

Aging and Disability

Supporting Those Who Care: Study Protocol for a Community-Led Dementia Education Program for Family Caregivers in Northern British Columbia S. Freeman, A. Panahi, L. Hayman, T. Dunn. *Gerontechnology* 25(s)

Purpose Canada is facing a growing dementia crisis, with the number of people living with dementia (PLWD) and their family and friend caregivers (FFCs) expected to triple over the next 30 years (1). Family caregivers provide much of the day-to-day care for PLWD across the care continuum, from supporting individuals at home to navigating transitions into long-term care (LTC) (2). Over time, a wide range of high-quality dementia education and training resources have been developed, particularly for health care staff working in formal care settings (3). Although high-quality dementia education and support for family caregivers are also widely available, caregivers may benefit from approaches that translate this knowledge into locally led, community-based education that reflects their roles, learning needs, and caregiving contexts, particularly in rural and northern communities. This article describes the protocol for a community-led dementia education initiative that adapts resources using the DementiAbility framework to better support family caregivers in rural and remote British Columbia (BC). **Methods** This project uses a phased, community-led implementation approach that actively involves caregivers and people living with dementia in program design, delivery, and evaluation. In Phase 1 (Development), a diverse Steering Committee, comprised of at least 50% PLWD and FFCs, will guide priorities and co-create educational materials. Existing high-quality dementia education resources will be translated into locally led, community-based education for family caregivers, using clear language, practical examples, and flexible delivery formats. Resources will be hosted on a centralized online platform, and local educators will be trained through a Train-the-Trainer model. Ethical approvals and evaluation frameworks will be finalized during this phase. Phase 2 (Pilot Implementation) will deliver in-person, virtual, and hybrid training sessions in Prince George, BC and surrounding communities. A website will be developed to improve access to materials, particularly for caregivers facing geographic, technological, or time-related constraints. Evaluation during this phase will focus on program reach, delivery, feasibility, and participant experiences to inform iterative refinement. Phase 3 (Scaling and Expansion) will refine the program based on evaluation findings and expand delivery to additional rural and remote communities across northern BC, including Terrace, Kitimat, and Haida Gwaii, with flexible delivery based on local capacity. **Results and Discussion** This protocol outlines an equity-informed, scalable approach to adapting and implementing dementia education for family caregivers in rural and remote settings. By embedding caregiver and PLWD leadership throughout the implementation process, the study aims to generate practical evidence to inform the broader adoption of community-based dementia education models that support caregiver capacity, person-centered care, and aging in place.

References

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