Talking About Your Medications:

Community Event Planning Guide

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INSTITUT DE RECHERCHE
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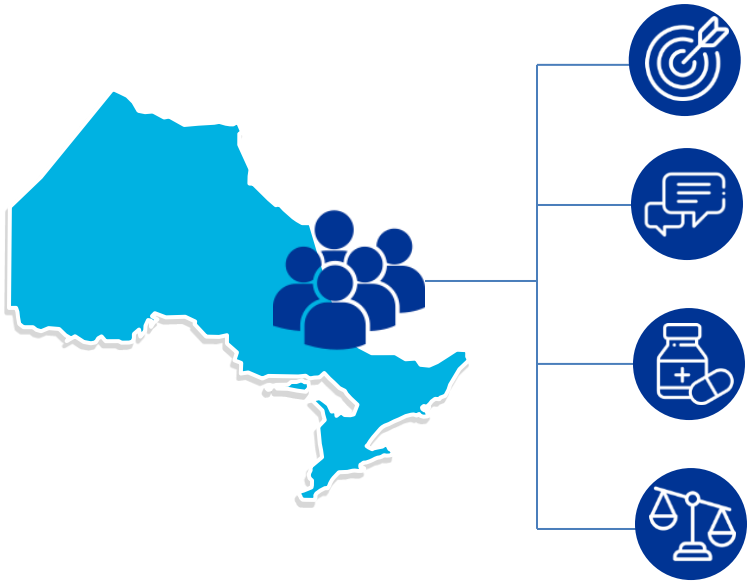
Introduction

Talking About Your Medications is the product of a collaboration between the Bruyère Deprescribing Research Team and an advisory group made up of local residents of small community in rural Ontario. As part of the research team's on-going efforts to address responsible prescribing practices and improved medication management for older adults, this community collaboration was initiated with the goal of encouraging older adults, caregivers, and healthcare providers to talk more with each other about medication management and, by doing so, minimizing the risks and maximizing the benefits of medications.



By partnering with community members, we were able to find ways of talking about medication management that directly addressed some of the concerns, questions, and fears that many older adults have about their medications and medication-related healthcare decisions. The face-to-face public session outlined in this guide is one of the products of this collaboration, and it has been piloted in our partner community. This guide has been assembled and made available free of charge so others can plan and hold their own *Talking About Your Medications* sessions, adapting the session elements to suit the particular interests and needs of their communities.

How was this guide put together?

The Bruyère Deprescribing Research Team's work centres around 'deprescribing' which is the planned and supervised process of reducing or stopping medication that might be causing harm or no longer be of benefit. Much of the team's work has focused on helping healthcare providers implement deprescribing as part of their everyday practice, creating evidence-based guidelines and supporting materials such as algorithms, pamphlets, infographics, webinars, and videos. Through this work, shared decision-making between patients and their healthcare providers emerged as a key part of effective deprescribing.

In our work with the community, our advisory group felt that older adults in their community largely lacked the kind of medication literacy that would allow them engage in shared decision-making about their medications with their healthcare providers, specifically their physicians and pharmacists; conversations about 'deprescribing' would be a stretch for someone who had trouble talking about even more basic medication information. This is why we decided to take a step back and start with helping people start the conversations and ask the questions they need to feel comfortable and confident talking about their medications.

Medication literacy **refers to the degree to which a person is able to obtain, understand, and communicate information about their medications.**

Shared decision-making **refers to a process in which healthcare providers and patients work together to decide on treatments that take into account both evidence-based medicine as well as the goals and preferences of the patient.**

How to use this Implementation Guide

This guide has been designed for community groups, service organizations, and other interested groups and individuals who are concerned about medication management amongst older adults and are interested in holding a *Talking About Your Medications* event in their own community. Copies of this guide are available online at www.deprescribing.org.

All the materials needed to use and implement the guide are also available for download from the website; most can be edited to suit the needs of individual communities.

This guide is set up on an eight-week planning schedule for the event, though this timeline can be adapted according to local needs and resources available. In addition to the session materials appended to this guide in the Toolkit, we highly recommend consulting the resources suggested at the end of the guide for more information and materials that may be appropriate for your community's session.

Background

The problem

The term 'polypharmacy' refers to a situation in which a person is taking multiple medications at the same time and in which the potential benefits of a given medication may be out-weighed by the potential risks associated with it. Older individuals are at a high risk of experiencing polypharmacy: it is estimated that 2 out of every 3 Canadians over the age of 65 take at least five prescription medications while 1 out of 4 take at least ten. At the same time, as people age, their bodies may handle and respond differently to certain medications; even medications they've taken for years may no longer be effective or may be harmful. Potential consequences of polypharmacy include cognitive impairment and a higher risk of falls, drug interactions, emergency room visits, and hospitalization.

The risks of polypharmacy can be reduced through careful medication management, requiring consistent and open communication between older adults and their healthcare providers, particularly their pharmacists and primary care physicians. However, many older adults are uncomfortable having these conversations: they're not sure what questions to ask or may be afraid of asking too many questions; they're not sure how to approach their doctor or pharmacist; or they don't feel like they have a role to play in decisions about their medications.
This means many older people aren't talking about their medications until an emergency arises like a fall or other adverse reaction that lands them in the hospital.

***Polypharmacy* refers to a situation in which an individual is taking multiple medications at the same time and in which the potential benefits of a given medication may be out-weighed by the potential risks associated with it.**

A solution

Better communication about medication management requires two key components: 1) helping older adults see themselves as having an important role in their healthcare decisions; and 2) supporting people in talking about their medications through approachable resources and communication strategies. By bringing together trusted local physicians and pharmacists, clear educational messaging, and accessible learning materials, the session outlined in this guide is aimed at helping older adults and their caregivers take the first step in taking on a bigger role in medication management to reduce polypharmacy and its risks. Better medication management can significantly improve quality of life for older adults by reducing both pill burden (the number of pills being taken) and the potentially-serious side effects of polypharmacy, and by supporting older community members' ability to live independently for longer.

What is The Circle of Care?

The session outlined in this guide is centred on the concept of the Circle of Care. In a healthcare context, the 'circle of care' usually refers to all the healthcare providers, including doctors, pharmacists, nurses, therapists, etc., who need access to a patient's health data in order to make informed decisions about patient care and treatment. The patient themselves is usually placed in the centre of this model: the hub around which the healthcare provider spokes revolve. The model outlined below illustrates the key members of the Circle of Care who participated in our pilot event.

However, this puts the patient in a passive position when they might more constructively be seen as an active part of the circle. Just as physicians and pharmacists have their field of expertise, so too does the patient: while physicians are experts in medical care and pharmacists are experts in medications and their use, the patient is an expert in how their medications make them feel – and how they feel about their medications. Looked at this way, patients and healthcare providers are partners in the goal of making sure patients are getting the best results from their medications.

Working with a Local Partner

Before you start working on the Suggested Timeline, we recommend you look for community partners who share your goals of supporting the health and quality of life of older adults. Partnering with a local organization who already works with older community members can be a big help in planning and holding your event: organizations like seniors' centres, community centres, and service clubs already have an interest in community well-being and may have a specific focus on the needs and interests of older adults. They also have existing resources like event spaces, communications resources, and established relationships in the community which can make them valuable collaborators.

You may already have a good idea of what kind of organizations like this are operating in your community; you can also find out about them through internet research, by asking around, or by taking a walk through your community and noting the organizations that are active and visible in the area. Pick two or three who you think would be interested in collaborating and reach out to them well in advance of beginning the planning process; this way they're more likely to be able to find the time and resources to be effective and enthusiastic partners.

How a Local Partner can support your event

Our Local Partner in our pilot event was a local seniors' centre. Their knowledge of their clientele's preference and habits allowed us to plan the event in a way that was more likely to attract the interest of our target audience. They were also able to provide an event venue that was physically accessible and already familiar to many attendees, and their connections to local healthcare and service providers allowed them to advertise the event more effectively than the research team alone would have been able to.

You'll also see that we've included in the Toolkit a template titled "My Appointment Plan". In our pilot, this form was distributed to attendees and they were encouraged to use it to put into action what they'd learned at the event. Our Local Partner came up with this idea and agreed to keep making the form available to their clients after the event, allowing them to continue accessing it if they found it useful. Our partner also offered an incentive for their clients to make use of the form: anyone who completed an appointment plan and brought it back into the seniors' centre would be entered into a small prize draw. In this way, our Local Partner was able to offer an element of sustainability to the event's messages, giving attendees a mechanism to keep putting into practice their new knowledge and tools.

Session Outline

Description

An interactive public session bringing together members of the community and local healthcare providers aimed at facilitating communication in the Circle of Care about medications.

Objectives

- Encourage patients to initiate conversations with their healthcare providers about their medications by demonstrating the former's integral place and role in the Circle of Care
- Provide tangible support for communication between members of the Circle of Care through actionable strategies and accessible resources

Target Audience

Primarily local, community-dwelling seniors who feel they lack the knowledge, resources, and/or confidence to talk to their healthcare providers about their medication-related questions and concerns. Caregivers, family members, and other interested members of the public are also welcome to attend as they may have relationships with the target audience. Local healthcare providers are also invited to attend and participate.

Content

- Introductory activities including 'icebreaker' to facilitate a welcoming and open context
- Community speaker to address "Why should you start a conversation with your healthcare provider?"
- Physician and Pharmacist speakers to address "What should you ask your healthcare provider about your medications" and "How to start a conversation with your healthcare provider"
- A refreshment break during which attendees will be invited to submit written questions for the above speakers
- A question period during which questions will be drawn at random from a box of the above-submitted questions
- A 'mingling' period during which attendees will have the opportunity to talk one-on-one with the speakers and other healthcare providers in attendance

The Event

The session roughly breaks down into three parts: speakers, a question panel, and a 'mingle.'

Introduction to the Session and Ice-breaker

Start the session off by welcoming attendees and giving them an idea of what they can expect from the session. An ice-breaker of five to ten minutes can help people feel more comfortable by giving them a chance to chat a bit with their neighbours. Though any kind of ice-breaker will work, we recommend going with something that also gets attendees thinking and talking about the session's topic. For example, have everyone turn to one of the people next to them, introduce themselves, and share a couple sentences about why they decided to attend.

Part 1: Members and Roles in the Circle

The first part of the session consists of three short (5-10 minute) talks from individuals representing different members of the circle of care. This is to help establish some baseline knowledge among attendees about the members and their roles in medication management as well as to get attendees thinking about potential concerns or questions they might want to bring up later in the session. Below is an outline of who could take on these roles during the session and what they might talk about. Ideally, all speakers should be members of the same community in which the session is being held, living and/or practicing in the area; this makes them not only familiar faces but, in the case of the physician and pharmacist, accessible sources of information for attendees following the session.

'Patient'/Member of the community

Who they are:

- As the first speaker of the session, this person is a member of the community that attendees can relate to; they may be about the same age as the attendees, have their own experiences with managing medications, and should ideally be a recognizable member of the community.
- This individual represents the patient perspective so it is recommended that they not be a currently-practicing physician, pharmacist, or other healthcare provider.

What they talk about:

- "Why should I start conversations with my healthcare provider about my medications?"
- Many people don't have a clear idea of their role in medication management or don't know that they're allowed to have a role at all; conversely, some people don't believe they need to have a role, trusting important decisions to the judgement of their healthcare providers.
- This speaker can introduce the idea of patient rights, the concept of the Circle of Care, and the important roles patients can play in the Circle of Care and in sharing decision-making with their healthcare providers.
- They may also choose to relate their own experience with shared decision-making or how they start conversations with their doctor or pharmacist.

Physician

Who they are:

- A local family doctor or general practitioner is an ideal candidate for this position: someone who is familiar with the community and with whom members of the community may already be familiar.
- Approachable and actively interested in engaging with community members, they may already work to support patient engagement and shared decision making in their own practice.

What they talk about:

- "What questions should I ask my healthcare provider about my medications?"
- The role of the doctor in this section is to give attendees practical ideas of what aspects of their medications they can, and should, ask questions about.
- Even when older people are interested in starting conversations with their healthcare providers, they don't always know how or where to start. This can be especially true when it comes to talking about medications which can have multiple different names, dosages, indications, etc.
- Physicians can be intimidating for some older adults, and many people don't feel comfortable asking questions; having a doctor address this part of the session supports the message that doctors want their patients to be informed and to participate in their healthcare decisions.

Speakers may also choose to share some personal experience relevant to the subject they're addressing. This 'personal touch' can add an important element of humanity, approachability, and relatability.

Pharmacist

Who they are:

- Though many peoples' primary experience with a pharmacist may be at their local drug store, pharmacists also work in hospital settings and within family practices. Any of these pharmacists could be appropriate and valuable speakers though the community pharmacist may be the one with whom community members would be most familiar and subsequently be able to contact.
- Like the physician speaker, the pharmacist should ideally be someone who already works to support patient engagement in their practice or perhaps is interested in doing so.

What they talk about:

- "How can I prepare for a conversation with my doctor or pharmacist?"
- The pharmacist's role in this section is to share with attendees some important things they can do to prepare for conversations with their doctor or pharmacist about their medications. Being well-prepared can help patients feel more confident in approaching these talks.

- Many people are not aware of the range of medication-related knowledge and services that their pharmacists can offer them; this section is a good opportunity to talk about the ways pharmacists support patients in their practices.

Other members of the Circle of Care

Although our event involved a physician and a pharmacist, other healthcare providers may also be part of a patient's Circle of Care. Nurses and nurse practitioners can also be valuable resources when talking about medication management; they are also primary healthcare providers who many people in the community may be used to interacting with. As such, they can be a valuable addition to the session and could be invited to participate in this part of the event as well.

Break

Following this first section comes a short refreshment break of 10 or 15 minutes. During this time, attendees are invited to write down any questions they would like to have answered by one or more of the speakers; a member of the event team collects these for the host/MC to draw at random for the panel question period.

Part 2: Panel Question Period

This section of the event plays an important role in helping attendees feel like participants rather than only listeners and is an opportunity to ask questions, voice concerns, and maybe share experiences. Having attendees write their questions down allows them to remain anonymous and gives everyone an equal opportunity to participate in the question period: the MC draws questions at random for the speakers to address. However, other methods, such as having people raise their hands to ask questions, may be also be effective.

Part 3: One-on-one Conversations or - the "Mingle"

After the question period, the MC invites attendees and speakers, as well as other healthcare providers present to 'mingle'. People may have follow-up questions or maybe they have ideas or concerns that weren't addressed. Reserving part of the session for attendees to mingle and talk one-on-one with the speakers enables them to make connections and start practicing how to ask about their medications. During the "Mingle" session, a table with medication management and polypharmacy resources can be set up for those interested.

Thank you and closing

At the end of the session, have your MC take a few minutes to thank everyone for attending. This is a good opportunity to mention any print resources you've made available and where people can find them. For example, at the beginning of our session, we handed each attendee the Talking About Your Medications tri-fold and the My Appointment Plan template (see Toolkit.) At the end of the evening, our MC let attendees know that the template was to help them put into practice what they'd learned at the session and the tri-fold was to help them remember some key points of the evening. They also let them know that we had a table with other useful print materials near the entrance that attendees could browse on their way out.

Planning

Suggested timeline

Week	Task
Pre-Week 1	Designate the Event Coordinator; identify and connect with your community partner
Weeks 1-2	Identify and contact potential speakers; identify communications opportunities
Week 3	Select and confirm venue; develop communications plan
Weeks 3-5	Finalize speakers; notify and invite local healthcare provider s; implement communications plan
Week 6	Recruit Host/MC
Week 7	Finalize session content and logistics (e.g. refreshment, equipment)
Week 8	Final preparations, session

Event Team Roles

Team roles have been divided up here so tasks can be distributed in a way that avoids over-burdening any one team member, but depending on how big your team is and how much time they can devote to planning, roles may overlap. You might find you don't need separate team members for each role though we do recommend designating an individual as Event Coordinator. An estimate of the amount of time per week each role might be expected to take up is given to help you figure out how big a team you need.

Event Coordinator (6-8 hrs/week)

- Draft and maintain event-planning document, updating as needed; this is the document that lays out the planning process for the whole team including timelines, roles, and expectations
- Liaise with the community partner (if applicable,) working with them to determine what role its members and resources will take in planning and holding the session
- Coordinate communication between team members
- Support other coordinators in their tasks
- Track the planning timeline and tasks, making sure everything gets done on time

Communications Coordinator (2-4 hrs/week)

- Identify opportunities and locations for promoting the event in the community
- Develop and implement a communications plan
- Create communications materials such as posters and pamphlets; supervise their printing and distribution
- Ensure that healthcare providers in the community are informed of the event and are invited to attend and participate in the event's 'mingling' time
- Receives and tracks event RSVPs
- Act as point-person for individuals and organizations seeking information regarding the event

Speaker Coordinator (2-4 hrs/week)

- Research potential speakers in the community; identify candidates to be contacted
- Contact candidate speakers and act as point-person for interested individuals
- Once speakers have been finalized, support them in developing their speaking points as needed
- Recruit host/MC for event; brief on role
- On day of event, ensure speakers know where they're going, when they're needed, etc

Logistics Coordinator (2-4 hrs/week)

- Identify potential event venues
- Handle venue booking and any equipment needs (e.g. audio-visual equipment, tables and chairs)
- Handle ordering and delivery of refreshments
- Recruit and assign duties to Event Staff
- On day of event, manage set-up and cleanup of venue, oversees event staff (besides host/MC)

Event Staff support the Event Team, particularly the Logistics Coordinator, on day of event. If your event is smaller, you may find you only need one or two extra people or that your existing team can handle everything. Time commitment for this role is limited to the event itself and a pre-event briefing with the Logistics Coordinator.

- Assist with day-of set-up and cleanup of venue
- Assist during event as needed, e.g. greeting attendees, serving refreshments, collecting questions before the panel

Recruitment of speakers

We recommend identifying potential speakers and getting in touch with them as early in the planning process as possible; healthcare providers in particular may need lots of lead time to fit the session into their schedules. Issuing invitations to participate is best done in person, though the practicality of this can vary: while you can approach a community pharmacist fairly easily in their practice, healthcare providers working in institutional or by-appointment contexts may be harder to approach. Where an initial in-person invitation cannot be issued, a phone-call or email invite can also be effective (see Appendix for an example email invitation.) Be sure to follow up with your invitations within a couple days to make sure they reached your invitee; the easier you make it for people to respond, the more likely you'll get an answer back.

Involving community healthcare providers

Inviting local healthcare providers to your event serves a few purposes: it lets them know the event is happening; it informs them of the kind of information their patients in the community may be accessing; and it gives them the opportunity to participate themselves by joining attendees in mingling and chatting at the end of the session. See above for suggestions on issuing invitations (see Toolkit for an

example invitation.) Connecting with your local healthcare providers can also open up other opportunities: in our pilot, the owner of the community's downtown pharmacy offered to make My Appointment Plan and the Talking About Your Medications brochure available through their pharmacy, making them accessible even to people who weren't able to attend the event itself.

Registering attendees

It is recommended that you include RSVP contact information on your communications materials; the Communications Coordinator is in the best position to keep a record of RSVPs. Having an idea of expected attendance to your event will allow you to more accurately plan for refreshments and print resources and ensure your venue can be set up in an appropriate manner (e.g. so everyone can hear the speaker, so seating is still easily accessible for people with mobility aids, etc.)

Logistics

Venue location and organization

There are a handful of important considerations when selecting and preparing your event venue

- Accessibility: Public events should always aim for maximum physical accessibility; since the target audience of this particular event is older adults, this is particularly important. Some recommendations include:
    - A stair-free entrance into the space
    - Elevator access if the space is above the ground floor
    - Wheelchair accessible restrooms
    - Signage to indicate accessible facilities (ramps, elevators, bathrooms) as necessary
    - If parking is provided, wheelchair accessible parking space
    - When arranging seating, tables, etc, ensure there's enough room for people to navigate the space with mobility aids
- Seating: Consider an arrangement that will best serve your session activities and venue
    - If refreshments are being served, arranging seating around tables might be most practical. This arrangement can also make it easier for attendees to write down their questions for the panel and examine any print resources they pick up
    - If you choose to arrange seating in rows, avoid theatre-style seating where seats are fixed to the ground; this can inhibit accessibility
    - Consider seating any attending healthcare providers in their own area rather than mixed in with the rest of the attendees. This will also help some non-healthcare providers attendees feel less inhibited when it comes to asking their questions or voicing their concerns
- Hand-outs: In addition to the Talking About Your Medications Trifold and the My Appointment Plan template included in the Toolkit to this guide, you may also choose to make other print resources available to attendees. A separate table, perhaps near the entrance, is ideal so people can browse what's available. See the Resources section of this guide for the organizations and websites we used for our session's hand-outs.

Timing

This is one area in particular where working with an organization familiar with your target audience can be very helpful: they might already be familiar with the preferences and schedules of potential attendees. For example, our partner organization was able to tell us that their clients typically went out to do their errands right after lunch, making the afternoon an inconvenient time for the session. Time of year should also be considered: is getting around harder at a certain time of year? When does it get dark out? We held our session for two hours in the early evening in June; this meant everyone had likely already had dinner, that the roads and sidewalks were clear of snow or ice, and that there was lots of light left at the end of the session for attendees to get home safely and comfortably.

Equipment

This will depend on the kind of space you use but for any space larger than your average classroom, using a microphone will help ensure nobody misses anything. You might have access to this kind of equipment through your chosen venue; if not, music stores, audio-visual services, and event-planning businesses often rent microphones and amplifiers for reasonable prices.

Refreshments

Refreshments aren't necessary, but they can be a pleasant way to break the event up and give attendees an opportunity to mingle, adding a social aspect to the session. They can also serve as small incentive for attendees: everyone likes a treat! While it may not be possible to accommodate every possible dietary restriction your attendees may have, we recommend providing a diabetic-friendly option; for example, if you plan to serve coffee and baked goods, a platter of fresh fruit would be an easy addition for attendees concerned about their blood sugar.

Communications plan

Considering how you're going to advertise your session should also start early in the planning process. Take some time to look into how people communicate and learn about local goings-on in the community.

- Are there active community message boards? These can often be found in community centres, service centres like the post office, and businesses like banks and grocery stores.
- You'll be talking to healthcare providers any in the course of planning; would any of them be willing to advertise the session in their practice?
- Is there a local newsletter or community newspaper? These smaller publications often allow free or low-cost advertising for community events
- Also consider what form of advertisement makes sense. For example, social media and email can be powerful ways to spread information, but how much does your target audience use these tools? It may be that more basic methods, like hand-outs or postering, will reach more of the people you're trying to attract to the session

Suggested agenda

Here is the agenda we used for our session; it will give you an idea of how you can time the different parts of your event.

Thursday, June 20, 2019	
6:00-6:10	**Welcome and Introductions**
6:10-6:20	**Icebreaker**
6:20-6:35	**Community member: Why should you talk to your healthcare provider about your medications?**
6:35-6:50	**Physician: What sort of questions should you ask your healthcare provider?**
6:50-7:05	**Local pharmacist: How can you prepare for a conversation with your healthcare provider?**
7:05-7:20	**Refreshment break and question submission**
7:20-7:45	**Question period (prewritten questions drawn at random)**
7:45-8:00	**Mingling**

You can see how quickly the time can fly by! Assigning someone to keep track of the time and keep everything on schedule can help make sure you don't run out of time.

Resources

These are some of the sites we accessed for their excellent, printable resources which can be distributed at your event.

Deprescribing.org (www.deprescribing.org): The website of the Bruyère Deprescribing Research Team is a resource for healthcare providers, caregivers, and the general public who are looking for information about deprescribing. This includes information, in the form of printable pages, about some of the most commonly prescribed drugs for older adults.

Canadian Deprescribing Network (www.deprescribingnetwork.ca): Online and printable resources for healthcare providers and the public about polypharmacy, deprescribing, and medication management.

Institute for Safe Medication Practices (https://www.ismp-canada.org/medrec/5questions.htm): "5 Questions to Ask About Your Medications." This printable poster summarizes some key questions to ask healthcare providers about your medications. It's also brightly-coloured and highly legible, making it ideal for keeping on a bulletin board or fridge door.

World Health Organization (https://www.who.int/patientsafety/medication-safety/5moments/en/): "5 Moments for Medication Safety." This is a small series of printable posters out-lining when and how to ask questions about your medications. All posters are brightly coloured and have varying amounts of detail.

About Us

The Bruyère Deprescribing Research Team

Based at the Bruyère Research Institute in Ottawa, Canada, the Bruyère Deprescribing Research Team is a group of researchers and healthcare providers working to promote the practice of deprescribing through the creation of evidence-based resources and knowledge mobilization strategies as well as community and stakeholder partnerships. More information about the research team and their work can be found on their website (www.deprescribing.org,) on Twitter (@deprescribing ,) Facebook (@deprescribing.org,) and YouTube (deprescribing.org.)

Carefor Nor-Dun Senior's Support Services

Carefor is the Bruyère Deprescribing Research Team's community partner in creating and hosting the *Talking About Your Medications* pilot event. Based in Eastern Ontario, Carefor is a non-profit healthcare and community-support service organization, offering in-home healthcare support, local wellness clinics, and community programming for older adults, adults with cognitive impairments, and their caregivers. More information about their organization and services can be found https://carefor.ca/.

HOW SHOULD I PREPARE FOR A CONVERSATION WITH MY DOCTOR OR PHARMACIST?

There are some steps you can take to make it easier to talk to your health-care provider about your medications.

Being prepared can help both you and your healthcare provider feel more confident about your medications.

- Always have an up-to-date list of your medications, including when you start new medications, when your dose changes, and when you stop taking something. Bring this list to your appointment.
- Include any over-the-counter medications like Tylenol, as well as any vitamins or supplements you take.
- Make an appointment just to talk about any concerns or questions you have.
- Before your appointment, write down your questions; this way, you won't have to worry about missing something important.
- Bring a notepad to your appointment so you can write down the answers to your questions. If you have trouble writing, bring someone you trust to your appointment (a spouse, friend, PSW) so they can take notes for you.

WHAT QUESTIONS SHOULD I ASK?

Whether you're starting a new medication or have had the same prescription for years, it's important to make sure you and your healthcare provider understand each other. Here are some questions you can ask your doctor or pharmacist.

- What is the name of this medication and what is it for?
- When should I take this medication and how much should I take?
- How will I know if this medication is working the way it should?
- What side-effects should I look out for?
- What should I do if I have side-effects?
- Can this medication interact with any of the others I already take?
- How long should I take this medication? When should it be reviewed?
- Am I taking any medications I no longer need? Can I stop or reduce the dose of this medication?

Always speak to your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse before changing or stopping any medication.

For more information visit the Bruyère Deprescribing Research Team at www.deprescribing.org

deprescribing.org

Talking About Your Medications

You are an **important** part in **managing** your **prescription** medications for your **best health**

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YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER NEEDS YOUR HELP TO MAKE THE BEST DECISIONS ABOUT YOUR MEDICATIONS.

Your circle of care is made up of you and the healthcare practitioners—like your family doctor and your pharmacist—who work together to make sure you are getting the medical care that best suits your needs and goals. This includes finding the right prescription medications for you.

Your role in the circle of care is just as important when it comes to decisions about your medications. In fact, all the members of the circle of care are experts with their own contribution to make.

YOUR PHARMACIST

Your pharmacist is a medication expert. They are highly trained and knowledgeable about safe and effective medication use. They can:

- Counsel you on how to use your medications and help you feel confident about taking them
- Answer your questions and address your concerns about new and existing prescriptions
- Monitor and review your prescriptions to make sure they're working the way they should
- Talk with your doctor to start, adjust, or stop medications as your needs change
- Offer non-drug options to help manage symptoms
- Identify potential side-effects or interactions

YOUR CIRCLE OF CARE FOR MEDICATION MANAGEMENT

Some other experts that might be part of your circle of care can also answer your questions about your medications. These include nurses and nurse practitioners as well as any specialists you see, such as the doctors who help take care of your heart health, diabetes, or other chronic condition.

YOUR DOCTOR

Your doctor is an expert in medical care. They use their expertise and your input to find the best treatments for your needs. They can:

- Answer your questions about your medications and possible alternatives
- Discuss issues you may be having with your current medications
- Work with you to determine your health goals and how to achieve them
- Help you feel comfortable and confident about discussing your medications

AND YOU!

You are an expert on your needs, goals, and how your medications make you feel. By providing your healthcare providers with the best information you can, you're contributing to your health and quality of life. You can:

- Come to your appointments prepared with your questions and concerns
- Provide your doctor and pharmacist with the most accurate information possible about your health and medication history
- Ask questions about things you don't understand or need more information about
- Inform your healthcare provider of your goals and preferences regarding your medications; you might have something different in mind than they do
- Let your doctor or pharmacist know if you have concerns or are having trouble with your medications.

My Appointment Plan

I have made an appointment with my **doctor or pharmacist** (circle which one) to talk about my medications.

My appointment is with _____

on _____(date) **at** _____ AM/PM

Three questions or concerns I would like to talk about are:

1._____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

I will bring to my appointment:

□ A written list of all my current medications, including over-the-counter pills, vitamins, and natural health products

□ My list of questions, concerns, and information I want to talk about

□ A notebook and pen to write down what I learn

□ Someone to take notes for me if I have trouble taking them myself

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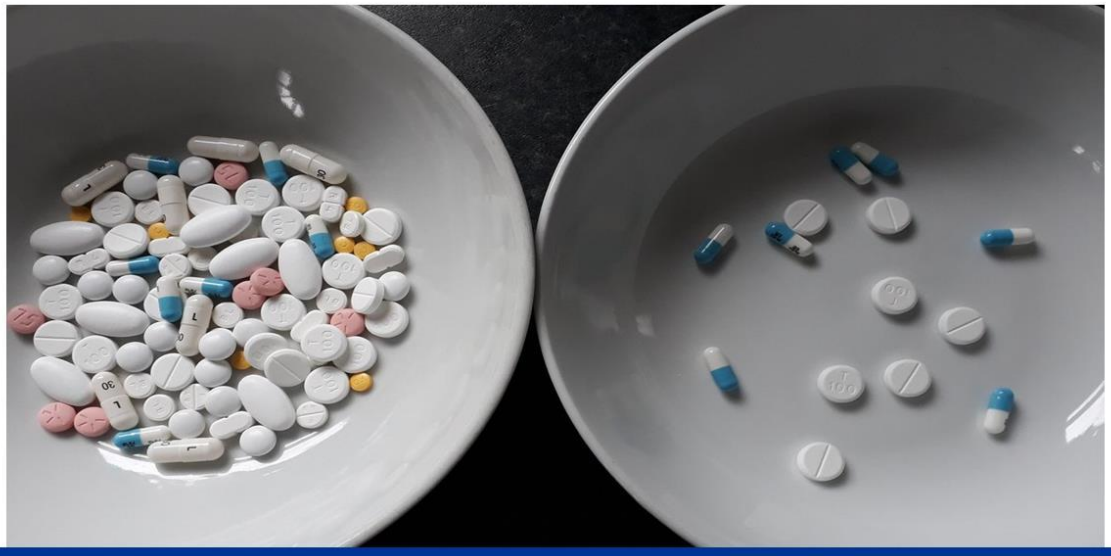
deprescribing.org
INSTITUT DE RECHERCHE Bruyère RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Example poster



Talking About Your Medications

Do you have questions or concerns about your medications but aren't sure where or how to get the answers you need?

Join local doctors and pharmacists to learn about how to start conversations with your healthcare provider to make sure you're getting the most out of your medications: how to prepare, what to ask, and how to follow-up.

Thursday, June 20, 6:00-8:00 pm
Carefor Nor-Dun Seniors'
Support Centre

Light refreshments will be served. Please register in advance by calling Carefor at [phone number] or in person at the Seniors' Centre.

Carefor® HEALTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES / SERVICES & SOINS DE SANTÉ COMMUNAUTAIRES

INSTITUT DE RECHERCHE Bruyère RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Speaker's invite example

INSTITUT DE RECHERCHE
Bruyère
RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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43, rue Bruyère St.
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Bureau central / Corporate office
613-562-6262, poste/ext. 3759

briirb@bruyere.org
bruyere.org/bri

23 juillet 2019

Dear [invitee],

The [community] Local Advisory Group (LAG) on Polypharmacy and Deprescribing, in partnership with the Bruyère Research Institute, would like to invite you to take part in our interactive public information session from 6 to 8 pm, on June 20th, 2019, at [venue]in [town.]

Many older adults report having difficulty talking to their healthcare providers about their medications; they often describe a lack of confidence or medication literacy that prevents them from engaging in meaningful and productive conversations with their healthcare providers about medication management.

This goal of this event is to support older people, and their caregivers, in starting these important conversations with their physicians, pharmacists, and other healthcare providers involved in their treatment plans by addressing the 'whys,' 'whats,' and 'hows' of talking about medication management.

We believe that community members will be more receptive and comfortable with the information presented if it comes from familiar and trusted members of the community. We are hoping you would be interested in giving a brief talk (five to ten minutes) and joining a small panel of local healthcare providers to answer audience questions.

[Event team member] would be happy to meet with you, either in person or over the phone, to provide more details on the study and the intervention, as well as on your potential role in next month's event. She can be reached at [email address] or at [phone number.]

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La compassion et le savoir en harmonie
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Healthcare provider invite example

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23 juillet 2019

Dear [invitee]

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This goal of this event is to support older people, and their caregivers, in starting these important conversations with their physicians, pharmacists, and other healthcare providers involved in their treatment plans by addressing the 'whys,' 'whats,' and 'hows' of talking about medication management.

We invite you to attend the patient-focused interactive component of the event as well as a short 'mingling' session afterwards, an opportunity for members of the public to chat with local healthcare providers.

For more information, or to register your attendance, please contact [name] at [phone number] or at [email address.]

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