



THE ONTARIO

caregiver

ORGANIZATION

Supporting Caregivers Starts with Healthcare Provider Education

Simple Strategies to Educate
Healthcare Providers



Healthcare providers play a central role in supporting caregivers as essential partners in care. Despite their critical role, many providers report uncertainty about how to identify, include, or support caregivers in everyday practice. Structured education and training can bridge this gap by providing clear guidance, practical tools, and strategies to engage caregivers confidently.

Research shows that healthcare providers who participate in caregiver-focused education report improved knowledge, confidence, and intentions to change practice, including better communication with caregivers, recognition of caregivers' expertise, and support for caregiver well-being¹. This education helps providers see caregivers not as add-ons but as essential partners whose insights improve care for the person receiving support.

Caregiving can also have significant impacts on caregiver well-being. According to the Ontario Caregiver Organization's 2025 Spotlight Report 69% of caregivers feel so burnt out they are unsure how they will continue, and 72% struggle to maintain healthy habits due to caregiving responsibilities². Equipping healthcare teams with the knowledge to address caregiver burn-out ensures caregivers are not only acknowledged as partners but also supported in ways that reduce stress and improve outcomes.

1. Parmar, J., L'Heureux, T., Anderson, S., Lobchuk, M., Charles, L., Pollard, C., Powell, L., Chaudhuri, E. R., Fawcett-Arsenault, J., Mosaico, S., Sim, C., Walker, P., Shapkin, K., Weir, C., Sprule, L., Strickfaden, M., Tarnowski, G., Lee, J., & Cameron, C. (2025). Bridging the care gap: Integrating family caregiver partnerships into Healthcare Provider Education. *Healthcare*, 13(15), 1899. <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare13151899>

2. Ontario Caregiver Organization. (2025). *Ontario Caregiver Organization. SPOTLIGHT ON ONTARIO CAREGIVERS - DECEMBER 2025*. <https://ontariocaregiver.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/OCO-Spotlight-Report-2025-Eng.pdf>



Strategies to Embed Education about Caregivers for Healthcare Teams

- ✓ Include caregiver education as part of **new staff onboarding**, helping teams recognize and include caregivers from day one - this can be provided by OCO through virtual or in person sessions
- ✓ Include caregiver education as part of **all staff annual training** - this can be provided via eLearning
- ✓ Offer education sessions at **team huddles, lunch & learns, workshops, or special presentations** - this can be provided by OCO through virtual or in person sessions
- ✓ Provide **practical tools, resources, tips & scripts** for healthcare providers to use and reference

The OCO offers educational content and resources to make this easy:

Educational Materials

Equip staff with practical tools, scripts, and privacy guidance to confidently communicate with and support caregivers at key points in care.

- [Health Privacy and Consent Resources](#) to help healthcare providers understand how to communicate with caregivers while respecting privacy laws
- [Scripts to help providers initiate conversations with caregivers at key points in care](#)
- Practical guide to [connect caregivers to support at point of care](#), which can be used during initial or on-going care interactions
- [Tips](#) for providers to identify and support caregivers, with easy-to-use language to prompt conversation and connection
- Caregiver [postcards](#), [Helpline posters](#), and [toolkits](#) for caregivers which OCO can print for your setting at no cost

In-Person or Virtual Training

Delivered by the Ontario Caregiver Organization's [Essential Care Partner Support Hub](#) team, these flexible sessions can be adapted to team huddles, lunch & learns, workshops, or special presentations, and include four core units:

- **Valuing Caregivers** - For all staff to understand the impact of caregiving on care recipients and providers alike
- **Including Caregivers** - For healthcare providers to learn the benefits of inclusion and practical strategies such as seeking consent, sharing information, and communicating effectively
- **Supporting Caregivers** - For staff to recognize, prevent, and respond to caregiver distress
- **Leading for Caregiver Inclusion** - For leadership to explore organizational approaches to caregiver inclusion



What you'll gain:

Staff are better equipped to engage caregivers respectfully and effectively as active partners in care.



What you'll gain:

Teams develop practical skills and implement organizational approaches to engage caregivers as partners in care.

Caregivers as Partners e-Learning

[Self-paced modules](#) designed for providers that can be integrated into your organization's Learning Management System.

- Caregivers as Partners (2 hrs) – Learn why family caregivers are valuable and how to engage them effectively.
- Caregivers as Partners in Long-Term Care (1 hr) – Designed specifically for long-term care teams.
- Caregivers as Partners – Mental Health and Addiction (1.5 hrs) – Support caregivers of individuals with mental illness or addiction.

Caregiver Co-Design

Helping healthcare teams involve caregivers directly in designing programs, policies, and care practices:

- Co-design with caregivers using [OCO guidance](#) and a [practical checklist](#), including tips and templates to engage caregivers from idea generation to implementation and evaluation—whether you're designing a guide, care pathway, or launching a new program.

Ready to start? Secure materials and tailored support at no cost.

Get your free package of resources and access to 1:1 support, including tailored education sessions and future opportunities for supporting caregivers across your organization.

[Book a time with our team here](#), or email us at ecpsupporthub@ontariocaregiver.ca



What you'll gain:

By incorporating their lived experiences, resources and programs co-designed with caregivers are more relevant, inclusive, and effective.

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

