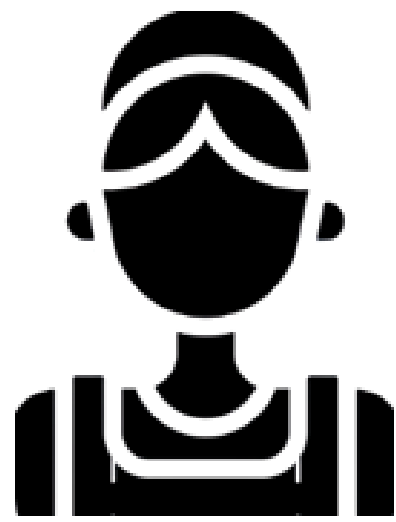


# CARING FOR LOW GERMAN SPEAKING (LGS) OLDER ADULTS AND CAREGIVERS: WEBINAR SUMMARY

FOSTERING AN “ALL TEACH – ALL LEARN” COMMUNITY  
ACROSS SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO

## Who Are the LGS Community?

- Low German, or Plautdietsch, is largely an oral language.
- Many have migrated from Mexico, Central and South American countries and may continue to go back and forth.
- Their historical experiences and faith shape present-day beliefs and interactions with care providers.
- Hold a strong sense of duty; may hesitate to seek help and may seek help when a situation is more critical.



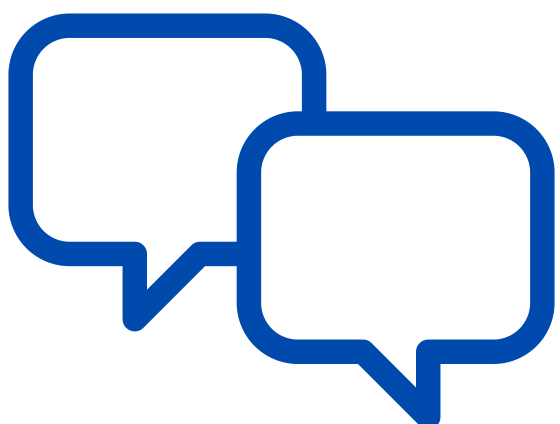
## Initial Collaborative Learning

- In June 2025, a partnership of the Regional Geriatric Program of Southwestern Ontario, Mennonite Community Services, Central Community Health Centre, East Elgin Family Health Team and the Elgin Ontario Health Team hosted a webinar for health and social service providers and community members.
- The webinar focused on the health section of Working with Low German Speaking Mennonites: A Guide for Service Providers and a community caregiver perspective.
- 117 people from across Southwestern Ontario participated in the webinar and 91% said they had learned more about how to better support the LGS community.

## KEY LEARNINGS & STRATEGIES

### Language & Respect

- Avoid jargon, use plain, simple English
- Employ teach-back method, visuals, and relatable metaphors for clarity
- Involve interpreters when possible; always ask first
- Check for understanding



### Building Trust

- Learn and use basic Low German words and greetings
- Try to suggest changes gradually over time
- LGS clients may disengage quietly when uncomfortable -- approach gently



### Cultural Sensitivity

- Modesty matters: dress and demeanor influence comfort
- Frame support as helping the family, not replacing it
- Respect faith-based or natural remedies when care planning



*Understanding language, culture, and trust opens the door to compassionate, effective care for LGS older adults and their families*

For more practical information:

<https://stelip.ca/resources/working-with-low-german-speaking-mennonites/>