

An inter-sectoral approach to Preventing Falls and Reducing Injury from Falls

On Behalf of NYSS OHT BPSO PF&RIFF Working Group (Abstract #67)

Background

Since 2024, the Northern York South Simcoe Ontario Health Team (NYSS OHT) has been designated as a BPSO OHT. For our 4th BPG, the NYSS BPSO OHT intersectoral partner organizations identified preventing falls and reducing injuries from falls (PF & RIFF) as a collective priority area across all organizations.

"In Canada, falls are the leading cause of injury-related hospitalizations and injury deaths among people aged 65 or older. Injuries from falls reduce older adults' quality of life, increase caregiver demands, and precipitate admissions into long-term care. The cost of treating fall-related injuries is high" (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2022, p.1).

Goals and Outcomes

Through employing the Preventing Falls and Reducing Injury from Falls BPG, NYSS BPSO OHT partner organization conducted a collective gap analysis and identified gaps in falls education for staff, informal caregivers and clients to be the top priority. As a result of BPSO OHT collaborative efforts from mid-2024-mid-2025, a Preventing Falls & Reducing Injury from Falls Toolkit was created. The toolkit evolved from primarily text-based to graphic-centric with a mix of images in infographic, fact sheet and screening tool formats.

Tips for Preventing Falls

Preventing falls before they happen is critical. Here's how you can prevent falls before they occur:

- Mention foot pain to Healthcare Professional
- Regular exercise
- Eat balanced meals
- Stay connected to supportive others
- Plan ahead & avoid rushing
- Schedule regular health checkups
- Use medication safely
- Use mobility aids correctly
- Adequate foot care
- Use proper lighting
- Remove loose carpets
- Remove clutter in walkways & stairs
- Do a home safety check

Screening for Falls

Complete this checklist to assess your fall risk

Am I at Risk of Falling?	Circle "YES" or "NO"
I have fallen in the past year.	YES (2) NO (0)
I use or have been advised to use a cane or walker.	YES (2) NO (0)
Sometimes I feel unsteady.	YES (1) NO (0)
I steady myself by holding onto furniture at home.	YES (1) NO (0)
I am concerned about falling.	YES (1) NO (0)
I push with my hands to stand up from a chair.	YES (1) NO (0)
I have some trouble stepping up onto a curb.	YES (1) NO (0)
I often have to rush to the toilet.	YES (1) NO (0)
I have lost some feeling in my feet.	YES (1) NO (0)
My medication makes me light-headed or tired.	YES (1) NO (0)
I take medication for sleep or mood.	YES (1) NO (0)
I often feel sad or depressed.	YES (1) NO (0)

Add up the number of points for each "YES" answer & enter your total Score

Total Score: _____

If you scored 4 POINTS or more, you may be at risk. Discuss your results with a Healthcare Professional.

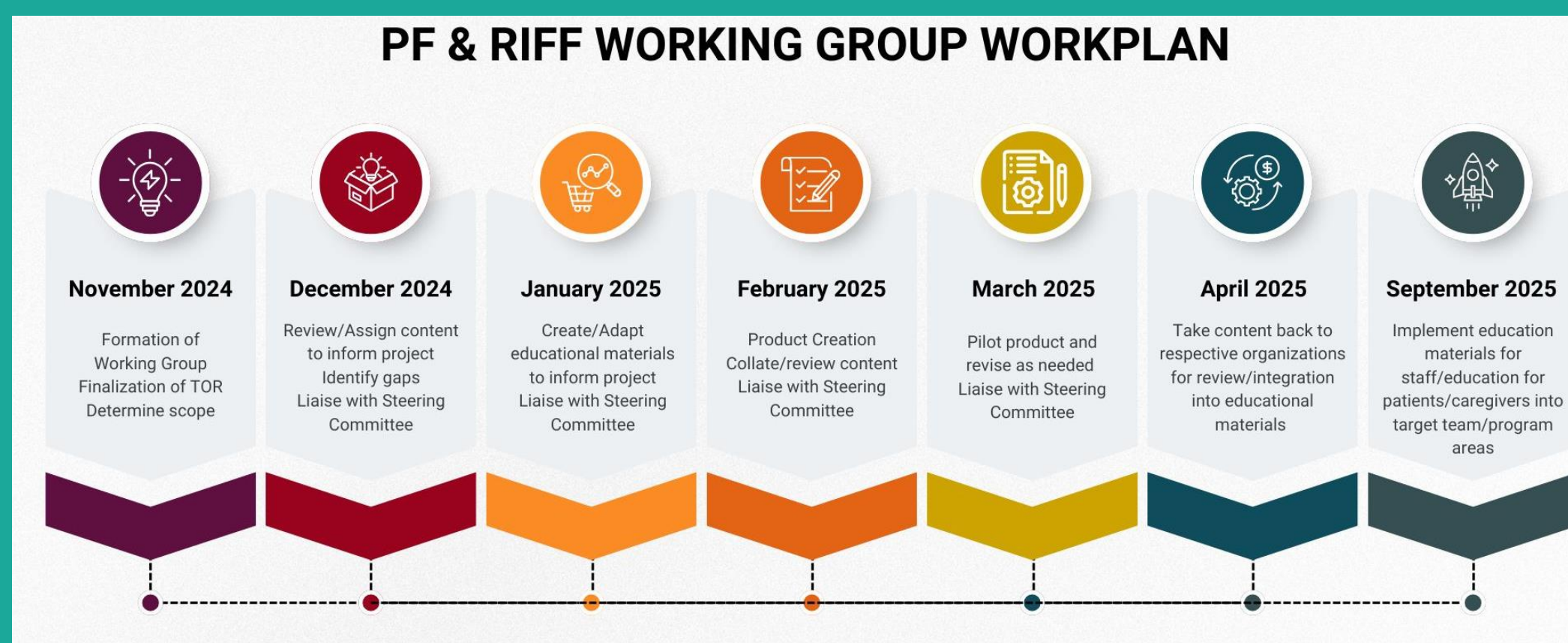
*If you said "Yes" to any of the above questions, speak with your Healthcare Professional to learn more about what you can do to reduce your risk.

Helpful Tips

- Learning fall prevention builds confidence and safety.
- Do balance exercises. Strengthening your muscles reduces fall and injury risk.
- Have a home safety assessment. Remove hazards from home.

Mobilize Change

To mobilize champions and address the identified collective gap, a PF & RIFF Working Group comprised of multidisciplinary partners and those with lived/living experience across NYSS OHT was formed to co-create this PF & RIFF toolkit. Through engaging with Champions who are passionate about this work and leveraging formalized structures such as a comprehensive Terms of Reference, workplans, consistent chairs/co-chairs and regularly scheduled working group meetings the comprehensive toolkit was created.



Key Lessons Learned in the Process:

- The value of inter-sectoral collaboration
- The collective power of multiple perspectives/disciplines to inform the product produced
- The importance of having people with lived/living experience remunerated for participation in this project
- Though falls look different across settings/contexts, falls prevention approaches are universal
- The value of leveraging lessons learned from previous BPGs implemented to inform this BPG project/product

Next Steps

Currently, we are piloting and gathering evaluation data of PF & RIFF Toolkit with staff (clinical and non-clinical), caregivers, and clients from across the BPSO OHT partners. Data obtained through analysis of survey results will inform the final PF & RIFF Toolkit, which will then be revised and shared broadly within the NYSS BPSO OHT and beyond.

BPSO Identity

As part of raising the visibility of our BPSO portfolio work, two banners have been created to display at in-person events to illustrate the commitment of our partners to this work. Also, we are currently developing a social media strategy and hashtags to use on our BPSO OHT site.

Information Sharing

As a result of our collaboration, a comprehensive PF & RIFF toolkit with over 15 falls prevention and injury reduction resources was created.

Additionally, a Preventing Falls and Reducing Injury from Falls Infographic to market the toolkit was created.

Both documents were uploaded to our Shared Health Information Network Exchange (Via MS Teams) for easy access across NYSS BPSO OHT organizations.



Preventing Falls and Reducing Injury From Falls Toolkit

Empowering caregivers, clients, and staff with practical, easy-to-use resources and prevention strategies to help prevent falls and reduce injury

Why Falls Matter

- Falls are the number one cause of injury-related hospitalizations & deaths for Canadians aged 65+
- One in three older adults fall each year, leading to:
 - Reduced quality of life
 - Increased caregiver demands
 - Higher risk of being admitted to long-term care

The Growing Need

- By 2040, 25% of Canadians will be aged 65+
- The fastest-growing age group in Canada is 65+
- Fall-related treatment costs are rising high



Toolkit Overview

- Who's It For?
- Clients
 - Caregivers
 - Non-clinical staff
 - Health professionals
- What's Included?
- Screening tools and fact sheets
 - Sample scripts
 - Education materials

Topics Covered

- Medical history and fall risk
- Medication safety
- Fall prevention tips
- Hearing and vision considerations
- Postural hypotension

Recommendations

- Various physical activities and exercise
- Nutrition and hydration
- Foot health and footwear
- Home hazards and safety
- Mobility aids and resources
- Community resources



Presenters/Acknowledgements

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- Alliah Over, York Region (Alliah.over@york.ca)
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