



THE ONTARIO

caregiver

ORGANIZATION

Creating a Welcoming Environment for Caregivers

Conversation Tips & Scripts for Healthcare Providers



Caregivers are essential to Ontario's healthcare system, providing emotional support, managing medications, coordinating appointments, and attending visits for loved ones. Today, **4.2 million Ontarians provide unpaid care**, a number expected to rise to 6.5 million by 2030. Many are experiencing burnout: according to the Ontario Caregiver Organization [Spotlight Report 2025](#), **69% feel unsure how they can continue**.

These numbers show why conversations with caregivers matter. Acknowledging their role, understanding their needs, and including them as partners in care helps both caregivers, and the people they support, feel welcomed and informed.



In this resource, we use the term “patient” to indicate those receiving care, acknowledging that in certain contexts, it may be interchangeable with ‘client’, ‘care-recipient’, or ‘resident’.

Caregiver Identification

Acknowledges the caregiver's role and sets a tone of partnership



When speaking with the patient

“Who is usually here to support you? We want to make sure they feel welcome and have the information they need.”

“Is there someone who helps you with meals, appointments, or decisions about your care?”

“Would it be okay if we recorded their name in our system so we can include them in conversations when appropriate?”

“Is this your [e.g., daughter]? Does she help you a lot? Would you like us to list her as your essential care partner?”

“To help us provide the best care, would it be okay if we spoke with [caregiver's name] as well?”



When speaking with the caregiver

“I know you've been closely involved—thank you for everything you're doing.”

“You know [person's name] better than anyone. Your insight is really important to us.”

“We'd like to make sure staff know who you are so you don't have to re-explain your role each time.”

Welcome & Introduction to the Healthcare Setting

Emphasizes collaboration and shared responsibility



**When speaking
with the
caregiver**

“With [*person’s name*]’s permission, we’d like to include you in conversations about their care.”

“We want to welcome you as part of the care team. The support you provide is really helpful and appreciated.”

“We have some information we usually share with caregivers; would it be helpful if I walked you through it?”

“This doesn’t mean we expect you to take on extra work or replace healthcare staff.”

“Your presence and emotional support are important, and we’re glad you’re here.”

Knowledge Sharing

Builds trust and helps caregivers feel confident



**When speaking with the
caregiver and patient**

“Here’s what the lab results mean in plain language.”

“Let me walk you through the treatment options and what to expect.”

“Does this match what you’re seeing?”

“Would you feel comfortable trying this at home? We want to make sure it feels realistic.”

“If training or guidance would help, we can talk about that.”

Transitions & Discharge

Sets clear expectations and checks for agreement



**When speaking
with the
patient**

“You’ll be going home soon, and we’d like to include [caregiver’s name] in discharge planning, is that okay with you?”

“There’s some new information, and we’d like to invite [caregiver’s name] to join the conversation, with your permission.”



**When speaking
with the
caregiver**

“We’ll work together on a plan that fits your family’s situation.”

“What kind of support will you need to keep this going at home?”

“Here’s what we’ll do next, does that sound doable?”

“What questions do you have before the transition?”

Care for the Caregiver

Shows care for their well-being even in challenging situations and help prevent burnout



**When speaking
with the
caregiver**

“How are you doing?” This can be a lot. How are you holding up?”

“Do you have help or support outside of this?”

“I want to share a resource with you [provide postcard or website information to caregiver]. The Ontario Caregiver Organization offers information, coaching and mental health support if you ever want to talk to someone or explore resources.”

“Do you have any concerns right now?”

“It sounds like this has been overwhelming. What kind of support would be helpful right now?”

Get insights on caregiver inclusion and support, straight to your inbox



[The Partners in Care Bulletin](#): A quarterly letter with case studies from healthcare organisations across Ontario



[The Essential Care Partner Support Hub's Learning Collaborative](#): Community letter with events, evidence-informed resources, and news about caregiver inclusion and support

Free Tools for Caregivers



24/7 [Ontario Caregiver Helpline](#) 1-833-416-2273 (CARE), available in 150 languages



[Toolkits](#) for caregivers



[Virtual support programs](#) for caregivers



Learn more at ontariocaregiver.ca

