OARC In Action

For Residents By Residents

November 2026

IN THIS ISSUE

- New Resource - Nutrition, Dignity, and Quality of Life
- Organizational Update
- Work Opportunity - Postdoctoral Researcher
- November Webinar Recording - Recreation Part One
- December Live Concert
- January Webinar - Recreation Part Two
- Ministry Update - Submit Your Feedback
- LTC Home Spotlight - Creating Engagement
- Coaches Corner - Building Bridges with Community Engagement
- Fall Prevention Month Resources
- Call for LTC Choirs
- Together We Care - Call for Content Open

OARC Resident Leaders Share Dining Experiences at Sector Workshop

On November 3, OARC representatives were pleased to participate in the *Nutrition and Food Service Excellence full-day workshop,* hosted by AdvantAge Ontario in partnership with Seasons Care. The event brought together long-term care professionals from across the sector to explore best practices, emerging trends, and opportunities to enhance the dining experience for residents.

OARC's participation included an exhibitor booth, where team members met with delegates, discussed resident engagement practices, and shared a new resource highlighting key findings from OARC's 2025 Food Service Survey for Residents, along with practical tips for meaningfully involving residents in enhancing the dining experience. The workshop also provided valuable learning opportunities, beginning with an update from representatives of the Ministry of Long-Term Care, who spoke about the different types of long-term care inspections and emerging compliance trends. Additional sessions featured long-term care leaders, including Food Service/Dietary Managers, Registered Dietitians, and other sector experts, exploring

common challenges, innovative practices, and collaborative approaches to strengthening nutrition services, dining experiences, and quality of life for residents.

Communication and collaboration were recurring themes throughout the workshop. OARC Board Chair Mary Nestor delivered an inspiring presentation that helped demystify the inspection process and encouraged a collaborative approach to quality improvement. Her remarks emphasized the importance of interdisciplinary teamwork, with residents recognized as valued and essential partners in the process.

During a Resident Voices fireside conversation with OARC Acting Director Melissa McVie, Resident Leaders Ann Donaldson and Jennifer Brown shared personal experiences and reflections on what contributes to a positive dining experience. They highlighted both the challenges residents encounter and the opportunities for home leadership and staff to work alongside residents in developing solutions.

Reflecting on the day, Jennifer highlighted a session titled Caring Connections: Interdisciplinary Care, which showcased quality-of-life initiatives developed in a Durham Region long-term care home through collaboration among residents, families, and staff. ***"The Durham home initiative was really striking because it wasn't a patchwork project. Everyone was involved, from every level. It was a concerted effort, and every conceivable action was a collaboration."***

The workshop reinforced a message that resonated throughout the day: meaningful improvements happen when residents are recognized as partners in shaping the services and experiences that affect their daily lives.

Many thanks to AdvantAge Ontario and Seasons Care for the invitation to participate and share OARC's resources and resident perspectives.

New Resource: Nutrition, Dignity, and Quality of Life

In fall 2025, OARC conducted a province-wide Food Service Survey for Residents, gathering feedback from nearly 1,400 residents across all Ontario Health regions about their food and dining experiences in long-term care. The survey provided

valuable insights into what matters most to residents and identified opportunities to enhance both the quality of meals and the overall dining experience.

Drawing on these findings, OARC has developed a new resource, Nutrition, Dignity, and Quality of Life, which highlights key survey results and emerging themes. The resource underscores the importance of adequate investments in food and staffing while recognizing the meaningful role residents can play in shaping positive dining experiences within their homes.

In addition to sharing resident perspectives, the resource includes practical implementation tips and guiding questions to support collaboration between residents, Residents' Councils, and long-term care teams in identifying and advancing quality improvement opportunities related to food and dining.

▶ **Access the resource here: https://shorturl.at/RgX8o**

Organizational Update

The OARC Board of Directors wishes to share that Dee Tripp has moved on from her role as Executive Director of OARC.

The Board is grateful to Dee for her leadership, dedication, and many contributions over the past 15 years, including the last ten as Executive Director. We thank her for her service and wish her every success in her future endeavors.

Melissa McVie continues in her role as Acting Executive Director. With the support of OARC's dedicated team, Board of Directors, and Resident Leaders, the Board is confident that OARC will continue to thrive.

In the Know at OARC

Work with Us to Evaluate OARC's Resident Engagement Toolkit

On behalf of the University Health Network (UHN), we are pleased to share an exciting opportunity for a Postdoctoral Researcher to lead the evaluation of OARC's *Everything About Residents Involves Residents Toolkit.*

This one-year position offers the opportunity to work closely with OARC, researchers, knowledge users, and residents with lived experience to design and implement a participatory evaluation of the toolkit. The successful candidate will support meaningful partner engagement, contribute to co-produced activities, and help advance knowledge mobilization and capacity building in resident engagement and long-term care.

- **Interested candidates** are encouraged to learn more and apply through the UHN Career Portal: https://shorturl.at/9sg9r
- To learn more about OARC's *Everything About Residents Involves Residents Toolkit*, visit the Toolkit webpage here: https://shorturl.at/MpwuT

Webinars

November Webinar Recording: Recreation – Beyond the Activity Calendar Part One

Uncover the real impact of recreation in long-term care. OARC's new two-part webinar series highlights the important role recreation therapy plays in supporting residents' well-being, independence, relationships, and sense of purpose.

Now available to watch on Youtube, *Part one: A Behind the Scenes Understanding*, details the recreation requirements for long-term care home, how it supports residents' quality of life, and what recreation programs could look like through the lens of the Recreation Professional and the resident.

- Access the recording and presentation slides here: https://shorturl.at/LELWZ

January Webinar: Recreation Part two "Shaping Your Activity Calendar"

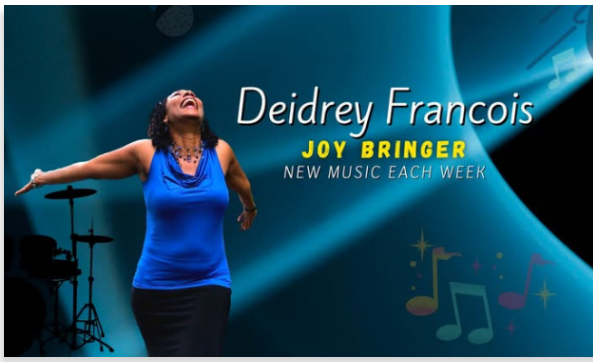
Meaningful resident engagement happens when residents and staff work together. Expand your understanding of recreation therapy with part two of OARC's two-part series exploring the impact of recreation in long-term care. Shaping Your Activity

Calendar explores practical ways recreation teams can collaborate with residents to create more responsive, person-centered programs and activities that reflect resident interests, preferences and needs. Joining OARC team members and resident leaders is guest speaker Kayla Sparling, Education Director at Activity Pro.

- Date: January 20, 2027
- Time: 2:00 PM ET
- Learn more and register here: https://shorturl.at/5KUVV

December Webinar: Holiday Concert with OARC and Deidrey Francois

Celebrate the holidays with OARC! Join us for a special Webinar Wednesday featuring a live performance with singer/songwriter Deidrey Francois!



Deidrey Francois is a passionate singer/songwriter and a sultry, soulful performer whose voice resonates love, enthusiasm and boundless freedom! She invokes the full gamut of emotion with music that ranges from gut wrenching blues, rhythmic rock to jazzy joy.

- Date: December 16, 2026
- Time: 2:00 PM ET
- Learn more and register here: https://shorturl.at/s5yiX

Ministry Update

Public consultations on proposed amendments to the FLTCA

On November 16, the Ontario Government introduced a new Bill titled the Protect Ontario Families and Communities Act, 2026, which, if passed, would amend the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021 (FLTCA). The Ministry of Long-Term Care is inviting public consultation on these proposed amendments, outlined in Schedule 6 of the Bill, from now until December 16, 2026.

- Learn more about the consultation and proposed amendments in the Assistant Deputy Minister Memo here:
  - **English:** https://shorturl.at/zezQU
  - **French:** https://shorturl.at/kvrGs
- Submit your feedback on the proposed amendments here: https://shorturl.at/eFJtz

OARC Impact Stories

OARC at This Is Long Term Care, conference reflection

Last month, OARC was pleased to participate in This Is Long Term Care, a three-day conference hosted by the Ontario Long Term Care Association (OLTCA). Bringing together leaders, innovators, researchers, and sector partners from across Ontario, the conference created space for important conversations about quality improvement, emerging practices, and the future of long-term care.

With a tabletop display in the Partner Piazza, OARC connected with attendees from across the sector, shared resources, and learned from the experiences and perspectives of others working to enhance quality of life for residents.

OARC's booth was located alongside our partners at Family Councils Ontario (FCO) and the Ontario Centres for Learning, Research and Innovation in Long-Term Care (CLRI), giving us the chance to exchange ideas and resources throughout the conference. We enjoyed learning more about FCO's new virtual Community of Support platform and exploring CLRI's recently released Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Practice Guide, *Welcoming Trans and Gender-Diverse Older Adults to Long-Term Care.* We were also delighted to welcome Marina and Evelyn, resident volunteers from Schlegel Villages, whose visit reinforced the importance of keeping resident voices at the centre of conversations about the future of long-term care.

Thank you to OLTCA for the opportunity to participate. We left with new ideas, valuable connections, and a renewed appreciation for the collaborative work taking place across Ontario to advance resident-centred long-term care.

OARC's Erin Westwood Attends LTC Community Wellness Event

On November 5th, Home Support Coach, Erin Westwood was invited to represent OARC at the peopleCare Tavistock Community Wellness Event. Organized by

Programs Manager and Resident Council Assistant, Kristen Leenders, the event featured nine vendors including OARC, the Tavistock Family Council, Alzheimer's Society, and other community wellness partners. ***Created to provide home staff, residents, and family members an opportunity to learn, connect, and engage with organizations on topics important to the health and wellness of residents,*** it was well attended with a steady flow of visitors throughout the day.

> ***It was wonderful to hear directly from the residents and learn more about their home, their experiences and what is important to them.***

At the OARC booth, Erin shared conversations about the importance of Residents' Council and how staff can support them by understanding their role in the home; identifying areas to optimize resident engagement in the home as a great place to begin collaborating with the Council.

"It was wonderful to hear directly from the residents and learn more about their home, their experiences and what is important to them. Thank you, peopleCare Tavistock, for inviting OARC to share in this exciting and important event! I look forward to connecting for a visit in the spring!"

REALs in Action: Holiday fun and resident advocacy at St. Lawrence Lodge.

The Christmas Bazaar at St. Lawrence Lodge is the home's main event of the year, organized annually by the activity department. A highly anticipated event, residents, staff, families and the public visit to enjoy crafts, homemade goods, and food. This year, the residents were offered a free table, and the Residents' Council used the opportunity to promote OARC, Residents Rights, and to fundraise for the Council with Christmas calendars that featured artwork created by the home's residents.

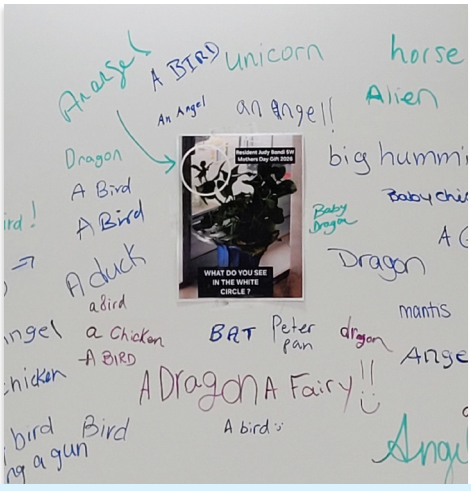
Proudly supporting the residents' display is La Vern Simpkins, Resident Leader and member of OARC's REAL group (Resident Experts Advisors and Leaders). We thank La Vern and all the Residents' Council members at St. Lawrence Lodge for showcasing OARC, and raising awareness of residents' rights and the important work Residents' Councils do for their home communities.

Long-Term Care Home Spotlight

Creating engagement with a very special plant — Southlake Residential Care Village

Last May, Judy Bondi received a gift for Mother's Day that sparked an opportunity for social interaction and fun for the residents of her home and the greater community who visited Southlake Residential Care Village in Newmarket. This gift was a plant, and it became quite special to Judy and the home's Residents' Council.

It started with Judy noticing an 'angel" pattern in the leaves, which intrigued her. Each week, as the plant grew, Judy would notice other patterns too, like Mickey Mouse! ***Judy enjoyed discovering these images and realized she could share this imaginative exercise with her community.***



Judy is the president of her Residents' Council, and with their support they posted sheets of the leaf patterns to give residents an opportunity to join the fun. They got several reactions: bird, turkey, bat, fairy, baby, eagle, alien...everyone enjoyed sharing their findings. Soon after, the Council realized they could expand the idea. "Everyone here saw something different, so we wanted to create social interaction among our visiting family members, PSW's, Managers, and anyone that entered the building," Judy shared.

> ***We wanted to create social interaction among our visiting family members, PSW's, Managers, and anyone that entered the building.***

Sunita, the home's Office Manager, supported the idea by providing a whiteboard, and over the Thanksgiving weekend they set up the activity, posting the plant's 'angel' leaf pattern.

Very quickly, guesses filled the whiteboard. What began as a thoughtful gift from one family to one resident had grown to include the entire community, showcasing the power of imagination and resident creativity.

This coming holiday season, Judy and the Residents' Council plan to recreate the activity with two other pictures, continuing the fun! Unfortunately, the 'angel' leaves, the pattern that started it all, broke off when the pot accidentally got knocked to the floor, but Judy's special plant continues to thrive, and she's excited to see what other patterns might emerge. What do you see in the attached photos?

Special thanks to Judy for sharing her story on behalf of the Southlake Village Residents' Council (Anita, Rita and Sharon).

Coaches Corner

Coaches Corner brings you helpful tips, insights, and resources directly from our four Education and Home Support Regional Coaches. This month, Jessica Mocny offers guidance on how home team members, residents, and Residents' Councils can work together in community engagement initiatives that foster connection, a sense of purpose, and strengthen home communities.

Building Bridges: Community Engagement Inside and Outside Your Long-Term Care Home

Moving into a long-term care home does not mean leaving community behind. Residents' Councils across Ontario continue to build relationships, contribute to important causes, and strengthen both their home communities and the neighbourhoods around them.

Community engagement is about more than attending events. It is about sharing ideas, supporting others, having a voice in decisions, and contributing to something meaningful. Residents living in Long-Term Care continue to be leaders, advocates, volunteers, and neighbours. Their voice matters.

Residents fundraising at Tullamore Communtity's Summer Slip N'Slide Day. *(Read more in OARC in Action, August 2026)*

What Is Community Engagement?

Community engagement is the process of building relationships and working together

toward common goals. For Residents' Councils, it means residents actively shaping life within their home while creating meaningful connections with the wider community.

Community engagement can look different in every home. It might involve:

- **Giving back** - Residents can support local causes by sharing handmade items, assembling care packages, writing greeting cards, or participating in donation drives.
- **Connecting with others** - Partnerships with schools, libraries, cultural organizations, and community groups provide opportunities for conversation, learning, and intergenerational connections, and advocacy.
- **Shaping their community** - Community engagement also means elevating their voice and participating in decisions that affect residents' lives. Consider inviting elected officials to visit the home, participating in town halls, and supporting age-friendly community initiatives.

Start Small

One common misconception about community engagement is that it requires large events or significant fundraising efforts. Meaningful connections often begin with simple actions and can lead to larger opportunities over time

Success is not measured by the size of a project or the amount of money raised. Instead, it can be seen in increased participation, stronger relationships, and positive experiences for residents and community members alike.

Five Steps to Building Community Engagement

1. Identify Resident Interests

Start by asking residents:

- What causes/charities are important to you?
- What community groups were you involved with before moving into the home? Or Were you involved in community initiatives/groups before moving into LTC?
- What skills or experiences would you like to share?

By considering these questions, Resident feedback can help identify projects that are meaningful and relevant.

2. Choose One Goal

Rather than taking on several projects, start with one achievable objective. For example, you may wish to support a community fundraiser such as your local food bank, or participate in a fundraising walk or awareness event.

3. Build Partnerships

Many organizations welcome opportunities to connect with older adults and benefit from the knowledge and experience residents bring.

Reach out to organizations such as:

- Public libraries
- Schools and daycares
- Community organizations
- Local businesses
- Municipal government

Resident Leader Wanda Jensch with Mayor and City Councillors of Minto during Royal Terrace's LTC Community Engagement Day, 2026

4. Involve Residents as Leaders

Strong community engagement begins within the home itself. Residents are more likely to participate when there are opportunities to:

- Share ideas and help plan activities.
- Welcome and support new residents or community guests.
- Build relationships with fellow residents.
- Participate in open and meaningful communication through Council meetings and resident forums.
- Fundraise for charity causes of importance to them

A sense of belonging within the home often leads to stronger connections outside of it.

5. Celebrate Success

Recognize resident contributions, thank community partners, and share successes through newsletters, bulletin boards, and Council meetings. Celebrating achievements encourages ongoing involvement.

How Resident Council Assistants Can Help

Resident Council Assistants play an important role in supporting resident-led engagement. They can:

- Identify community partnership opportunities.
- Connect with local organizations and businesses.
- Help arrange transportation or virtual participation.
- Support communication and outreach efforts.
- Encourage residents to lead initiatives and make decisions.

Challenge Your Council This Month

At your next Residents' Council meeting, discuss:

1. What community connections already exist within our home?
2. What cause or community issue matters most to residents?
3. What is one new community partnership we could create this year?

Community engagement is not about how far you can travel, how many events you attend, or how much money you raise. It is about building meaningful relationships, sharing your voice, and contributing to something bigger than yourself.

Together, we can build stronger communities both inside and outside our long-term care homes.

Looking for inspiration?

- Start a pen-pal program with a local school or neighbouring senior living community.
- Create comfort kits for a shelter.
- Participate in a donation drive.
- Invite local community groups to visit the home.
- Share residents' stories and experiences with younger generations.
- Participate in age-friendly community initiatives.
- Sponsor a local youth sport team.
- Hold a collection drive for a local charity.
- Invite a community leader or organization to visit the home.

Jessica Mocny

Education & Support Coach, East Region

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If you have any questions about supporting community engagement in your home, or would like to connect with Jessica on other topics, please reach out.

Resources

Fall prevention Month

Falls are the number one cause of injury in Canada, with a single fall causing a potentially significant altering of an older adult's quality of life. However, there are ways in which individuals can help to lower their risk of falls that include simple daily habits, minor living adjustments, and education.

November is Fall Prevention Month, and we encourage residents, long-term care staff members, and home leadership to review the curated information below

RNAO Health Education Fact Sheet

The Registered Nurses Association of Ontario (RNAO) has developed an information fact sheet with concise and important information about falls, and some tips and guidance older adults can do to reduce their risks.

- **Download the fact sheet:** https://rnao.ca/media/3519/download?attachment

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OARC Fall Prevention Resources

Webinar Recording – Strong Bones, Strong Voices: Empowering Residents in LTC

Created with residents in mind, this webinar recording reviews what osteoporosis is, common types of fractures, and reviews ways residents can reduce their risk of fractures.

- Access the recording and informational slides here: https://shorturl.at/1j45q

Keeping it Together – Supporting Osteoporosis Knowledge in Long-Term Care Homes

Developed as part of the Ontario Osteoporosis Strategy for Long-Term Care, with input from OARC Resident Leaders, *Keeping It Together* is a conversation guide that helps residents learn about osteoporosis, bone health, and fracture prevention. This resource also supports residents in taking an active role with suggested questions they can ask themselves, their home leadership, and their physician or care teams.

- Download the guide: https://shorturl.at/vnthN

Media and Podcasts

Article – 'A lasting way to recognize': Program honours 305 Canadians for service

A new program called "The Proud 305" created by All Seniors Care Living Centres, was initiative to honour veterans, spouses of Canadian Armed Forces members and RCMP workers who live it its long-term care homes. ***"We wanted to create something that goes beyond an annual day of remembrance – a lasting way to recognize the people among us who have served our country and supported those who did,"*** Lily Goodman, CEO of Castle Living Group, of which All Seniors Care Living Centres is a division of, adds.

- Read the full article here: https://tinyurl.com/4tms7pbb

Article— Remembrance Day: Honouring Denise and Eric

Aspira Retirement Living honours residents and former Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) officers, Denise and Eric. This inspiring article details their lives living during WWII, how they met and fell in love while serving in the CAF, and their contributions both as military personnel and afterwards, when they served as problem solvers, teachers, and humanitarians to help people across the globe.

This tribute not only honours the veterans who fought and sacrificed in both World Wars but is a reminder to continue to recognize and honour the men and woman who served as military personnel and peacekeepers after them, in the pursuit of glocal peace and freedom.

- Read the article here: https://shorturl.at/acUSM

Podcast: The Green Bench – Coming of Age: Meeting the needs of our aging population

Hear from Doug Robinson, 91-year-old resident at the Village of Sandalwood Park, and his daughter, Elaine, as they share Doug's move in experience into long-term care, just before COVID-19, the staff who became like family, the Green Bench and the documentary that took them home to England.

- Listen: https://tinyurl.com/bdcvjwjt

> ***"Just because somebody's elderly does not mean that they don't have a story."***

Webinars

OLTCA KnowledgeBREAK Webinar: The Basics of Saving and Investing

Are you saving enough? Are you comfortable investing your savings? Learn about different savings accounts in Canada, how the markets work, and how they have performed, with an upcoming OLTCA KnowledgeBREAK webinar focused on helping you reach your financial goals for any stage of life.

- Date: December 9, 2026 | Time: 12:00 PM ET
- Learn more and register here: https://shorturl.at/CrLoi

CLEO Connect: Understanding Canada Pension Plan disability benefits

The Canada Pension Plan (CPP) disability benefit is a Government of Canada program that supports people who cannot work because of a disability. To be eligible for the benefit, a person must be younger than 65, have contributed enough to the CPP when they were working, and have a sever disability that does not allow them to work again.

This webinar covers qualities, how to make a strong application, how to appeal a decision about CPP disability benefits and tips on how to navigate the application process.

- Date: December 2, 2026 | 12:00 PM ET
- Register here: https://shorturl.at/yhf03

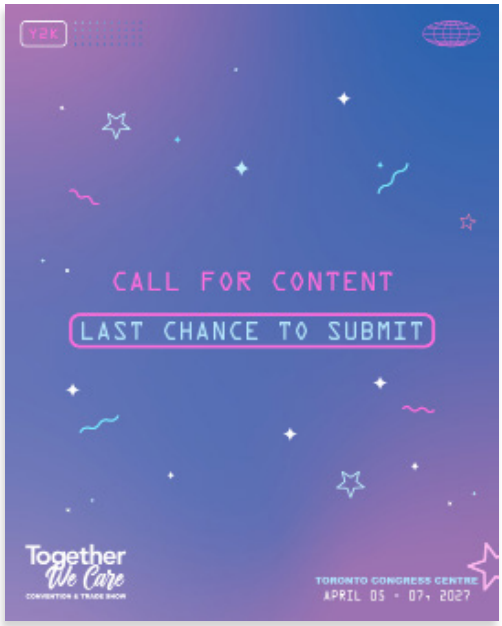
Opportunities

Call for choirs: Let your resident voices be heard! – OLTCA Special Video Project

Does your home have a resident choir, informal singing group, or a choir made up of family members or volunteers? The Ontario Long Term Care Association (OLTCA) is looking for groups interested in participating in a special video project featuring performances of O Canada, and they want your home to be part of it!

- No formal choir or performance experience is necessary. To learn more, email membership@oltca.com

Together We Care Convention – Call for Content now open!



Speaker submissions are now open for Together We Care Convention & Trade Show (TWC) 2027.

Taking place April 5–7, 2027, TWC is Ontario's premier gathering for the long-term care and retirement communities' sectors.

OLTCA and ORCA want to hear what's working: the programs, partnerships and innovations making a real difference. This year's streams cover workforce, quality of care and life, operations and the future of seniors' care, and culinary and nutrition.

- Have a story? Learn more and submit your proposal here: https://tinyurl.com/46upvn5e

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Resources, Tools and Workshops

Creating a Culture of Belonging – Learning opportunity

Explore key strategies for advancing equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging (EDIB) in long-term care. This four-hour workshop, offered by the Ontario Centres for Learning, Research & Innovation (CLRI), is designed for interprofessional LTC teams and leaders with a focus on practical strategies in day-to-day care.

Through this workshop, participants will deepen their understanding of EDIB concepts and move beyond awareness into real-world application.

The next available session is Wednesday, December 2 at 9:00am ET, with more sessions occurring in January and February 2027.

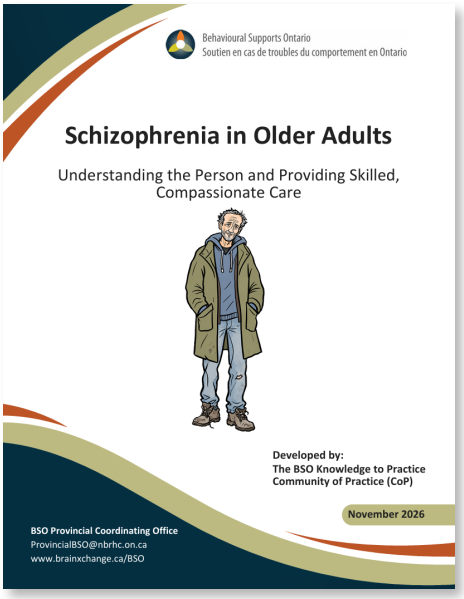
- To learn more, visit: https://shorturl.at/EeY92

> ***It has opened my mind and provided me with educational information that I can move forward with in my day-to-day work life and personal life.***

Behavioural Supports Ontario - The Schizophrenia in Older Adults Capacity Building Package

Grow skills in the provision of compassionate, confident, and knowledgeable care to older adults living with schizophrenia. Created for point-of-care team members, as well as leadership, this resource includes an in-depth information booklet, slide decks and tip sheets that are evidence informed and expert-reviewed.

- Access this new resource, as well as other mental health capacity building tools here: https://shorturl.at/ReuH5



We encourage you to share this information with residents in your home.

Have a Long-Term Care Spotlight story you'd like featured in our next newsletter? We love to hear from you - email Communications Coordinator Stephanie Buosi at sbuosi@ontarc.com with your questions, stories and ideas.

Thank you to AdvantAge Ontario, Extendicare, Java Group Programs, peopleCare communities, Sienna Senior Living and S&R Group for supporting OARC's Confidence in Culture Change Program.

To find out more about how you can support OARC, please contact Melissa McVie, Acting Executive Director mmcvie@ontarc.com.

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