

Ontario Caregivers and BounceBack



Ontario Caregivers play an invaluable role in the lives of those they care for and Ontario's healthcare system, enabling family members and partners to remain in their homes and their communities.

Many caregivers experience a sense of fulfillment from being a caregiver, but it can also be overwhelming – both physically and emotionally. Many caregivers admit that they are under a great deal of stress and not coping well with their situation. The recent Spotlight Survey indicates that 54% of Ontario's 3.3 million caregivers feel anxious or worried, 53% are overwhelmed and 49% experience disturbed sleep.

There are also other factors that may contribute to the stress and anxiety felt by caregivers. This includes frustration with not being able to control their situation or see their loved one get better; not feeling like they are receiving enough empathy and respect from healthcare providers; and not being recognized by society for the significant work they do. In the same survey, caregivers said caregiving had a negative impact on their physical health (44%) and mental health (53%) and availability of leisure time (57%).



"Some of our stress comes from the fact that we don't see our loved one getting better. We know that they're not getting what they need. It always goes back to this. If they could be better, we can be better."

– Caregiver

It is important that caregivers support their own mental and physical health to ensure they can provide meaningful care to others.

We have the support you need.

1. Single point of contact for services and supports:

The Ontario Caregiver Organization exists to support the 3.3 million caregivers in Ontario who provide physical and/or emotional support to a family member, partner, friend or neighbour. We're here as a single point of contact for services and supports you need to be successful in your role. You can go online (ontariocaregiver.ca) or call the Ontario Caregiver Helpline at: 1-833-416-2273 (CARE) for support. Our community resource specialists are available 24/7 to help connect you to the right caregiver information, resources and support in your local area.

2. Mental health support through the BounceBack program:

The Ontario Caregiver Organization is pleased to partner with the Canadian Mental Health Association to provide caregivers with a free mental health support program called BounceBack. Funded by the Ontario Government, BounceBack is a skill-building program for adults and youth 15+ that can help individuals better manage low mood, mild to moderate depression and anxiety, stress, worry, irritability or anger. Through one-on-one telephone coaching, skill-building workbooks and online videos, individuals learn new skills to regain and maintain positive mental health and well-being. Coaches work with participants to tailor skills and learning to their unique needs, experiences and circumstances. The coach is also there to help motivate and support individuals as they learn practical skills they can use now and into the future. Further, the coaches help participants learn to set and achieve goals so that long after they've finished the program, they can become their own coach.

Individuals can choose from 20 workbooks. Here are five that might be particularly useful:

Understanding worry and stress

You'll learn how worry or stress affects five key areas of your life (situations and relationships, thoughts, feelings, physical symptoms, behaviours) and which area you need to work on to overcome your anxiety. While you don't have control over your situation, you can control how you respond or think about stressors in your life.



Helpful things you can do

Learn which activities you can do that give you a boost and get ideas on how to make sure you do these things, even when you are busy or under stress.



Overcoming sleep problems

Learn to identify what things are preventing you from getting a good night's sleep and some changes you can make to overcome sleep problems.



Practical problem solving

Learn a seven-step plan on how to approach a problem so that it becomes easier to solve. We all face difficulties in life; what's different is how we deal with them.



Building relationships with your family and friends

Learn about your own styles of communicating or relating to others, and how to build (or rebuild) relationships with the people close to you.



For individuals who are not quite ready for telephone coaching, BounceBack also offers a variety of online videos that can be accessed from home at any time at: bouncebackvideo.ca (using access code: bbtodayon). The videos are also available in multiple languages.

For more information and to see if this program is right for you, visit: bouncebackontario.ca.

3. Peer support programs:

Talking to others who are experiencing similar issues and challenges can help validate what you're feeling and give you a different perspective on how to cope. The Ontario Caregiver Organization offers peer support groups and a 1:1 peer support program where you can share your caregiving experience, challenges and solutions. Visit www.ontariocaregiver.ca for more information.

