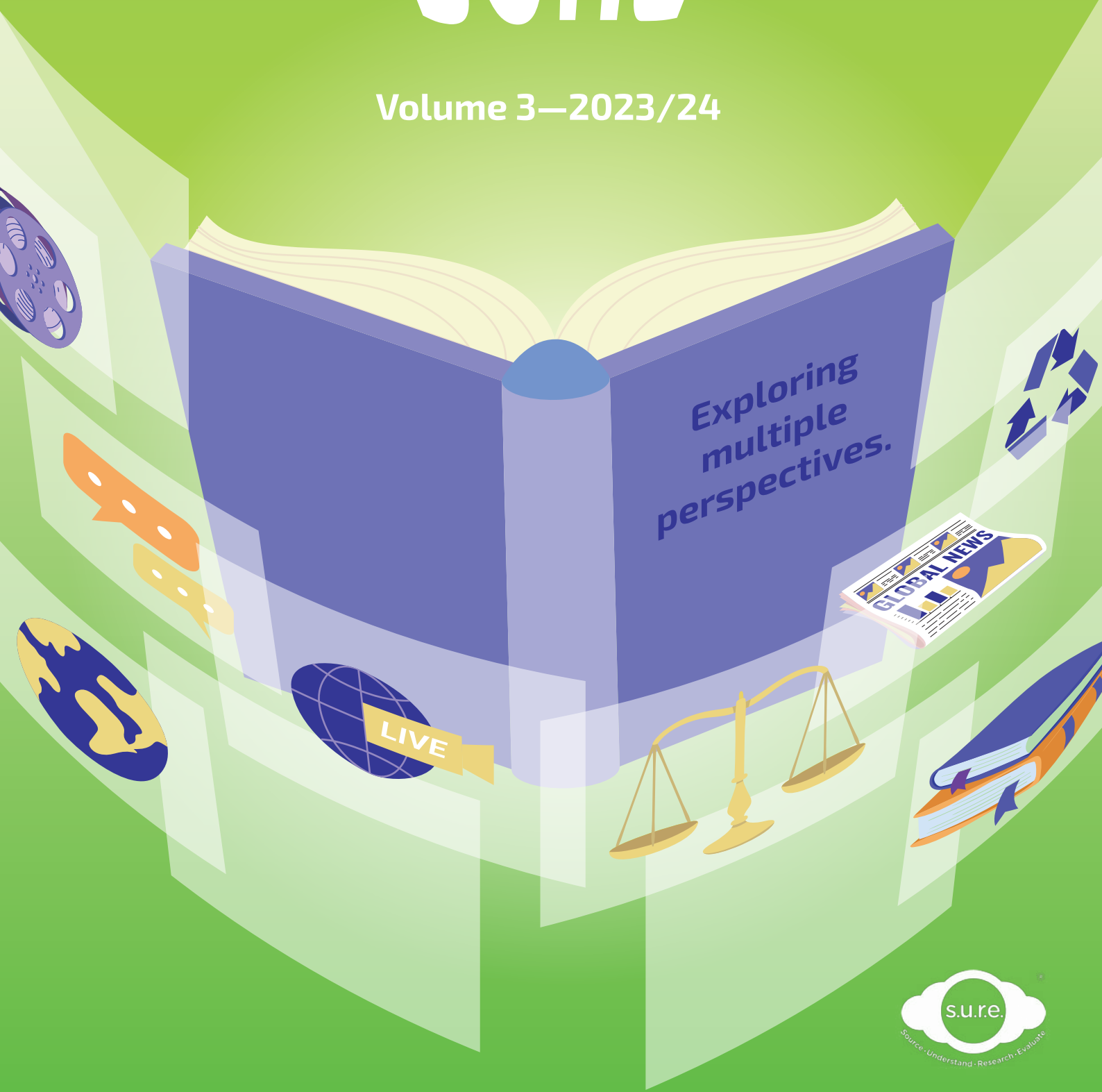


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Volume 3—2023/24

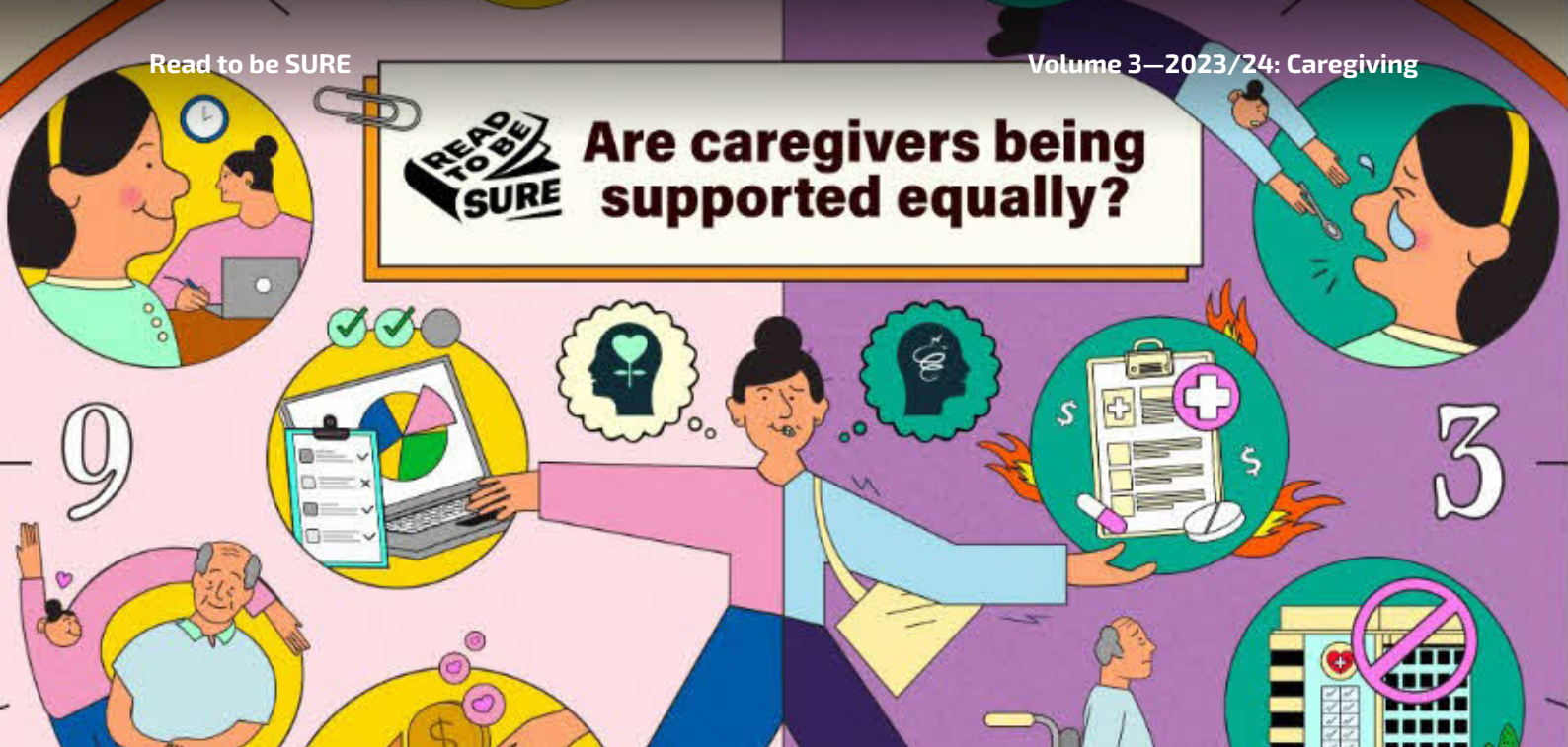


Issue 3

CAREGIVING



*All information and weblinks
are valid as of March 2025.*



Caregiving

In Singapore, caregivers are the unsung heroes of society, providing vital support to seniors, children and persons with disabilities (PwDs). Yet all too often their contributions remain invisible.

Caregivers have complex and diverse needs. Some are potentially at risk of caregiver burden. For example, caregivers often encounter difficulties in taking care of their relatives with intellectual disabilities (ID) and worry about the future and challenges of future planning.

While services for autistic children have grown substantially, services for autistic adults and their caregivers is still a work in progress. Demand for adult services exceeds supply in residential or respite care, resulting in up to a five-year wait for placement at day activity centres.

Come 2030, 1 in 4 Singaporeans will be aged 65 and above. With low birth rates and increased life expectancy, the rapid ageing population will have significant implications for caregiving, including fewer family members supporting older adults and a growing "sandwich generation" caring for both children and older family members.

Caregivers need concerted and targeted support as they provide multidimensional care, including physical, medical, financial, psychological and social assistance. The government has introduced policies to enhance access to care such as CareShield Life, Home Caregiving Grant, Active Ageing Centres, as well as Caregiver Support Action Plan. Employers are also encouraged to provide flexible work arrangements and paid leave to workers who are caregivers.



However, are caregivers being supported equally with respect to the broad range of care recipients?

Yes, Singapore is a developed nation that has well-supported caregivers for different conditions.

Support is available for caregivers caring for different recipients.

Everyone plays a key role in the caregiver support ecosystem, including family caregivers, employers, service providers, and friends/co-workers.

The key social services available to caregivers include financial (e.g. Home Caregiving Grant, Seniors' Mobility and Enabling Grant); respite care (nursing homes); training (Eldercare Foreign Domestic Worker Scheme); psychological (Caregiver Support Networks); and workplace (flexible work arrangement).

Organisations that cater to specific groups of caregivers include Agency for Integrated Care (for caregivers of seniors, persons with dementia and mental health conditions); SG Enable (for caregivers of persons with disabilities); Movement for the Intellectually Disabled of Singapore; Dementia Singapore; Caregiving Welfare Association; Caregivers Alliance Limited; and Caregivers' Association of the Mentally Ill.

Structural support available for caregivers of persons with disabilities (PwDs) and seniors.

Singapore's fourth Enabling Masterplan 2030 (EMP2030) envisages Singapore as an inclusive society in 2030. EMP2030 is the blueprint to support PwDs and their families across life stages, including alleviating their financial burden, education and care services for families with children with developmental and special educational needs.

Singapore has been empowering seniors to age actively since 2015. The 2023 Action Plan for Successful Ageing empowers Singaporeans to be responsible for their own ageing journeys. It focuses on 'Care', 'Contribution' and 'Connectedness' to help seniors live life to the fullest such as supporting persons living with dementia and their caregivers, and incentivising employers to offer flexible work arrangements.

No, Singapore still has a long way to go to provide a supportive ecosystem for caregivers.

Caregivers are still in need of more support.

The NCSS Quality of Life of Caregivers study shows that 53% of caregivers were "burdened" or "barely coping" and had lower quality of life and self-efficacy. They faced financial problems, health issues, schedule disruption, and lack of family support caregiver. Informal caregiving will continue to rise given that by 2030, about 100,000 seniors will require help with at least one daily living activity.

Gender disparity in caretaking exists. Many women sacrifice their careers to take on caregiving. Unmarried daughters are more likely to care for their ageing parents. Long-term care is often provided by family, friends, and neighbours, where most caregivers are women, between 45 and 59 years of age.

Low-income families need more caregiving support to cope with both work and caring for their children. The MSF is partnering with a charity, Daughters of Tomorrow, to pilot a childminding service for underprivileged women.

Caregivers lack resources caring for persons with intellectual disabilities (ID).

Many family caregivers of persons with ID lack the necessary skills and resources. Targeted family support such as skill training workshops and intervention supports promoting family empowerment, can improve the well-being of caregivers of people with ID across the lifespan. This will help in the development of an inclusive community living as well as reducing institutionalisation.

Autism is a lifelong and complex condition. People with autism need a range of support spanning across different sectors such as health, education, and social care. More flexible and inclusive support, as well as a change in societal attitudes towards autism, are needed to combat stigma and discrimination.

However, are caregivers being supported equally with respect to the broad range of care recipients?

Yes, Singapore is a developed nation that has well-supported caregivers for different conditions.

Some caregivers have had positive caregiving experiences.

Caregivers can have both negative and positive experiences of caregiving.

A 2022 [study](#) has identified positive aspects of caregiving which includes the quality of the relationship between caregiver and receiver, a caregiver's feeling of accomplishment and the meaning of the caregiver's role.

Caregivers with higher [self-efficacy](#) are capable of identifying positive aspects of caregiving. Higher self-efficacy, the ability to overcome difficulties, is linked to better health and coping outcomes for caregivers of persons with dementia in Singapore.

No, Singapore still has a long way to go to provide a supportive ecosystem for caregivers.

For others, caregiving is associated with a lower quality of life.

According to the [NCSS Quality of Life of Caregivers study](#), caregivers who experience a lower quality of life tend to have lower household incomes, are unemployed or part-time employed, seniors aged 65 and above, and live in 4-room HDB flats and below.

Caregivers also have lower quality of life in social relationships and personal beliefs. In the study, caregivers had lowest scores in recreation and leisure, financial adequacy, sleep and rest, and positive feelings.

Let's hear our guest speakers weigh in on this issue:

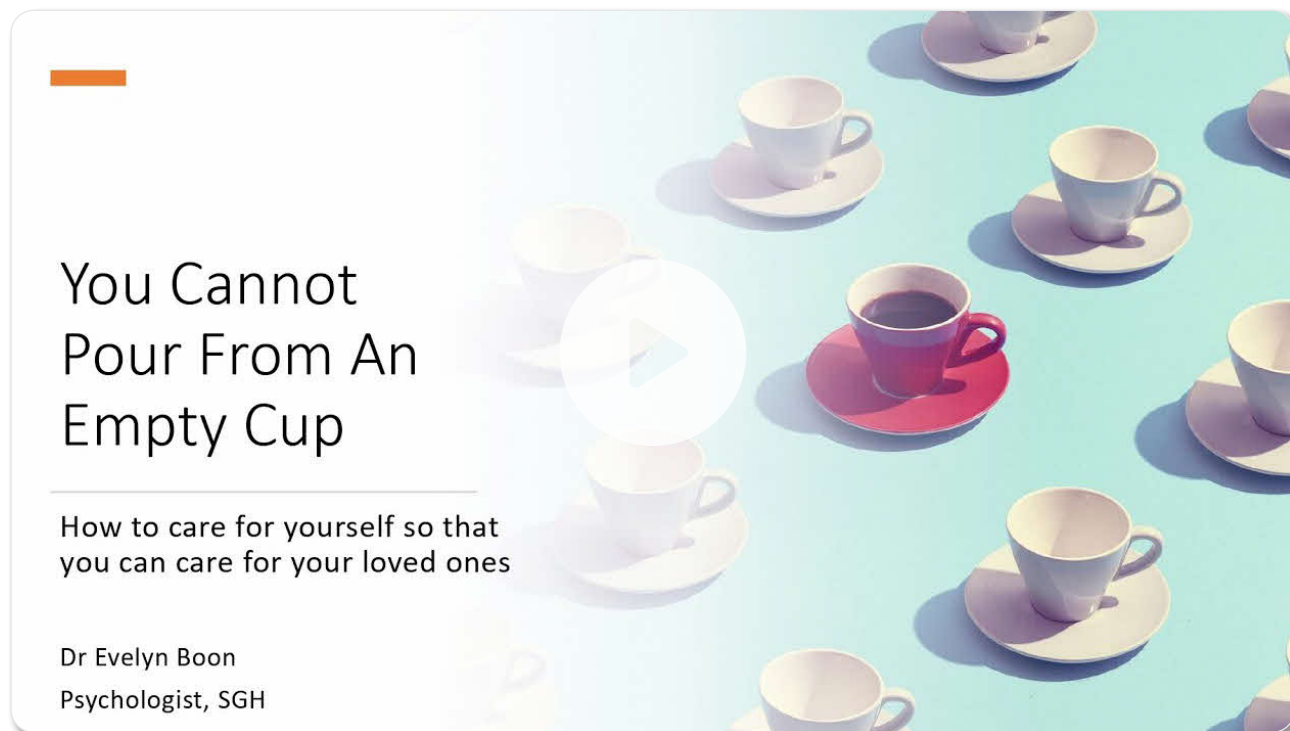


Recommended Resources

Explore the resources below to find out more about Caregiving.

Videos

You Can't Pour from An Empty Cup. Caregivers Alliance Limited. (26 September 2023). Retrieved 2023, November 27.



Websites

[Rethinking Care in a Fast-Ageing Society](#)

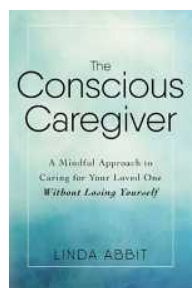
"Rethinking Care in a Fast-Ageing Society." *NUS Alumnus*, April-June 2023. Retrieved 2023, November 27.

Podcasts

[Mental Health Caregivers: Challenges & Solution](#)

Rebound with Resilience. (February 2022). *Mental Health Caregivers: Challenges & Solution*. Retrieved 2023, November 27.

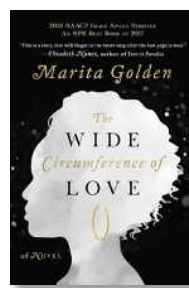
NLB eBooks



[The Conscious Caregiver: A Mindful Approach to Caring for Your Loved One Without Losing Yourself](#)

Abbit, Linda. *The Conscious Caregiver: A Mindful Approach to Caring for Your Loved One Without Losing Yourself*. New York: Adams Media, 2017.

Retrieved from OverDrive. ([myLibrary ID](#) is required to access the eBook).



[The Wide Circumference of Love](#)

Golden, Marita. *The Wide Circumference of Love*. New York: Arcade Publishing, 2015.

Retrieved from OverDrive. ([myLibrary ID](#) is required to access the eBook).