



Canadian Mental  
Health Association  
Ontario  
*Mental health for all*

Interim Report  
May 2017

# CAREGIVERS LIVING LIFE TO THE FULL



**An initiative to promote social  
connection and positive mental health  
in caregivers 55+ living in Toronto**

Funded in part by the Government of Canada's  
New Horizons for Seniors Program.



Canadian Mental  
Health Association  
British Columbia



Canadian Mental  
Health Association  
Toronto



Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario  
Association des centres pour aînés de l'Ontario

**OACAO**

Toronto Community Housing



# ABOUT THE PROJECT

## The Solution

**Living Life to the Full is an 8-week course that provides skills and knowledge to cope with life's challenges.**

**Our course is offered to caregivers 55+ who provide unpaid support for family members or friends in need.**



12 hours



Delivered in groups of 10-15 people



A fun and interactive course



Based on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)

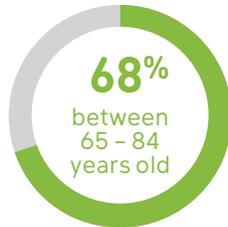
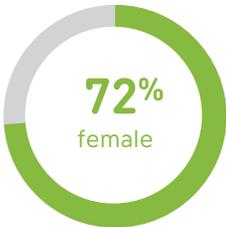
## Demographics

27

Courses delivered between March 2016 - 2017

275+

Caregivers have participated to date



## Rationale

**Caregivers are at risk of experiencing poor mental wellbeing.**

These feelings can result from:



Feeling overwhelmed by competing life demands



Coping with personal health challenges



Feeling socially isolated and disconnected from friends or family



Limited support and training available for care-related responsibilities

## Caring for

The most common caregiver relationships:



caring for a parent



caring for a child



caring for a spouse

**Most common conditions affecting care recipients:**

- general aging
- Alzheimer's
- anxiety
- depression
- physical impairments

## Benefits

### What caregivers are saying about Living Life to the Full

Top three benefits of the course:

“ I learned new skills for coping with stress.”

“ I learned how to take better care of myself.”

“ It improved my mood.”

“[Living Life to the Full] helped me to make small changes day to day in my life and look at things from a different perspective.”  
— Participant

“The facilitator was wonderful! Participants told me they felt supported, and that the course taught them to understand and cope with their emotions related to caregiving and beyond.”  
— Manager, Host Organization

# PROJECT TIMELINE



# ADDITIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

## Caregiving support network

A wide network of committed health and social service organizations has developed throughout this project. Collaborative outreach strategies have allowed us to reach caregivers where they live, work and play.

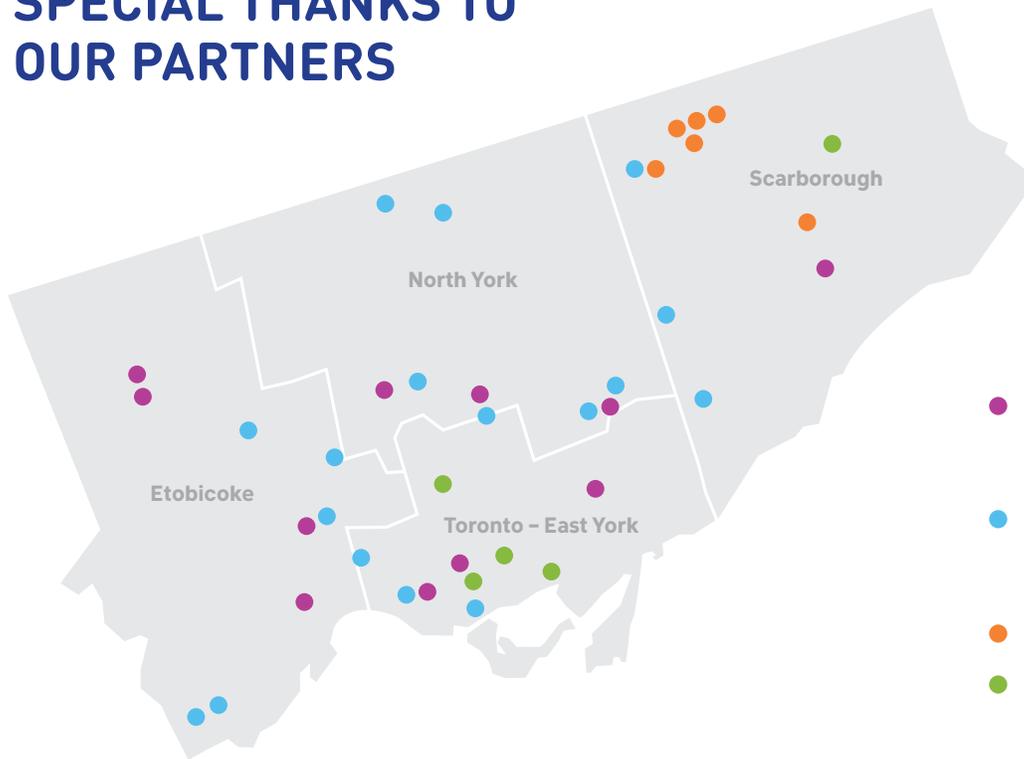
## Enhanced course curriculum

After listening to feedback from participants and facilitators, we have updated the facilitation guide, introduced a pre-course orientation workshop and refined the French translation.

## Establish best practices

CMHA Ontario continues to involve French- and Chinese-speaking community members in the planning, development and evaluation of further adaptations to the course and project.

# SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS



- **Facilitator Sites** (Community Health Centres and Additional Community Agencies)
- **Host Sites** (Senior Centres and Additional Community Agencies)
- **Chinese Adaptation Partners**
- **Francophone Adaptation Partners**

# HOW TO GET INVOLVED

## Caregivers

- Caregivers aged 55+ living in Toronto can sign up for a free Living Life to the Full course.
- Already took a course? Refer a friend or family member that you think could benefit.

## Service Providers

- Host a course.
- Host a lunch-and-learn orientation session to spread the word through your agency.
- Refer a caregiver.

## Additional Resources

For more information about the course:  
[www.livinglifetothefull.ca](http://www.livinglifetothefull.ca)

For more caregiver supports from our partners:  
[www.enriches.ca](http://www.enriches.ca)

**For more information:**

[www.ontario.cmha.ca/caregivers-toronto](http://www.ontario.cmha.ca/caregivers-toronto)  
416-977-5580 ext. 4135