

TOUR 2026

FCO SESSION:

**WHAT CAN YOUR
COUNCIL DO TO
SUPPORT INCLUSION
AND BELONGING?**



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TODAY WE WILL EXPLORE

- What do diversity and inclusion mean?
- Why is it important for family councils to understand diversity and strive to be inclusive?
- What is your council currently doing to help create a welcoming and inclusive environment?
- How can you bring this conversation back to your own council and develop ideas or actions to support diversity and inclusion?

Family Councils Ontario (FCO) will partner with family caregivers and long-term care (LTC) champions in fostering sustainable and effective family councils (FCs) with a goal of having councils in 75% of long-term care homes in Ontario by 2030 — each one working to improve residents' quality of life and the family caregivers experience through collaboration and transparent communication, within the FC and with the home. As we continue to support FCs, we will evolve into an organization which better tracks and measures elements of success and shares these with our community.

Our approach will include coaching, education, and meaningful opportunities for connection to help councils grow stronger, be more inclusive, and promote a sense of belonging. Working together with champions and our sector partners, we will amplify the collective voices of family councils, leading to new research and policy change recommendations in LTC that reflect and incorporate the perspectives of families and caregivers.

SETTING THE STAGE...

- Some parts of this discussion may feel challenging or uncomfortable — that is okay. Honest conversations often lead to meaningful learning and growth.
- Approach the discussion with care, openness, and respect for yourself and others.
- Take time to reflect on your thoughts and feelings, and step away if needed.
- Keep the shared goal in mind: building a stronger, more welcoming, and inclusive long-term care community.
- Stay present, listen openly, and move at a pace that supports thoughtful participation.

GROUND RULES

- Assume Positive Intent: Believe others have good intentions while acknowledging impact.
- Confidentiality: Agree that "stories stay; learnings go."
- Use "I" Statements: Speak from personal experience to avoid making generalizations.
- Lean into Discomfort: Encourage participants to lean into uncomfortable, yet constructive, conversations.
- Listen Actively: Listen to understand, not to respond.
- Zero Tolerance Policies: Clearly state that derogatory, discriminatory, or harassing language is not permitted.

CONTEXT



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DISCUSSION QUESTION:

**Q1. WHAT DOES DIVERSITY
MEAN TO YOU?**

DISCUSSION QUESTION:

**Q2. WHAT DOES INCLUSION
MEAN TO YOU?**

DIVERSITY

Diversity refers to the wide range of characteristics that make each person unique.

It can include (but is not limited to):

- Ethnicity
- Race
- Gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Physical abilities and disabilities
- Education and lived experience
- Religion and spirituality
- Cultural background
- Beliefs and values
(including political beliefs)



INCLUSION

- Ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their abilities, disabilities, or health care needs are respected as valuable members of the community.
- To be fully inclusive, it is important to identify and take steps to remove any barriers to meaningful participation.



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THE BELONGING TREE

- Adoption of person-centered language and practices
- Increased accountability for words, actions, and behaviours
- Recognition of multifaceted identities, needs and experiences
- Creating safe spaces for all residents, families, and staff
- Opportunities for open dialogue, learning and understanding
- Combatting biases and various forms of discrimination
- Intersectional lens for improving the quality of life and health outcomes for residents
- Prioritizing cultural safety, competency, and sensitivity

**DIGNITY • INCLUSION • EQUITY
RESPECT • DIVERSITY • REPRESENTATION**



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THE GAPS AND NEEDS OF DIVERSE CAREGIVERS & FAMILY COUNCIL MEMBERS



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UNDERSTANDING CAREGIVER & FAMILY COUNCIL EXPERIENCES

Family Councils Ontario (FCO) partnered with Evenings & Weekends Consulting to better understand the needs and experiences of diverse caregivers and Family Councils across Ontario.

The project included small “house meetings” (up to 15 participants) where caregivers and council members shared their experiences and perspectives in a supportive setting.

A broader online survey was also conducted using Qualtrics from January to April 2026 to gather additional input from across the province.



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ISSUES AFFECTING LONG-TERM CARE RESIDENTS & CAREGIVERS



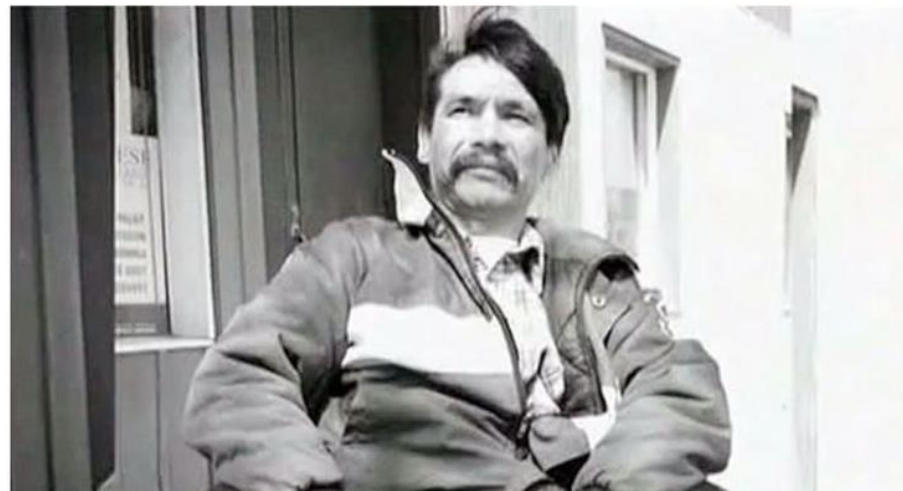
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HISTORICAL AND ONGOING IMPACTS ON CARE EXPERIENCES

Ignored to death: Brian Sinclair's death caused by racism, inquest inadequate, group says

Brian Sinclair, 45, was found dead in Health Sciences Centre ER 34 hours after arriving without being treated

Aidan Geary · CBC News · Posted: Sep 18, 2017 10:53 PM EDT | Last Updated: September 19, 2017



Unreserved

The dark history of Canada's Food Guide: How experiments on Indigenous children shaped nutrition policy

Zoe Tennant · Posted: Apr 19, 2021 3:52 PM EDT | Last Updated: July 5, 2021



- Experiences of discrimination and oppression shape how some residents engage with LTC systems
- Racism, colonialism, homophobia, and transphobia can contribute to fear and mistrust of care settings
- 2SLGBTQ+ older adults report concerns such as misgendering, exclusion of relationships and chosen family, and pressure to hide identity
- Black and Indigenous communities continue to be impacted by historical and ongoing harms in healthcare
- These experiences can affect trust and feelings of safety in long-term care

KEY ISSUES

- Language barriers in accessing and navigating care
- Limited culturally responsive and inclusive care
- Mental health challenges for caregivers and residents
- System-level and structural barriers within LTC
- High levels of unpaid caregiving labour and financial strain
- Different cultural understandings of care, voice, and advocacy



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COUNCIL STRENGTHS

- Openness to welcoming new members and voices
- Strong commitment to improving residents' quality of life



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CREATING INCLUSIVE COUNCILS



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OPPORTUNITIES FOR COUNCILS

- Strengthen diversity and representation in councils
- Create culturally safe and inclusive spaces
- Support respectful dialogue across differences
- Improve accessibility, language, and participation options
- Build stronger relationships with families and communities
- Take a systems-focused approach to inclusion and change



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ACCESSIBILITY OF MEETING SPACE

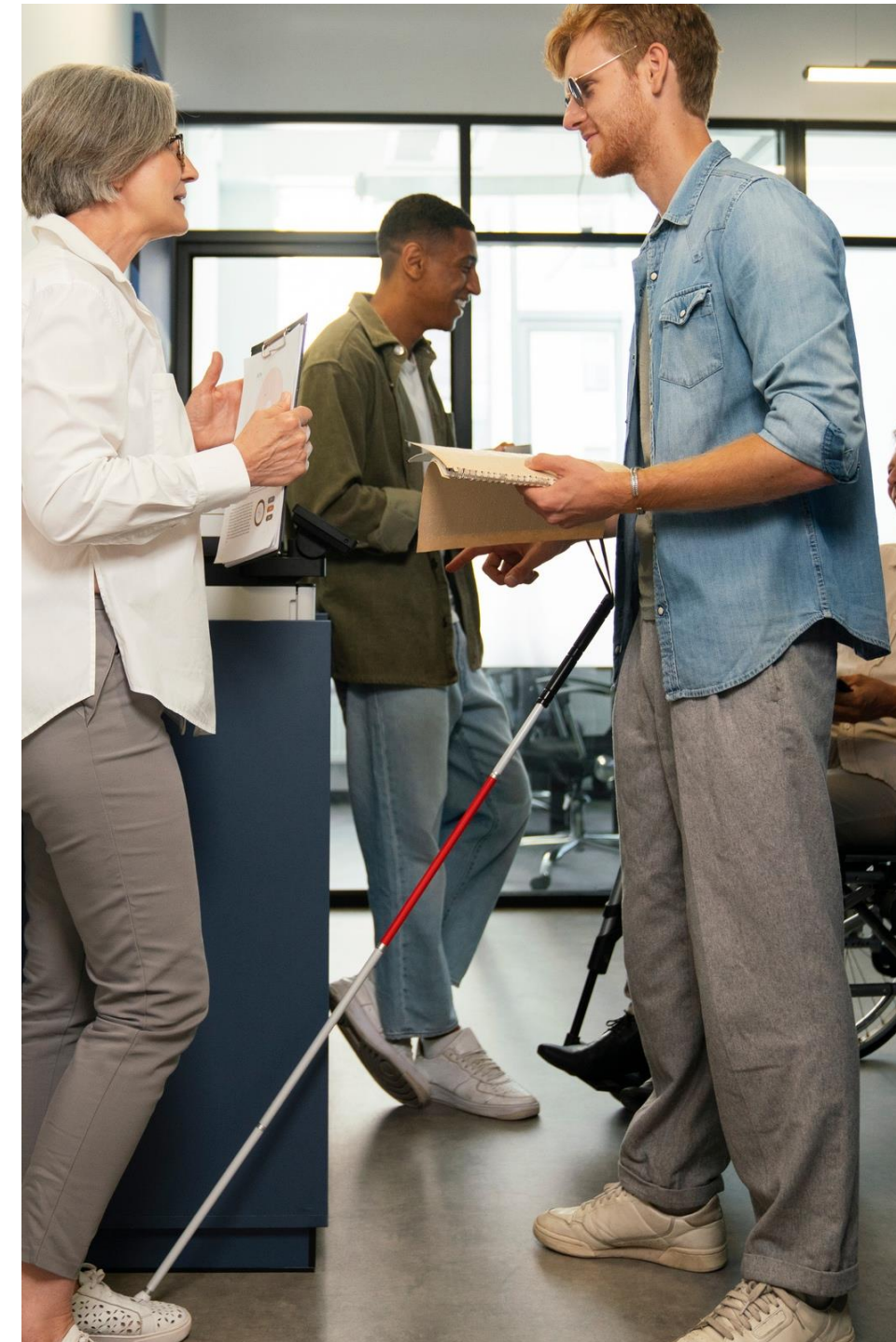
Barrier-free access to council meetings and work



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COMMUNICATION & MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

- Acknowledge important cultural dates and observances in meetings
- Include a land acknowledgement where appropriate
- Provide materials in multiple languages when possible
- Use clear, consistent, and accessible communication
- Offer different ways for members to share ideas and feedback
- Focus on building strong, respectful relationships among members



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THINGS TO CONSIDER

- How does this information connect to your own Family Council and long-term care community?
- What is your council already doing to support accessibility and inclusion?
- How are you currently supporting clear communication and meaningful participation in meetings?



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NEXT STEPS

- Continue this important conversation within your Family Council
- Choose a date and plan when you will revisit this discussion
- Consider what you need to prepare to feel confident facilitating the conversation
- Identify resources and supports that can help guide your next steps





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