

Our Methods

To reach our objectives, our research team are:

- Completing literature reviews to assess what is known about unpaid work and its consequences in the jurisdictions included in our study
- Consulting with key stakeholders to select long-term care homes that are likely to have promising practices for supporting rewarding unpaid care work
- Visiting long-term residential care facilities in small teams to observe the life of residential care facilities throughout full days
- Conducting interviews with unpaid family carers and residents
- Analyzing anonymized care plans to better understand how unpaid work is counted, included, monitored and understood
- Making our findings accessible by producing journal articles and plain language free publications, making presentations and holding events at long-term care homes, conferences and other venues, and ensuring findings are available on our website.

The Team

This international interdisciplinary team is led by **Dr. Pat Armstrong** at **York University**.

The team includes academics from Ontario, the U.K., Sweden, and Norway. It includes people trained in sociology, nursing, social work, gerontology, health policy and more. It also includes graduate students who will be the next generation of long-term care researchers.

Partners in this research are AdvantAGE, and the Alzheimer's Society of Canada. Other interested people and organizations are supporting the research team by providing information and feedback, and sharing resources.

Contact Us

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Changing Places: Unpaid Work in Public Places

A research project that examines the unpaid work that residents, families, volunteers, and staff do before, during and after transitions to long-term residential care.

The Objectives

To further develop understandings of unpaid work in long-term residential care settings

To identify and assess promising conditions of care for resident and family work as they vary among settings in Ontario, the U.K, Norway and Sweden, and between urban and rural areas

To provide evidence for the development of supports that allow families and residents to engage in meaningful, rewarding care work

The Main Issues

Our research is organized to address three common dilemmas associated with unpaid work in long-term residential care.

Dilemma # 1: Residents' work to take care of their own and other resident needs

Residents come to long-term care because they require support on a 24/7 basis. At the same time, resident health and well-being depends on residents continuing to do as much

for themselves as they are able. Sometimes, residents also assist other residents. Dilemmas emerge when residents require significant support from staff or family to do things for themselves or when they risk injury to themselves or others.

Dilemma #2: Families' work to take care of their residents and more

Many long-term care homes work to include family members, not only through family councils but in the residence everyday activities. Family members, including spouses, children and grandchildren, siblings and chosen kin, can help create community, prevent residents from experiencing social isolation and provide significant support to their family resident and, in some cases, to other residents as well. At the same time, families may place heavy demands on staff time, may take out frustrations on staff, may upset or agitate their loved one or may provide care that does not support the care plan.

Dilemma # 3: Volunteers' contributions

Volunteers can be the heart of a long-term care home. They can help create continuity with the community, support fundraising, help with a

variety of resident social activities, provide hospice supports and much more. But volunteers require recruitment, training, support and supervision, with some volunteers requiring more than others.

Each of these dilemmas helps to focus attention on the consequences of unpaid work for residents, families and family relationships, volunteers and the organization of paid work. Further, they help to focus attention on how policies are implicated. Our research will identify promising conditions that support unpaid care work.
