

Time to Talk



“ I’m honoured to care for my mom, but I’m tired and overwhelmed. I don’t know where to find the information I need. ”

Being a family caregiver often means you have less time to care for your own needs. If you’re feeling overwhelmed in your caregiving role, speak to your health care team.

For more information about caregiving and to access programs and services that can support you in your role visit **ontariocaregiver.ca** or call our 24/7 helpline at **1.833.416.2273**.

Most Ontarians have been or will be someone's caregiver at some point in their lives. Twenty-nine percent of the provincial population – or 3.3 million people – provide some form of support, assistance, care or enrichment to a family member or friend.

But who is caring for caregivers?



ARE YOU A CAREGIVER?

Caregivers are defined as a family member, friend, or neighbour who provides personal, social, psychological and physical support, assistance and care, for family members and friends in need. This support can be provided for any period of time.

The reality is that caregivers often don't see themselves as a caregiver. Instead, they see themselves as "just" a spouse, a son, a daughter or a friend – someone who cares about the person and steps in to fill a necessary need.

Caregivers told us they find it hard to ask for help, and in some cases the person they support won't allow them to accept it. They feel overwhelmed in their role, unsure of where to get information and anxious about what the future holds. They are frustrated, worried and feel tremendous guilt. They put themselves last and find it difficult to cope.

Their responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Bathing, toileting, grooming
- Scheduling appointments
- Shopping
- Laundry, cooking, cleaning
- Taking care of the home (repairs and outdoor maintenance)
- Managing finances
- Planning social activities
- Driving
- Care navigating
- Patient advocating

WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS OF CAREGIVING?

For many caregivers, providing support to a loved one is a rewarding experience. However, there are impacts to the caregiver that can't be ignored. Time spent caregiving takes time away from other family responsibilities, as well as from work. Time is also taken from personal relationships and restricts a caregiver's ability to participate in social activities. This can cause more stress and feelings of isolation.



CAREGIVING HAS AN IMPACT ON:



Time



Employment and
Work-Life Balance



Finances



Health and Wellness:
Mental, Emotional,
Physical and Social



Personal
Relationships

CAREGIVER BURNOUT

Caregivers often feel mentally and physically exhausted. This can eventually leave a caregiver feeling burnt-out or feeling a loss of self. They are no longer able to cope with even simple tasks. Unfortunately, many caregivers don't seek help until they reach this point. In extreme cases, it takes being hospitalized for caregivers to accept support.



There are a number of factors that contribute to caregiver burnout:

Need for perfection

Many caregivers focus on what they need to do to improve rather than focusing on their accomplishments.

Overwhelming list of things to do

The never-ending list of tasks can lead caregivers to feel like they are not completing anything and trying to keep up contributes to exhaustion.

Self-sacrifice

Many caregivers agree to take on the role but may not want to, or they may have to give up other activities to be able to support their loved one. This can lead to feelings of resentment.

Unspoken feelings

Unexpressed emotions can manifest in unproductive ways and impact a caregiver's ability to complete tasks or function in relationships.

Not taking time for themselves

Many caregivers put themselves last and find it hard to find time for self-care.

SIGNS YOU MAY BE EXPERIENCING CAREGIVER BURNOUT

If you are experiencing any of the following, you may be showing signs of caregiver burn-out. Please speak to a member of your healthcare team.



- Lack of energy and exhaustion
- Feelings of tremendous guilt
- Frequently sick, feeling unwell, anxious
- Neglect own needs because life is dominated by caregiving
- Difficulty relaxing even when help is available
- Impatience, irritability
- Feeling overwhelmed or helpless, and possibly hopeless
- Changes in sleeping or eating patterns and/or the excessive use of alcohol, cannabis, and/or prescription medications
- Unable or unwilling to ask for help



▶ WHAT CAN YOU DO?

It's **Time to Talk**. Don't wait until you reach a point where you can no longer cope. If you are a caregiver and feeling overwhelmed in your role, please reach out to a member of your health care team.



“Friends drift away, they don’t know what to say. It surprised me at how quickly it happened...It was like we had the plague and not Alzheimers”

CAREGIVER

SUPPORT, RESOURCES AND EDUCATION

Meeting the needs of caregivers during COVID-19 and beyond:



24/7 Ontario Caregiver Helpline & Live Chat

– one place to go to find information and support in the community
1-833-416-2273 (CARE)



Toolkits – including Caregiver Starter Kit and Work & Caregiving – A Balancing Act



COVID-19 Tip sheets – including contingency planning, caregiver mental health and effective use of technology



SCALE Program

(Supporting Caregiver Awareness, Learning and Empowerment) – weekly webinars, online group coaching and one-on-one telephone counselling



Peer Mentoring Program

– connect with another caregiver and share experiences, challenges and solutions



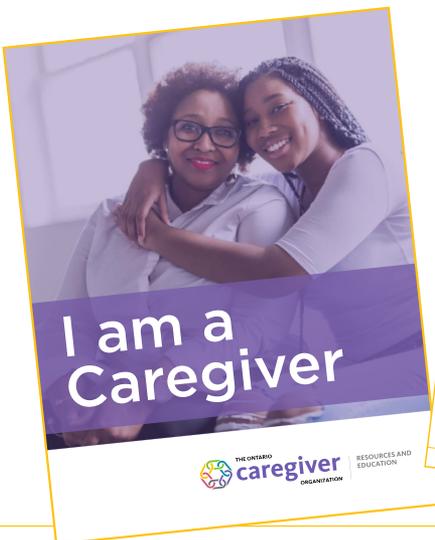
OCO webinar series

– providing information on a range of topics including finances, privacy and caregiver wellness



Online Support Groups

– connecting caregivers with similar lived experience on a weekly basis.



The Ontario Caregiver Organization (OCO) exists to support Ontario's 3.3 million caregivers; ordinary people who provide physical and/or emotional support to a family member, partner, friend or neighbour. The OCO helps to improve the caregiving experience by providing one point of access to information, services and supports that empower and enable caregivers to be successful in their role. Where gaps exist in caregiver programs and services, the OCO partners with caregivers, health care providers and other organizations to find new and innovative ways to bridge those gaps so all caregivers, regardless of age, condition or geographic location have access to the help they need.

OCO's programs and services are created in collaboration with caregivers who participate through our caregiver advisory panel and many working groups which give us an opportunity to road-test ideas, get real-time feedback on our approach, and explore caregiver issues and themes with caregivers themselves. Their shared experiences help us shape all of our work, including our reports, programs and services, and emerging priorities.

The OCO is a not-for-profit entity funded by the Government of Ontario.

Ontario Caregiver Helpline: 1-833-416-2273

Email: info@ontariocaregiver.ca

Phone: 416-362-CARE (2273) or 1-888-877-1626

www.ontariocaregiver.ca

