



Avi Parmar

For some, it takes years before they recognize their role as a caregiver. For Avi Parmar, that realization came through a series of defining moments. As an only child supporting his parents, Leena and Daljit came naturally. So, when Leena, a sociology professor, experienced a cardiac event in 2011 that required triple bypass surgery, Avi was there by her side without hesitation.


While balancing his career with her recovery, Avi began to approach caregiving differently. Drawing on his background and finance strategy and operations, he applied a system lens approach, finding practical, thoughtful ways to support his parents while preserving their dignity and comfort. He also leaned on the support of his longtime friend and neighbour of over 25 years, Augusto, who would also become like family to them.

The family would face another set back, however, when Leena was later diagnosed with cancer. Aware of her fears around chemotherapy and its impact on her independence and self-expression, Avi responded with care and intention. He learned how to cut her hair and they took it in stages and when she was ready, found stylish caps to help her feel confident. This had the intended impact as Avi recalls her first appointment when, despite the weight of the day, Leena was so pleased with her outfit that she asked him to take her photo.

As Avi continued supporting his mother, his father's health began to decline. In time, he would step fully into the role of primary caregiver for both his parents as Daljit experienced the physical and cognitive effects of early onset dementia. Over the next five years, Avi would balance caregiving with his career and volunteer work, while also deepening his commitment to learning. He immersed himself in research and completed training in first aid as well as empathy and mindfulness, tools that he said helped him navigate the realities of long-term caregiving.

He also transformed his home to meet his parents' evolving needs, creating a safe, calming and accessible environment. Every decision was intentional, supporting independence while reducing risk. To maintain peace of mind while working, he introduced discreet motion alert technology, including video recordings, which also offered comfort to Leena that she could now see her beloved garden and stay connected.

When Leena passed away in 2023, Avi faced the profound loss of his mother while also continuing to care for his father, supporting him through the progression of the disease that at times was difficult for Daljit to fully understand and grasp Leena's passing.



It was ultimately his mother's encouragement that led Avi to share his caregiving experience, something he had once been hesitant to do due to stigma and cultural expectations and potential impacts on his career. Nina, who dedicated her career to amplifying underrepresented voices saw the unique opportunity his story could have, particularly within the South Asian community where men may feel less comfortable speaking about caregiving. She encouraged him to be brave, to be open and vulnerable, knowing it could help others feel less alone.

Today, Avi honours her legacy by speaking openly and advocating for caregivers. He also continues to explore practical solutions to support care at home. From voice-enabled systems that help his father navigate his daily routines like turning on the lights or turning on and off the TV, to smart boxes and locks that allow care providers to come and go with ease and minimal disruption, as well as GPS tracking on medical equipment to assist one out of the house.

Avi and Daljit have also taken part in research initiatives to support both patients and caregivers, like a virtual reality headset through the Kite Research Institute that provides short term respite for Avi, while Daljit can explore the aquarium or travel around the world accompanied by calming music that provides him with stimulation and engagement.


Avi also supports projects exploring ways artificial intelligence can help filter alerts, ensuring that caregiver notifications are necessary and meaningful rather than overwhelming, a challenge that he's experienced. He also uses online platforms like the Neighbour app, where he can connect to caregivers in his community to share resources as well as coordinate ride sharing opportunities, further strengthening his network.

Avi also spends his time supporting organizations like Mackenzie Health, Chats and the Western Region Ontario Health Team, where he shares both his professional expertise and his lived experience as a caregiver, honouring his mother's legacy.

Today, Avi remains committed to a promise he made his mother before she passed, that his father would remain at home with him. And while it took time, they have found a sense of rhythm and predictable stability.

Spending time with Avi and Daljit, the care and intention behind their daily lives is clear. Each detail is thoughtfully designed to provide a dementia-friendly home that provides care and support. Together, they enjoy regular outings, including walks at the local track and have even begun travelling again, something their family had always enjoyed.

Last year, with the support from Augusto and close friends, they even took a trip to the Dominican Republic. Though Avi was initially hesitant at first, he embraced the experience, finding that the benefits far outweigh the uncertainty.



In preparing for this story and learning more about Avi's journey, he's continued to express his gratitude for this recognition, but also how being acknowledged, especially as a male, culturally diverse caregiver, has really meant a great deal to him and is in keeping with his mother's wishes. And sharing, "I'm always happy to connect, collaborate and contribute to this community."

Thank you for going Above and Beyond!