

Caregiving Strategies (Self Paced): Course Outline

Providing Care and Support for a Senior Living with Frailty



Caregiving Strategies: Providing Care and Support for a Senior Living with Frailty

Improve your skills, knowledge, and confidence
as a family member or friend caregiver.

**NEW
RESOURCES**
designed by
caregivers and
health care
experts.

Get resources at
www.rgps.on.ca/caregiving-strategies

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Course Overview

The *Caregiving Strategies* course is for unpaid family and friend caregivers who provide care and support for a senior living with frailty. This course will guide you on a learning journey to gain knowledge, practical strategies, and confidence related to the following topics:

- Caring for the Caregiver
- Pain
- Staying Active
- Nutrition and Bladder Health
- Medication Management
- Changes in Thinking and Behaviour (Delirium)
- Social Engagement

Applying knowledge and strategies related to these topics can support resilience, independence, and quality of life of a senior living with frailty. Many health issues associated with frailty may be prevented, postponed or reversed when a caregiver has the right information, access to strategies, access to community resources, and tips about communicating with health care professionals.

The course is **self-paced**. It should take about **one hour to complete each of the modules**. You will not be graded.

The goal of this course is to improve your knowledge and confidence related to self-care, other caregiving topics, and frailty.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- access resources that meet your needs related to the module topic
- develop confidence in your approach and skills
- access an online network of other caregivers
- develop your own personalized strategies related to module topics
- recognize an improvement in your knowledge related to module topics
- access resources that meet your needs related to module topics

Background

This course was developed *with* caregivers of seniors living with frailty and a wide variety of health care professionals. The work has been funded by the Government of Ontario, Ministry of Health. Partners include the Regional Geriatric Programs of Ontario (RGPO) (later called Provincial Geriatrics Leadership Ontario), the Regional Geriatric Program of Toronto (RGP-T), Desire2Learn (D2L), and McMaster University Continuing Education. This course also complements to the *Caregiving Essentials* online course offered by McMaster University, Continuing Education.

The information offered in this course is for you to consider and apply to your own caregiving style and situation. An important part of introducing new strategies is to speak to the person about their goals and wishes. Asking for permission and encouraging independence reinforces that the person you care for is in charge of their life and choices.

This course may guide, inform and support discussions about senior-friendly care between you and health care professionals. The information in this course is not intended to replace the medical advice of a health care professional. Please consult a health care professional when seeking advice about a specific medical condition.

Method of Learning

The course is self-directed. You can **complete it at your own pace**.

We know that being a caregiver means many interruptions and unknown changes, and the course has been structured to create an experience that will work for you. Each module should take about 60 minutes (one hour) to complete, but you can spend as much time as you want.

There may be parts of the course content that are not relevant to you or the person in your care. You are encouraged to go through each topic, as some material may not be relevant to your caregiving now but may be helpful in the future.

Take time to complete all the activities in each module if you find them relevant and helpful. They have been developed to support your learning, but you are not obligated to complete all of them. The course has been designed to be flexible to your unique learning needs and style.

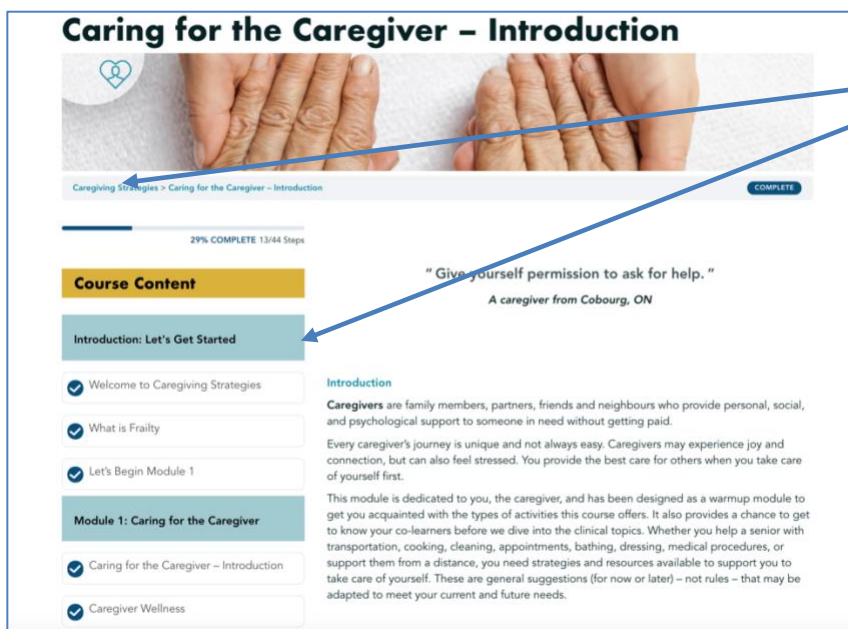
Course Components

This course is composed of a variety of activities to help you learn. We all have a learning style that is natural to us when we are learning new things – a preferred way in which we absorb, process, comprehend and retain new information. Here are ways you can engage with the materials and with other people taking the course at the same time as you.

Module Information

Each module starts with an introduction to the topics covered and an overview of what you can expect to learn. It also has a statement of learning outcomes, so you know how the learning in the module ties together and how the module will unfold.

The **Navbar** represents the top choices in the course from which you 'navigate'. Here's what is referred to as the **Navbar**.



When you click on **"Caregiving Strategies"**, just below the banner image, you can quickly jump to the table of contents and see each of the modules from there. You will also find a full lesson list (table of contents) at the introduction of each module.

Each module is divided into a number of topics or sections.

You can move forward and backward through the sections by clicking on the arrow keys near the bottom of your screen.



When you have finished a lesson, click the "mark complete" button, to help you keep track of what you have finished. You will see a check mark appear in the lesson list, next time you arrive at an introduction page.

Reflection Journal

The caregiver's reflection journal provides an opportunity for you to note your thoughts and feelings about the module topic as the course progresses. You will be provided with information and strategies in every module. You will be asked to reflect on some of the most important strategies that you learned.

When you've completed the course, your personal reflection journal will be your quick-reference guide – your record of your learning and reflections. By the end of the course, you will have a complete document that you can rely on, share with others, take to appointments and update as needed. It's a great 'take away' from the course.

Module Activities

At different times in each module, you will be asked to participate in an activity. Activities will vary depending on the material. Completing them as they arise will solidify your learning and prepare you for what's coming next. You will be able to access all the activities directly from the links provided in each module.

Try a Tool

Activities may ask you to "Try a Tool". These activities are designed to give you actual tools that you can complete and use to help recognize complex medical issues, recognize signs and symptoms, and help you communicate with health care professionals.

Test Yourself

Activities may ask you to "Test Yourself". These activities are simple but effective quizzes that test your knowledge of the information you just learned. Remember – there's no 'failing' this course, so use these activities to test yourself as much as you want. Only you can see your results.

Watch

You may be asked to "Watch" a video. The videos are short and easy to understand. For some, a video is a nice way to visualize the information you just learned. Don't forget your headphones if you are completing this course in a public space (e.g. library).

Pause and Reflect

These activities are opportunities for you to think about your current caregiving situation, reflect on strategies, make notes, keep records and more. The “Pause and Reflect” opportunities can be collected together at the end of the course to be a log of your learning journey throughout the course. See the “Reflection Journal” section on page 4.

The course is about improving your knowledge about frailty and the topics covered in this course, rather than about specific medical conditions. If you have particular concerns about the health of the person in your care, please speak directly with a health care professional.

End of Module Surveys

At the end of each module, you will find a short survey. The survey will help us understand whether you are learning new information that is beneficial to your caregiving situation.

Supplementary Handbook

Caregiving Strategies: Providing Care and Support for a Senior Living with Frailty

The course content is also available for download as an entire printable handbook. This handbook was designed for individuals who do not prefer to learn online and/or who have limited access to the internet. Feel free to download the handbook and share it with other caregivers. Please note that the handbook is approximately 100 pages. You can access the handbook at www.rgps.on.ca/caregiving-strategies

Course Schedule

Below is a recommended plan for progressing through the course.

Self Study Only (No in-person/virtual sessions with a facilitator)

Week	Module
1	Introduction: Let’s Get Started Module 1: Caring for the Caregiver
2	Module 2: Pain
3	Module 3: Staying Active
4	Module 4: Nutrition and Bladder Health
5	Module 5: Medication Management

6	Module 6: Changes in Thinking and Behaviour (Delirium)
7	Module 7: Social Engagement
8	Module 8: Pulling it all Together

Module Details

Each module includes different learning outcomes, but you will see the same flow of information in each module.

Module 1: Caring for the Caregiver



By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- recognize caregiver stress
- identify your strengths as a caregiver
- develop strategies to manage caregiver stress
- review helpful tips on how to maintain wellness and build resilience
- find additional support related to your own self-care and your other unique caregiving needs

Module 2: Pain



By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- recognize when someone is in pain
- determine the severity of pain a person is experiencing
- identify different types of pain
- develop strategies to manage a person's pain now and on an ongoing basis
- communicate more effectively with health care professionals about pain

Module 3: Staying Active



By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- recognize different levels of mobility
- review helpful tips on how to set activity goals
- develop strategies to incorporate activities for different mobility levels
- recognize how to support safe mobility
- communicate more effectively with health care professionals
- find additional support related to staying active

Module 4: Nutrition and Bladder Health

This is a larger module that discusses two topics. By the end of this module, you will be able to:

Nutrition:



- recognize eating habits
- recognize nutrition risk
- identify strategies to support meal planning
- review helpful tips on when a person refuses food
- identify the link between mouth care and nutrition
- communicate more effectively with health care professionals
- find additional support

Bladder Health:



- recognize common factors that cause urinary incontinence
- identify different types of urinary incontinence
- develop strategies to manage incontinence now and in the future
- review tips on managing the impact of incontinence on a relationship
- communicate more effectively with health care professionals
- find additional support

Module 5: Medication Management



By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- recognize the complexities of medication management
- identify strategies for assisting a person to take medications safely
- identify techniques to encourage a person to take their medications
- review alternative approaches to using medications
- communicate more effectively with health care professionals
- find additional support for medication management

Module 6: Changes in Thinking and Behaviour (Delirium)



By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- recognize common signs of delirium
- review common causes/risk factors of delirium
- differentiate between delirium and dementia
- identify strategies to manage delirium as a caregiver
- review strategies to prevent delirium
- communicate more effectively with health care professionals

- find additional support related to delirium

Module 7: Social Engagement



By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- differentiate between social isolation, loneliness, and depression
- recognize isolation, loneliness, and depression in another person
- identify strategies to support the social engagement of another person
- communicate more effectively with health care professionals
- find additional supports related to social engagement

Module 8: Pulling it All Together



By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- articulate a clear strategy to improve your caregiving for one or more topics presented in the course
- use your module reflections as your caregiving log and see how it is a useful tool for your present and future caregiving

Technicalities

We have tried to ensure that links to resources are functioning and accessible. However, web pages can change. If you notice a broken link, please notify PGLO by emailing us at info@rgpo.ca .

How to Increase Font Size

If you would like to increase the size of the course displayed on your screen you can use the **Ctrl** button on your keyboard. Hold down the **Ctrl** key while also tapping the **+** (plus) key will make the page bigger. Holding down the **Ctrl** key while also tapping the **-** (minus) key will make the page smaller.

Acknowledgements

The PGLO takes full responsibility for the content of this course, and any errors or omissions.

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- McMaster Centre for Continuing Education, McMaster University, Hamilton, ON
- Desire2Learn, Kitchener, ON