



A PARTNERSHIP GUIDE ON

Delivering In-Person Caregiver Mental Health Supports





Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to support Community Partners who are interested in implementing the Ontario Caregiver Organization's SCALE (Supporting Caregiver Awareness, Learning and Empowerment) Together program in their community or setting.

SCALE Together is an **in-person adaptation** from the original online SCALE Program:

- Delivered twice a year
- 8-weekly **psychoeducational webinars**
- Weekly **workbooks** that offer strategies, tools, and resources to help caregivers cope with difficult caregiving emotions
- **Free** group and/or individual counselling

SCALE Together grew organically from a need to support caregivers mental health in-person, within their local community settings that they can access for themselves or for their care recipient(s) (e.g., Long-Term Care, Family Health Team, Community Health Centre etc.).

Offered by OCO at no cost, SCALE Together is when a Community Partner offers the SCALE program on-site by hosting live or recorded virtual SCALE sessions, which includes a group debrief with other caregivers to unpack the difficult caregiving emotions being discussed.

In 2025, OCO piloted two SCALE Together programs with Shalom Village (a long-term care home) and Elliot Lake Family Health Team (a primary care setting) that showed overwhelmingly positive results. Based on these outcomes, OCO is now offering SCALE Together to Community Partners across Ontario.

SCALE Together Program Goals

- To support the emotional well-being of caregivers in-person, within their local community, while they support their care recipient(s).
- To build the capacity of organizations to easily offer caregiver support programs and activities on-site, within their community setting.
- To support the expansion of SCALE Together to other local organizations, helping to reach and support more caregivers across Ontario.

Expected outcomes for caregivers and Community Partners

Caregivers:	Community Partners:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased awareness of tools and strategies to manage their own well-being while providing care to others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased capacity to offer caregiving support.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved outlook towards their caregiving role. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a community of local caregivers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in feeling emotionally supported in their caregiving role. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased connection/referrals to additional caregiving supports.



“We introduced the SCALE program (Supporting Caregiver Awareness Learning and Empowerment) at our home. Caregivers were invited to attend a webinar, enjoy light refreshments, and connect with one another. What we witnessed was truly moving—anxious expressions softened, and participants found clarity in the shared definitions of emotions and common caregiving challenges presented during the insightful webinar.

Each participant received a thoughtfully designed workbook to take home, further extending the value of the experience. The care and expertise that go into OCO’s programs and resources are exceptional; I frequently refer caregivers to their resources and feel a deep sense of pride in our partnership with OCO.”

- Maddi Steller-Cain, Director of Assisted Living and Community Programs, Shalom Village

Outcomes from SCALE:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 89% of caregivers are more aware of tools and strategies to manage their own well-being while providing care to others. 86% of caregivers experienced a helpful change in their outlook towards their caregiving role. 85% of caregivers feel more emotionally supported in their caregiving role.

If your organization is interested in implementing SCALE Together within your local community setting, email info@ontariocaregiver.ca

SCALE Together: Implementation Options

We recognize that each Community Partner is unique and offer flexibility when implementing the program. Since the original online SCALE program runs twice a year (typically once in the Fall and once in the Winter), Community Partners can choose from the following options to implement the program:

<p>Option 1: Streaming live webinars during each official launch (i.e., Following directly along with the original online SCALE program schedule, each Fall and Winter).</p> <p>You can implement SCALE Together at the same time OCO runs the original online SCALE program by streaming the live webinars.</p> <p><i>For example, if OCO starts SCALE on October 9th and runs at 12pm for 8-weeks, you can follow this same schedule. This option offers access to all live resources.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to weekly live webinars• Access to recorded webinars• Access to digital workbooks• Access to live Q&A with a mental health professional• Access to free online group and individual counselling• Access to additional caregiving support through OCO such as Peer Support and Caregiver Coaching• Implementation Support from OCO staff	<p>Option 2: Screening recorded webinars at a pace that works best for your setting (i.e., running a different schedule than the original, online SCALE Program).</p> <p>You can implement SCALE Together either outside of the timeframe when OCO runs the original online SCALE program (e.g., Spring) or at a different time during the live-webinar launch (e.g., evenings instead of at 12pm) by showing the recordings of each webinar.</p> <p><i>For example, if your organization prefers to run the program during the live launch (i.e., starting in October), you can set your organization's preferred day and time to implement the program instead (e.g., Wednesdays at 5pm). This option offers greater flexibility with dates and scheduling.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to recorded webinars• Access to digital workbooks• Access to free online group and individual counselling (ONLY available during the live launch timeframe, each Fall and Winter)• Access to additional caregiving support through OCO such as Peer Support and Caregiver Coaching• Implementation Support from OCO staff
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SCALE Together: Roles and Responsibilities

What requirements are needed from Community Partners?

- The Community Partner will provide an accessible physical space to host the 1-hour live or recorded webinars and a 30-minute debrief afterwards. Total time each week is approximately 1.5 hours.
- The Community Partner will identify a staff member to lead and facilitate the group. The staff member must be present during the live or recorded webinars, as well as the 30-minute debrief to facilitate.
- The staff member will be a trained health professional with experience working with caregivers or similar groups due to the nature of the caregiving topics being discussed (e.g., social worker or social service worker). The topics being discussed may be triggering to some participants. The staff member must have the skills to support caregivers navigating these challenges as they arise within the group setting.
- The Community Partner will be responsible for promotion and recruitment of caregivers within their site, as well as, program registration, and facilitation of each session. Ideal group size is between 10-12 caregivers.
- The Community Partner will sign a Memorandum of Understanding.
- The Community Partner will participate in evaluation activities, such as completing a brief report to track key metrics such as program registration and attendance, as well, as provide an anonymous SurveyMonkey link to caregiver participants. A report will be shared with Community Partners after feedback is collected.



How will OCO support the Community Partner?



If selecting Option 1: Streaming live webinars during each official launch (see next page)

- Offer the original online SCALE program as scheduled.
- Provide the online SCALE program registration link for the staff member identified as the facilitator, to receive access to the live Zoom link.
- Provide a SCALE counselling registration link to the Community Partner. Please note, counselling is limited and occurs on a first-come, first-served basis.



When selecting Option 1: Streaming live webinars during each official launch OR Option 2: Showing recorded webinars outside of official launch times (see next page)

- Provide all relevant program materials, such as recorded webinars and workbooks.
- Provide an OCO staff member as a lead contact for the Community Partner to support planning and implementation processes throughout the program.
- Support communication efforts to promote the program by providing a flyer template that can be co-branded and customized to the Community Partner.
- Provide a 1-page PDF of OCO's free programs and services, and any additional OCO resources the Community Partner may be interested to share within their site.
- Provide a reporting template to track key metrics such as program registration and attendance.
- Provide an anonymous SurveyMonkey link to caregiver participants to assess program satisfaction. Results will be shared with the community partner.



SCALE Together: Program Materials & Content

What will Community Partners receive?

- Access to 8 psychoeducational webinars (LIVE or RECORDED) (see topics below).
- Access to Workbooks that offer strategies, tools, and resources to help cope with the emotional aspects of caregiving.
- Access to free online group or individual counselling for short term support. This is available during the live option only. (Counselling is optional and limited based on a first-come, first served basis).
- Greater awareness of additional caregiving supports within OCO (e.g., peer support, caregiver coaching).
- Support from OCO staff to implement the program within your organization
- A flyer template that can be co-branded and customized to the Community Partner (see Appendix A).
- A data collection template to record key metrics and an anonymous SurveyMonkey link to share with caregiver participants for program feedback.

What are the webinar topics?

Session 1: “I feel burned out”: Resetting within your Caregiving Journey

Session 2: “I feel like I am not doing enough”: Challenging Feelings of Guilt and Failure

Session 3: “I feel overwhelmed”: Managing Caregiving Stress through the Power of Noticing

Session 4: “I don’t know how to change things”: Navigating Grief and Helplessness in Caregiving Relationships

Session 5: “I feel angry and resentful”: Navigating Difficult Emotions within Caregiving Relationships

Session 6: “Who am I aside from being a caregiver?”: Rediscovering Yourself by Embracing Self-Compassion

Session 7: “I feel like nobody appreciates me”: Setting Boundaries within the Caregiver Relationship

Session 8: “I feel alone”: Creating Meaningful Connections

SCALE Together Partnership in 10 Steps

- 1. Initial Meeting:** Connect with OCO to explore SCALE Together partnership opportunities.
- 2. Program Selection:** Choose a program option (see Page 4) and set a start date.
- 3. Agreement Review:** Review and finalize the Memorandum of Understanding with OCO.
- 4. Pre-Launch Planning:** OCO schedules a meeting to support promotion, registration, and logistics. All program materials are provided (e.g., recordings, workbooks, data collection tools, implementation checklist, facilitator tips etc.).
- 5. Co-Branded Flyer:** Update and review the flyer template with OCO staff lead.
- 6. Caregiver Recruitment:** Begin outreach using the flyer. Registration setup is based on your organization's preference.
- 7. Launch Preparation:** Secure an accessible space and equipment, and necessary technology to live stream or watch recorded videos. Ideal group size: 10-12 caregivers.
- 8. Program Launch:** Deliver the 8-session program as scheduled.
- 9. Mid-Launch Check-In:** OCO provides support and shares a participant feedback survey.
- 10. Post-Launch Debrief:** Review implementation, share feedback, and submit final data collection on participant registration and attendance.

If your organization is interested in implementing SCALE Together within your local community setting, email info@ontariocaregiver.ca

Appendix A: Co-branded flyer template



Nurturing mental health and wellness for caregivers

Supporting Caregiver Awareness, Learning and Empowerment (SCALE) Together

In partnership with The Ontario Caregiver Organization, [Community partner name] is offering the SCALE Together, **IN PERSON**, to caregivers this [fall or winter or spring or summer].

The SCALE Together aims to empower caregivers with practical information and skills to focus on their mental health and well-being needs by offering:

- **In person weekly psychoeducational webinars that acknowledge and unpack difficult caregiving emotions.** [Live or Recorded] sessions will be offered each week and recordings will also be available afterwards.
- **In-person group discussions** after each webinar with other caregivers to reflect on the weekly topic.
- **Workbooks that offer strategies, tools, and resources** to better cope with difficult caregiving emotions.
- **Access to free and confidential online group and/or individual counselling (OPTIONAL)**
*Space is limited. Registration is based on a first-come, first-served basis. You will need to watch webinars to receive the maximum benefit from group or individual counselling.

Seeing this past [insert program start date]? You can still sign up for any of the remaining webinars by contacting [insert host name]!



[Insert program start and end date]

[Insert program location and time within the organization, include address]
[if community partners provide refreshments]

- **Week 1:** "I feel burned out": Resetting within your Caregiving Journey
- **Week 2:** "I feel like I am not doing enough": Challenging Feelings of Guilt and Failure
- **Week 3:** "I feel overwhelmed": Managing Caregiving Stress through the Power of Noticing
- **Week 4:** "I don't know how to change things": Navigating Grief and Helplessness in Caregiving Relationships
- **Week 5:** "I feel angry and resentful": Navigating Difficult Emotions within Caregiving Relationships
- **Week 6:** "Who am I aside from a caregiver?": Rediscovering Yourself by Embracing Self-Compassion
- **Week 7:** "I feel like nobody appreciates me": Setting Boundaries within the Caregiver Relationship
- **Week 8:** "I feel alone": Creating Meaningful Connections

Register with [staff lead], [job title]
Phone: XXX-XXX-XXXX, Ext XXX or
Email: [email]

Hosted by
[Community partner name] in partnership with the Ontario Caregiver Organization (OCO)

OCO 24/7 Helpline 1-833-416-2273

Insert partner logo

