

## Caregiving Across Cultures:

A community partnership to support older adult caregivers who have immigrated to Ontario

In Ontario, there are 4 million caregivers who provide care for family, friends, and neighbours. Many caregivers are older adults or are caring for older adults with diverse backgrounds and approaches to caregiving. Caregivers who are new to Ontario often experience additional barriers to receiving support. According to a recent Research Institute on Aging literature review these barriers include:

### Cultural Barriers

- Language barriers
- Stigma toward dementia and mental illness
- Family obligation to provide care
- Lack of trust in external or professional care

### Structural Barriers

- Finances
- Lack of culturally competent, appropriate, and sensitive services
- Length of residency in Canada
- Transportation, climate, and built environment

It is estimated that caregivers provide 75% of patient care in the healthcare system. Many caregivers go unidentified and are unaware of the resources and supports available to them in their communities. Barriers for multigenerational immigrant families make navigating the healthcare system more challenging.

After a year of community consultations with caregivers and community agencies, it was learned that caregivers in the community continue to struggle with accessing the essentials to support themselves and their families while in their caregiving role, affecting their mental health and wellbeing. As a result, an easy-to-follow guide to support service providers in assisting immigrant older adult caregivers with accessing practical supports in the community has been developed. This can also act as a visual aid for newcomers, enabling users to independently access services within their community.

This guide is intended to act as an evolving tool to streamline information for caregivers, to ensure caregivers are identified, engaged and supported in a whole-person and culturally sensitive manner, and to support independence in finding supports and resources in local communities.

For service providers, this guide is intended to encourage providers to look at the whole person. Caregiving is often a role that is overlooked, while it remains vital to communities. This guide supports service providers in responding to the current needs of immigrant caregivers, focuses on the practical supports available, and helps to build service integration.

By raising awareness to this population and adopting the use of navigation tools such as this guide, we can ensure we are offering the best support to caregivers in our community.

**Thanks:** To the older adult caregivers and agencies who partnered on this work and through the pilot, including African Family Revival Organization, Neighbourhood Nurses, House of Friendship, Camino Wellbeing and Immigration Partnership Waterloo Region.

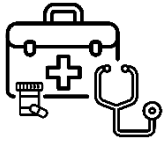
**Further Information:** Please email [cplatt@cmhaww.ca](mailto:cplatt@cmhaww.ca)

# Caregiving Across Culture: Caregiver Guide



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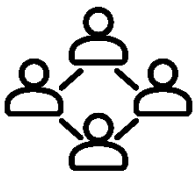
Filling in the blanks of the Caregiver Guide can help you find culturally appropriate service to support you through your caregiving role, pinpointing daily needs.



**Medication and doctors:** Caregivers may benefit from awareness of local pharmacy delivery services and how to ask for medical interpretation services.



**Transportation:** Services such as medical transportation, MobilityPlus, how/where to apply for bus passes, volunteer driver programs.



**Community Connection:** Family caregiving can be isolating. Social and emotional connection is critical to the wellbeing of caregivers, such as culturally appropriate groups or social connections.



**Translation services:** Caregivers are entitled to translation services when at appointments, but many don't know how and where to access this information.



**Food:** Grocery delivery, food banks, meal delivery and culturally appropriate grocery stores are essential for caregivers to provide adequate support while caring for others.



**Support Services:** Include services like the Ontario Caregiver Organization 24/7 Helpline, Nisa Helpline (Muslim Women's Confidential Helpline), Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario, Local victim services or distress centres.



**Child care:** Locations where older adult caregivers can bring the children they are supporting for regular child care.

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### Important Notes:

- The categories provided are identified as the common areas of need for caregivers supporting one or more family members, friends, spouses and other people in their lives.
- Many caregivers have identified not understanding how or where these types of services can be accessed or found. Caregivers can address some of the ways to feel supported in their caregiving journey by using this guide to identify the service needed, request service providers to help find contact information and/or search for appropriate services.
- Ask service providers to identify services using their existing networks and/or other tools, such as healthline.ca, 211, Ontario Caregiver Organization, and internet searches for local relevant businesses.
- The icons are intended to help overcome language barriers, but it is important to still leverage translation services wherever available (in-house, OCO helpline, google translate, etc.).