science of Memory and the Art of Forgetting' by Lisa Genova (2023)

'The Little Book of Positivity' by Lucy Lane (2015)

For more info on the 'Powerful Tools for Caregivers' Program, contact NSCR Caregiver Support Program Coordinator, Vic Gailiunas, at the following email: [vic.gailiunas@nscr.ca](mailto:vic.gailiunas@nscr.ca)

# 7<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CAREGIVER & SENIOR EXPO

**SATURDAY MAY 24, 2025 • 12-4 PM**  
SILVER HARBOUR CENTRE, 144 EAST 22ND ST, NORTH VAN

Self-care, support and resources for unpaid caregivers is crucial to helping them navigate the difficulties of caring for loved ones. North Shore Community Resources is proud to present the following speakers:



**CORINNE STEWART**  
RN BScN Clinical Coordinator,  
*Vancouver Coastal Health, Home & Community Care*  
Case Management: How and When to get a Case Manager; and Long-Term Care Homes: How and When to Apply

12:15PM



**CHANTAL BOURKE**  
Registered Clinical Counselor  
Self-Care, Caregiver Burnout, and Coping with Difficult Emotions in Our Loved Ones

1:15PM



**DR. MELANIE BADALI**  
Clinical Psychologist,  
Caregiver Strategies for Clarifying and Communicating Healthy Boundaries

2:15PM



**LISA DAWSON**  
*Independent Long-Term Care Councils Association of BC*  
& **JANICE DESJARDINS**  
*Vancouver Coastal Association of Family Councils*  
Family Councils: Nothing About Us Without us!  
Increase Quality of Life in Long-Term Care with what we already have: Our Voices!

3:15PM

Be sure to visit all of the expo booths and meet local business owners who offer products and services that can help you in your caregiving journey.

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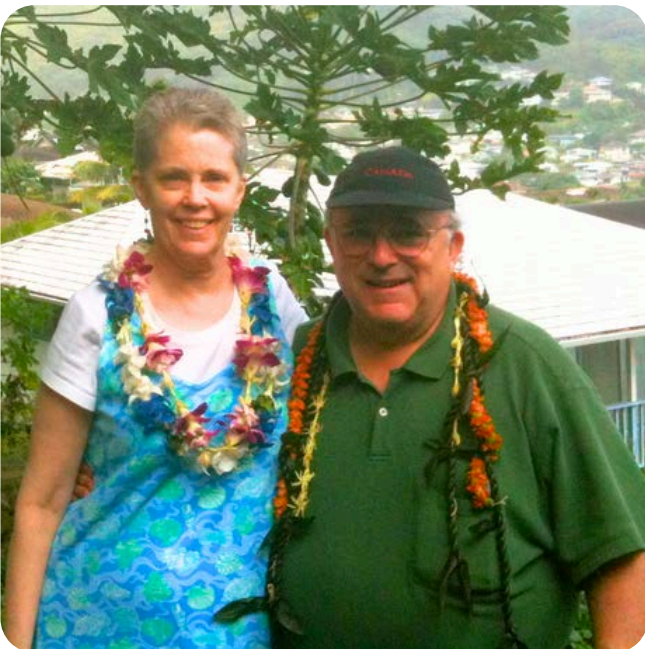
# Recovering From a Terrible Loss

By David J. Smith

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Experiencing a terrible loss can be one of the most challenging moments in life. Four years ago, my wife of 54 years died in care, suffering from Alzheimer's and Dementia; at the time, my grief simply felt overwhelming and all-consuming. However, I have learned that recovery is possible, even if it feels distant or unattainable at first. Healing takes time, patience, and intentional effort, but it can lead to growth and resilience. Grief comes in waves, and with time, the waves get further and further apart. That process can't be hurried.

For me, the first step in recovering from this kind of all-consuming loss was to allow myself to grieve. Not "I mustn't cry or feel sad, I must appear strong for my friends, for the children" but "I must allow myself to feel the pain and sadness and doing so will be good for me and for everyone else". I have learned that grief is a natural response to loss, and that it displays itself differently for everyone. Some people I know with similar losses to mine began by feeling anger, guilt, or even numbness. I came to realize that it's important to acknowledge these emotions without judgment and give yourself permission to feel them, as well as grief and sadness. Suppressing grief can prolong the healing process, so embracing your feelings is vital to moving forward. Journaling, talking with trusted friends or family members, or seeking professional counseling can help you process your emotions in a healthy way.



Another key aspect of recovery is finding support. Loss left me feeling isolated, but I came to understand that leaning on others, and learning from others, can provide comfort and strength during difficult times. It's a good idea to surround yourself with people who understand your pain or are willing to listen without trying to "fix" you. North Shore Community Resources offers support groups for those in grief, and for caregivers; these groups can be beneficial because they connect you with others who have experienced (or are experiencing) similar losses and this can provide a safe space to share your journey.

Another lesson I learned: as you navigate grief, self-care becomes essential. Loss can take a toll on your physical and mental health, so prioritizing sleep, nutrition, exercise, and relaxation is crucial. Even small acts of self-care—like taking a walk in nature or practicing mindfulness—can make a significant difference in your ability to cope. Be patient with yourself; healing doesn't happen overnight, and setbacks are normal.

Over time, finding meaning in your loss can help you move forward. This doesn't mean forgetting or minimizing what you've lost but rather finding ways to honor it while embracing life again. For example, my wife is buried near home in Lynn Valley, and so I can easily stop by and "say hello" whenever the spirit moves me. Some people find solace in creating rituals of remembrance, volunteering for causes related to their loss, or channeling their pain into creative outlets like art or writing.

The primary lesson I learned is that recovering from the death of a loved one is not about "getting over it" but learning how to live with it and grow through it. While the pain may never fully disappear, it can transform into a source of strength and wisdom that can shape your life, and the lives of others, in meaningful ways.

# Events Calendar

## MAY

Thurs  
01

**Men's Support Group Meeting** (In Person)

**10:30 AM - 12:30 AM**

Tues  
06

**Caregiver Support Group Meeting** (In Person & Zoom)

**6:30 PM - 8:30 PM**

Wed  
21

**Korean Group Meeting** (In Person)

**2:00 PM - 4:00 PM**

Sat  
24

**7th Annual Caregiver Expo**  
(Silver Harbour Senior's Centre)

**12:00 PM - 4:00 PM**

Thurs  
22

**Bereavement Support Walking Group**

**11:00 AM**

Mon  
26

**Persian Group Meeting** (In Person)

**6:00 PM - 8:00 PM**

Tues  
27

**Bereavement Support Group Meeting**  
(In Person and Zoom)

**6:00 PM - 8:00 PM**

## JUNE

Tues  
03

**Caregiver Support Group Meeting**  
(In Person & Zoom)

**6:30 PM - 8:30 PM**

Thurs  
05

**Men's Support Group Meeting** (In Person)

**10:30 AM - 12:30 PM**

Wed  
11

**Korean Group Meeting** (In Person)

**2:00 PM - 4:00 PM**

Mon  
16

**Persian Group Meeting** (Zoom)

**6:00 PM - 8:00 PM**

Thurs  
26

**Bereavement Support Walking Group**

**11:00 AM**



# 16 Warning Signs That an Older Adult Should Stop Driving

By Catherine Bryson

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This post is meant to assist you in the all-important decision of whether you or your loved one with dementia should stop driving. The symptoms of mild-to-moderate dementia can adversely impact an older adult's driving ability. It is recommended that you start the conversation early and that you use due sensitivity towards the older adult as driving is one of the key adult independence issues.

## Warning Signs That You or Your Loved One Should Stop Driving (or Get an Assessment):

- Is she/he/they driving too slow or too fast?
- Do they have difficulty concentrating while driving?
- Is the older adult taking too long driving home from work or going missing for hours?
- Is the older adult driver accumulating traffic tickets/fines?
- Is the person driving in the wrong direction? (e.g. hitting the gas instead of backing up)
- Is the older adult ignoring traffic lights?
- Is the older driver relying on a co-driver or refusing certain passengers (presumably because their driving skills will be negatively judged)?
- Are other motorists frequently honking at them?
- Do they have difficulty coordinating hand and foot movements?
- Do they have difficulty concentrating while driving?
- Do they have vision problems, particularly at night?
- Do they have difficulty driving through intersections, judging distance, seeing pedestrians, road signs, other vehicles, changing lanes or merging? (If so, consider having the older driver's driving skills assessed, note that there could be a fee for this service)
- Are they in an increasing number of near collisions? (near misses)
- Have they been directly involved in minor collisions (e.g. signs of dents and scrapes)
- Is the older driver nervous behind the wheel?
- And finally, do family members (or others) express concern about the older adult's driving ability?

Note that most older adults continue to drive 2-4 years post onset of dementia symptoms or diagnosis (something to bear in mind). Consider some more driving training especially geared towards older drivers. My late mother did this, and decided at that time that she no longer wanted to drive on the highway and, later on, indeed decided voluntarily to stop driving, which honestly is the 'best case scenario'.

I hope you have found this post helpful.

Here are some additional resources for you to explore.

Note: this issue is not an easy one. Give yourself and your loved one due sensitivity and a pat on the back for even starting the conversation.



### Resources

Alzheimer's Society of Toronto (see recorded webinar on Driving and Dementia,) <https://www.alz.to>.

See the Alzheimer Society of BC You Tube Channel for all previously recorded webinars. To access the latest webinar on Driving and Dementia please see: <https://alzheimer.ca/bc/en/help-support/programs-services/webinars/recorded-videos/>.

Note: For each province/jurisdiction, particular laws/protocols on older adult drivers may differ.

#### **Note on images:**

Some classic cars. A little 'levity' for a very serious subject. It is not a bad idea to temper serious discussions on driving ability with this sort of 'lighter' fare.



# Persian Wellness and Education Group

NSCR's wellness group aims to bring together members of the community to meet, share, and talk about topics brought forth by the group.

We welcome program participants to join us for a 2 hour session, held entirely in Farsi, with guest speakers, resources, group interaction, and music.

## Monthly Meetings

We are currently meeting in person at the NSCR Community Room and on Zoom. Our meetings run on the third Monday of every month from 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM.

## Next 2 Meetings

May 26 - In Person

June 16 - Zoom

To join the NEW NSCR Persian Telegram Group, to receive information, meeting reminders, and to connect with others in our North Shore Persian community, scan the QR code or email [vic.gailiunas@nscr.ca](mailto:vic.gailiunas@nscr.ca)!



Scan or  
click to  
connect





# CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a monthly support group specifically for family caregivers who support their loved ones – either living together or apart.

The group's goal is to create community and offer a time of sharing, listening, and connecting for anyone with the unique experience of caregiving for family members.

Program participants are welcome to encourage and invite others they feel might benefit from joining the group.

## Monthly Meetings

Next 2 meetings:

May 6 (In person AND Zoom)

June 3 (In person AND Zoom)

Meetings are currently on the first Tuesday of each month from 6:30 – 8:30pm.

Currently we are meeting on Zoom and/or in person. For the Zoom link, please contact NSCR directly.



(photo credit – Paul McGrath)

## Contact

For more information, details, or to find out more about NSCR's Caregiver Support programs, please contact:

Vic Gailiunas (Caregiver Support Program Coordinator) ~ [Vic.Gailiunas@nscr.ca](mailto:Vic.Gailiunas@nscr.ca)

Or Phone: 604-982-3320



# CAREGIVER BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a support group specifically for people experiencing grief in the loss of a loved one. The group is designed to create community and offer a time of sharing stories and resources, listening, and connecting with others with similar experiences.

**Tuesday, May 27, 2025 Group Meeting In Person at our NSCR Community Room AND on Zoom, 6:00pm-8:00pm**



As we move into Spring, things can seem more pronounced for those experiencing loss. It is a good time to consider our well-being, how to find meaning in grief, but also in hope, rejuvenation and renewal of spirit.

For more information, to register, and for details, please contact:

Vic Gailiunas  
Caregiver Support Program Coordinator  
604.982.3320  
[vic.gailiunas@nscr.ca](mailto:vic.gailiunas@nscr.ca)



# MEN'S CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a support group specifically for male caregivers who support their spouses/partners, either living together or apart. The group was designed to create community and offer a time of sharing, listening, and connecting for men with the unique experience of caregiving for their partners.

Program participants are welcome to encourage other men they feel might benefit from joining the group to join us.

## Monthly Meetings

We currently meet in-person at the NSCR Community Room on the first Thursday of each month, from 10:30am-12:30pm.

Next 2 meetings:

May 1

June 5



(photo credit – Paul McGrath)

## Contact:

For more information and details, contact:

Vic Gailiunas (Caregiver Support Program Coordinator) ~ [Vic.Gailiunas@nscr.ca](mailto:Vic.Gailiunas@nscr.ca)



# KOREAN WELLNESS AND EDUCATION GROUP

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a wellness and education group specifically for the Korean community on the North Shore.

The group was designed to create community and offer a time of sharing, learning, and connecting for our Korean community.

Program participants are welcome to join us for a 2-hour session, held entirely in Korean, with guest speakers, resources, group interaction, and creative arts.

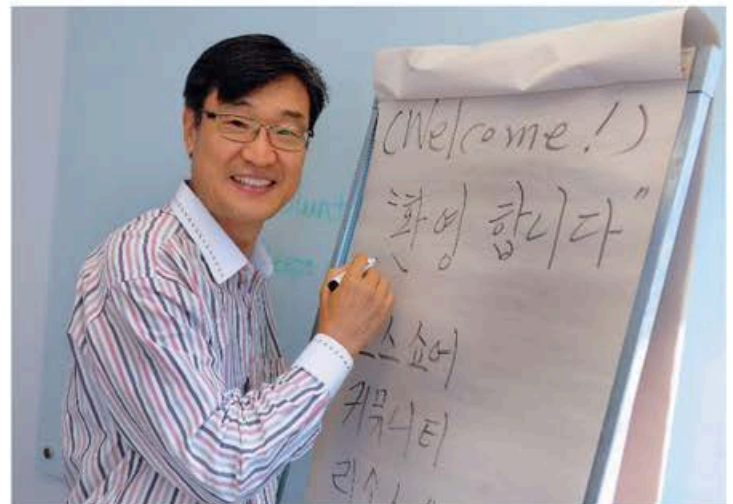
## Monthly Meetings

We meet In Person in our NSCR Community Room. Our meetings run on the second Wednesday of each month, from 2:00-4:00pm. **\*Note: May meeting is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday due to a staff event**

Next 2 Meetings:

May 21

June 11



(photo credit – Paul McGrath)

## Contact

For more information and details, contact:

Yoonwon Lee (Group Leader) ~ [infocwtc@gmail.com](mailto:infocwtc@gmail.com)

Vic Gailiunas (NSCR Caregiver Support Program Coordinator) ~ [Vic.Gailiunas@nsr.ca](mailto:Vic.Gailiunas@nsr.ca)



# Memory Cafe

Memory Cafe is a social gathering where care partners can relax, unwind and have fun with their family member with memory loss.



## It's all about

- ✓ social connections
- ✓ joyful engagement
- ✓ music and art
- ✓ creative expression

### LOCATION:

Silver Harbour Centre  
144 E. 22nd Street, North Vancouver

### DATE & TIME:

Mondays, April 28 - June 9  
1pm - 3pm

### REGISTER NOW!

space is limited

**\$99**

per couple  
for

**6 Weeks**

**To register or for more information,  
call 604-980-2474**

**SILVER  
HARBOUR -  
CENTRE**



# THE GRAPEVINE

*North Shore Caregivers Newsletter*



North Shore  
Community  
Resources

If you'd like to help support NSCR and the work we  
do you can follow the link below to donate

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help others without the generous help of patrons like you