



2025 Above and Beyond Caregiver Recognition Learnings

On behalf of the staff, leadership and Board of Directors at Ontario Health atHome, thank you for joining us and being a part of the 2025 Above and Beyond Caregiver Recognition Event.

Through our engagement and in preparing for the event, caregivers said that they'd like to hear from their caregiver peers. Specifically, what they have learned, what has been helpful etc.

Key takeaways from the April 1, 2025, event participants:

Caregiver Wellness

Social Circle:

- Reach out to family and friends for emotional support, practical help, or a listening ear.
- Laughter can be the best medicine. Watch a funny show, sign up for a joke a day email or laughter yoga. *Try searching "a joke a day email or text" for options.*
- Join a support, meditation, or community group. *Try searching "mindfulness activities", "daily wellness reminders" for ideas and options.*

Self-Care:

- If you find it difficult to make time for yourself, try scheduling **"me time"** in your calendar. Start with something you enjoy like reading, exercise, meditation, colouring, video games or watching a show.
- When able, take screen breaks, find a quiet space outside to meditate, walk etc.

Technology Supports

Virtual assistants or Voice assistants:

- For drop-ins as an intercom within your home or assisted living facility. The person you are caring for can call while in another room or location without pressing anything. *Try searching "hands-free drop-in technology" for more information and options.*
- For those unable to do so on their own, empower them to use "hands-free" devices to help with turning television / lights / radio on/off.

Video Cameras:

- Video camera with motions sensor recordings can help families monitor well-being, especially those who are prone to fall.
- Using a camera can help alleviate stress when you are not there and help monitor activities.

Wearable Technology:

- Smartwatch can monitor health / falls / movement / location, specifically for those not living with you or may be at risk of wandering.

Comforting Tools:

- Self-recorded story books where you can record your own audio so they can hear your voice. *Try searching self-recorded albums or story books for options.*
- Fidget toys, mindfulness stickers, breathing box reminders, etc. can help to self sooth and alleviate anxiety. *Try searching “self-soothing tools” for more examples.*
- A toy cat (option that purrs and moves) or doll is a great companion for the elderly and those with dementia.
- A storybook projector is great for those unable to hold or concentrate on a book.

Caregiver Relief

- When asking for support we try to match our requests with their interests. For example, one of our family enjoys meeting new people, so we ask her to go every Friday for "social hour" at the retirement home.
- When someone asks if they can help, food delivery or meal trains are practical suggestions. They can also cook, serve, and clean up dinner. It's helpful to have dinner made but the socialization makes a great impact too. *Try searching “free meal train scheduling” to find a website or application to help others coordinate and schedule.*

General Tips

Communication and Coordination:

- Provide a notebook for friends and family to share what they've noticed about your loved one.
- Share a visiting schedule to encourage family and friends to come at different times to spread out visits.
- Track any significant events and changes in a spreadsheet so you can tell the doctor or care team about changes.

Day Programs:

- Day programs can help provide respite. You can access them through your care coordinator or [Adult Day Programs | Ontario Health atHome.](#)
- Find caregiver supports and community services including day programs at [Health Services for Ontario - thehealthline.ca.](#)
- Call 211 to find an adult day program in your area.



Learnings:

- Educate yourself on your loved one's illness. You can ask medical professionals for resources, connect with community organizations, or join a support group.
- Depending on the illness, learn options and how it may progress, so you are prepared in advance, which makes it easier to be ready moving forward!

Inspirational Quotes from Caregiver Peers

- "Caregiving is a challenging journey and it's nice to see others that are in it and striving to do our best for our loved ones. Cheers to everyone being recognized."
- "Nobody will care like you do. Learn to accept some but push when you can."
- "It's ok to have hard days and give yourself grace. Tomorrow is a new day."
- "Don't be afraid to build boundaries for your own mental health, but to also leave yourself open to accept help when its offered."
- "Know that you are not alone! Knowledge is power!"
- "Let yourself FEEL when you need to."
- "Be kind, loving, committed, patient and faithful, to yourself and to your loved one."
- "It's easy to get lost in caregiving as it is demanding at times. It was nice to be recognized for the sacrifices we make as caregivers."
- "Asking for help doesn't mean you're weak. It means you noticed your limit before burnout."
- "Important to remember to also take care of yourself because if we're not good, the child or person we're caring for would have a real hard time."
- "I wish I had set boundaries early on and also asked for help sooner."