

Dawn Burstall

Dawn Burstall knows what it is to be a caregiver. Her father was sick with several chronic illnesses, including Alzheimers disease. Because Dawn knew how to navigate the health system, “I was my family’s resource.”

“It wasn’t bad at first,” she says. “I went to specialist appointments and family doctor appointments.” It became more challenging for Dawn as her dad got sicker. “I was the first line resource to the health system for my mother who was Dad’s primary caregiver. I wanted to be there for my father and mother and my reality is that it was a very stressful time.

It’s a different experience being a health care worker with a sick family member. My family would think, ‘Dawn’s on it.’” Dawn is thankful that she had a job with flexible hours so she could work around her dad’s schedule. She also considers herself and her family fortunate to have been able to hire a sitter for respite care. Still, it was a challenging time for Dawn and her family.

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