

Researchers create app to help stressed-out caregivers

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From left: USask kinesiology PhD student Nathan Reis and computer science PhD student Jenna Neiser.
Credit: Victoria Dinh

A group of University of Saskatchewan (USask) researchers have developed an app-based pilot project to help relieve stress and offer support to caregivers of people with Alzheimer's or dementia.

USask computer science Ph.D. student Jenna Neiser said she has noticed a lack of resources and accessibility in Saskatchewan, when it comes to [caregiver](#) health. That's one of the major reasons behind the creation of the Caregiver Self-Compassion and Support App.

"We wanted to make sure that everybody could have access, so when it's minus 51 outside, and you can't leave home, that you still have a tool that you can go to help you cope," she said.

Through the use of curated podcasts, videos, articles and other useful information, the app takes participants through an eight-week program concentrating on areas such as sleep, hygiene, [physical activity](#) and nutrition.

"The idea is once they get through the eight weeks, they'll sort of not be quite as hard on themselves," said USask kinesiology Ph.D. student Nathan Reis.

"This approach of self-care will ultimately help them, not only be kinder to themselves, but be more effective caregivers, too," he said.

The [pilot project](#) is currently using measurement tools through the app to keep track of how the caregivers are coping week-by-week. At the end of the program, the participants are then interviewed for feedback.

"There are a lot of apps that are centered around the person with dementia and Alzheimer's, and how they can sort of cope better with that, (but) there's not a lot of help for the caregiver," said Reis.

"That's a challenge, as an adult, to be in charge of a parent or a spouse. I think we just want to help people going through that."

Reis said their research group is currently looking for more caregivers to test out the app before it's released to the public. People wishing to participate are asked to email: nathan.reis@usask.ca.

Provided by University of Saskatchewan

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