

EDITORIAL

with Dawn Brown

The Sandwich Generation

More and more often, Canadians find themselves in the position of caring for both their own children and their aging parents, also. The situation, which at one time might have been unusual or uncommon, has in fact become so common place there is even a name for it now; the Sandwich Generation.

While caring for aging parents is hardly new, longer life expectancies combined with couples choosing to have and raise children later in life have lead to some people being in the position of being a care provider for their parents and their children at the same time.

Statistics Canada reported that in 2011 nearly 600,000 grandparents lived with their grandchildren, 88 per cent also lived with at least one person from the middle generation. Family Services of Ottawa explained that those making up the sandwich generation are usually between the ages 45 to 60 years old, and are more often women than men, who, while raising their children, also work either full or part time.

Sandwich Generation caregivers can often experience greater stress than non-caregivers, spend less time with their partners and families, and are more likely to experience exhaustion and illness. They also face ongoing feelings of guilt and being overwhelmed.

So, what can you do if you find yourself one of the Sandwich Generation? Family Services of Ottawa have a number of tips and suggestions, but at the top of the list is for caregivers to take care of their own health, both physical and mental, reminding them to get out and have some fun without feeling guilty for it. Make a point of making time for your family and spouse, and don't take on more than you can manage.

All too often caregiving for a parent falls on the shoulders of one individual. Whatever the reason, it's not fair for the bulk of the responsibility to be carried by one person. Hold family meetings to discuss fair disbursement of responsibility between siblings and even older children, and be sure to include the parent so he or she can make their feelings known also.

Don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it. Friends and family, local groups, as well as online support groups can often provide great resources. When someone offers you help, take it, and don't be afraid to tell people what you need. If you feel yourself burning out or struggling with depression, it's important to speak to a doctor or look for counselling. The problem won't get better without help.

Another important step in caring for an aging family member is learning as much as possible about any illnesses or health conditions that your loved one may have. It is important to have as much information as you can find to better understand what your loved one is experiencing as well as what to expect if and when the illness progresses. This knowledge will allow you to advocate for you and your loved one fully informed.



RECYCLING FUN: While they worked hard helping people unloading their cars, Toby Semple (front) and Austin Ash (back), also found ways to have some fun at the Limehouse Public School e-waste and scrap metal collection event held in Acton on Saturday and Sunday. - Les Schmidt photo

Thoughts and prayers

Another day with another senseless tragedy. This time in our own backyard, so to speak. On Monday afternoon a man drove a rented van into a large number of pedestrians killing 10 and injuring 15.

Tragedy is defined as an event causing great suffering, destruction, and distress. It can be also described as a form of drama based on human suffering. That, in my opinion, is what goes on almost daily in our world...dramatic tragedy.

We Canadians sometimes have a false sense of security. We live in pretty safe communities. We don't carry handguns and proclaim the right to bear arms like our neighbours to the south do with the Second Amendment. We leave our cars and homes unlocked without worry, and our children ride their bicycles without fear roaming freely in our towns and cities. We don't like to think we have to worry about being attacked, let alone face a terrorist attack. I am not saying that the Toronto event was a terrorist attack either. I am merely saying we live without much concern. Prime Minister Trudeau was actually asked by a CBC reporter on Tuesday—and I paraphrase—how he thinks Canadians can be protected while going about their everyday lives.



By
Angela Tyler

As if Trudeau had a plan to protect anybody walking down a street in any town at any place, or even those children their riding bicycles home from school. It was a ridiculous question, to imply that anybody could protect all of us at any time.

Yet when tragedy happens our heartstrings are pulled. We bond together as a country to mourn and to publicly state "our thoughts and prayers" are with the victims' families. We don't really know what to do. We don't know what to say so instead we resort to social media and proclaim we are hashtag—insert tragedy—strong. We are #torontostrong or #humboldtstrong and we return to the multi-purpose "thoughts and prayers". Frankly, it's the polite thing to do.

Then we join those publicly grieving. Some choose to place blame on the then acting Government, or better yet, choose to blame those "refugees" and "immigrants" that were brought into our country. Look at them! We just brought them here and have given thousands and thousands of dollars, places to live and they

don't do anything. Look at them! We're supporting them and not our veterans or our seniors or our children. Let's blame them, shall we? You know that truck driver who killed those kids? His last name was Singh, so he must be one of them. The police aren't saying anything because it's a conspiracy, and Trudeau is trying to cover everything up. You know that guy who killed those people in Toronto? He looked like "one of them" too.

That's what some people are choosing to say, how they're choosing to behave. The truth is that we don't know what happened with the Humboldt tragedy. It will be a while until the investigation is complete and that is normal. There is no conspiracy. The man that has been charged in the Toronto tragedy was actually in the Canadian Armed forces at one point, and it too will take time to find out why what happened.

Sadly, these events keep happening, and I really wish people's first instinct wasn't to assign blame based on an individual's culture or our country's immigration policy. Instead of offering thoughts and prayers, we should worry more about stopping the need to blame based on colour of skin, religion or culture. This mind-set doesn't help anybody. It only fuels the fire of hatred.



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