

LISTENING TO INFORMAL CAREGIVERS: Working Towards Social Change

From 25 research interviews with informal caregivers, Dr. Michelle Lafrance - Psychology professor at St. Thomas University - was granted the inside scoop of what it means to be an informal caregiver in New Brunswick.

As part of their STU social work placement, Emily MacEachern and Samantha Steeves explored these transcripts for the challenges caregivers face. Below are the student's findings, as well as the actions they took to raise awareness about informal caregiving in the province.

CENTRAL FINDINGS

Navigating the "System"



Informal caregivers experienced difficulty knowing where to start in their caring journey. The care 'system' is not user friendly and extremely difficult to navigate.

A Need for More Information



Informal caregivers need consistency in information. This includes, but is not limited to: information obtained from social workers, doctors, home care services and other supportive agencies.

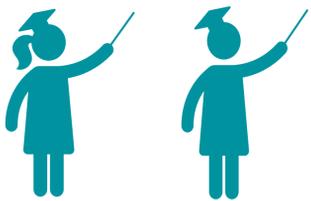
Caregiving Community



Informal caregiving can be an isolating job. A caregivers' association or group would help alleviate the loneliness that comes with this work.

ACTIONS TAKEN

Students



Emily and Samantha took the challenges they found and presented them to students at St. Thomas University. Students receiving the presentation were engaged, eager to learn more about the lived reality of caregivers in their province.

Community Engagement



Michelle Lafrance, Emily and Samantha all presented their work at the Provincial Summit of the Collaborative for Healthy Aging and Care, which was a large conference that brought together community members, health professionals, academics and government representatives. The panel presentation sparked key conversation amongst audience members, with critical insight raised on how to best support informal caregivers throughout New Brunswick

Government



Alongside the help of Dr. Lafrance, Emily and Samantha advocated on behalf of informal caregivers to government on ways to improve a new website dedicated towards all services in New Brunswick.