

Growing Expertise in Evaluation and Knowledge Translation (GEEK) Program: An Informational Webinar

July 20th, 2026



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WELCOME TO BRAIN CENTRAL



Agenda



About OBI & the GEEK Program

Who we are and the program's theory of change



Eligibility & Past Recipients

Who can apply and who we've worked with



What GEEK Provides

Funding, evaluation capacity, community & connection



Application Process & Key Dates

From Letter of Intent to Full Application



A Success Story

Progress Place — Seniors Corner results



Questions

Ask your questions!



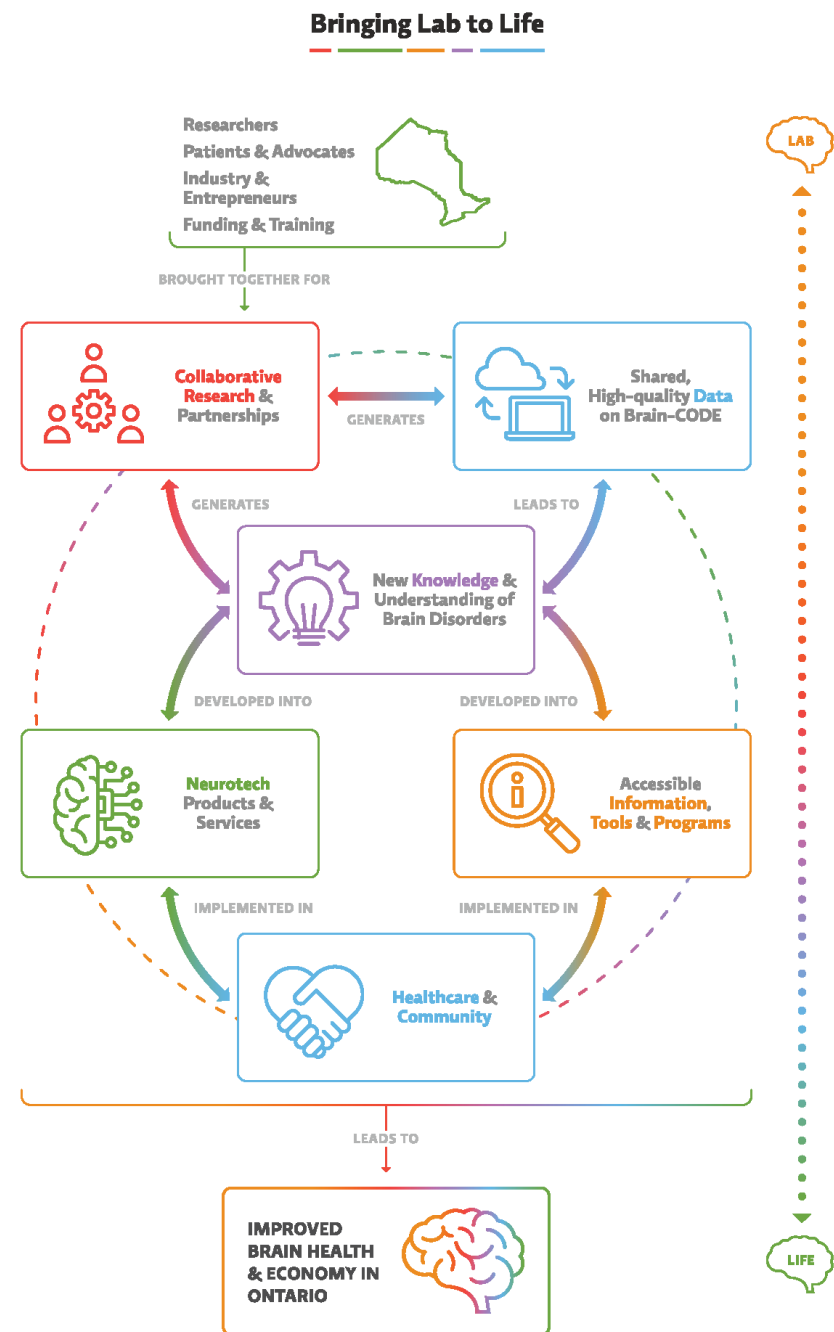
Ontario Brain Institute (OBI)

Who we are

The Ontario Brain Institute is a provincially funded, not-for-profit organization that accelerates discovery and innovation, benefiting both patients and the economy.

Our vision

Ontario as a world leader in brain research, commercialization and care — realized through a collaborative ‘team science’ approach between researchers, clinicians, patients, and their advocates to deliver products and services that improve the lives of those living with brain disorders.



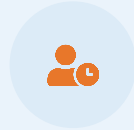


The GEEK Program



Created in response to feedback from community organizations about their need in evaluation capacity and a lack of funding for community programs

What we heard



Staffing, timing & resource constraints



A need for evaluation coaching and learning from lived experience



Value in a network of brain-health organizations sharing evaluation stories

THEORY OF CHANGE

If we fund community-based programs for people living with brain disorders and give these organizations the resources to evaluate their work, they can generate the evidence needed to improve their programs, increase funding, and strengthen the success and sustainability of evidence-based care in the community.



Goal & Approach



Goal Enable community-led organizations to evaluate their programs, generate evidence for learning and improvement, and demonstrate their impact to strengthen program success

Approach Provide funding to sustain, scale, and/or spread community-led programs through evaluation capacity building



Sustainability

Ensuring long-term success and lasting benefits by optimizing or increasing resources



Scale

Increasing the positive impact on society through new strategies



Spread

Replicating the initiative organically by other organizations

“Learning from action and acting from learning”



Importance of Evaluation



What is evaluation?

An organized approach for collecting information about program activities, results, or effectiveness that helps to improve a program and describe its accomplishments.

Evaluation Capacity Network, 2022



Learning

Understand what works and why



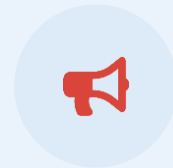
Decision making

Guide choices with evidence



Accountability

Show results to funders & community



Advocacy

Make the case for your program



Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB)



Builds the system

Creates a system of practices and processes that enable the conduct of quality program evaluation.



Learning by doing

Learn by doing and transfer learnings into a program — key to increasing evaluation practice and evidence generation.



Community impact

By improving community-based organizations' ability to generate program evidence through evaluation, community programming can better situate itself within health-care contexts.



What does GEEK Provide



1



Program support

Funding for up to 2 years to evaluation and run program

2



Evaluation capacity

Co-developing & implementing evaluation plans with an evaluator

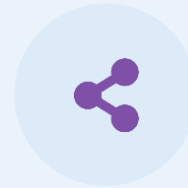
3



Community

A Community of Practice (CoP) across recipients

4



Connecting

Knowledge translation to share what works

HOW

Provide funding for up to two years to promote evaluation and improve the quality and quantity of evidence-based care in the community.



A Success Story: *Progress Place*

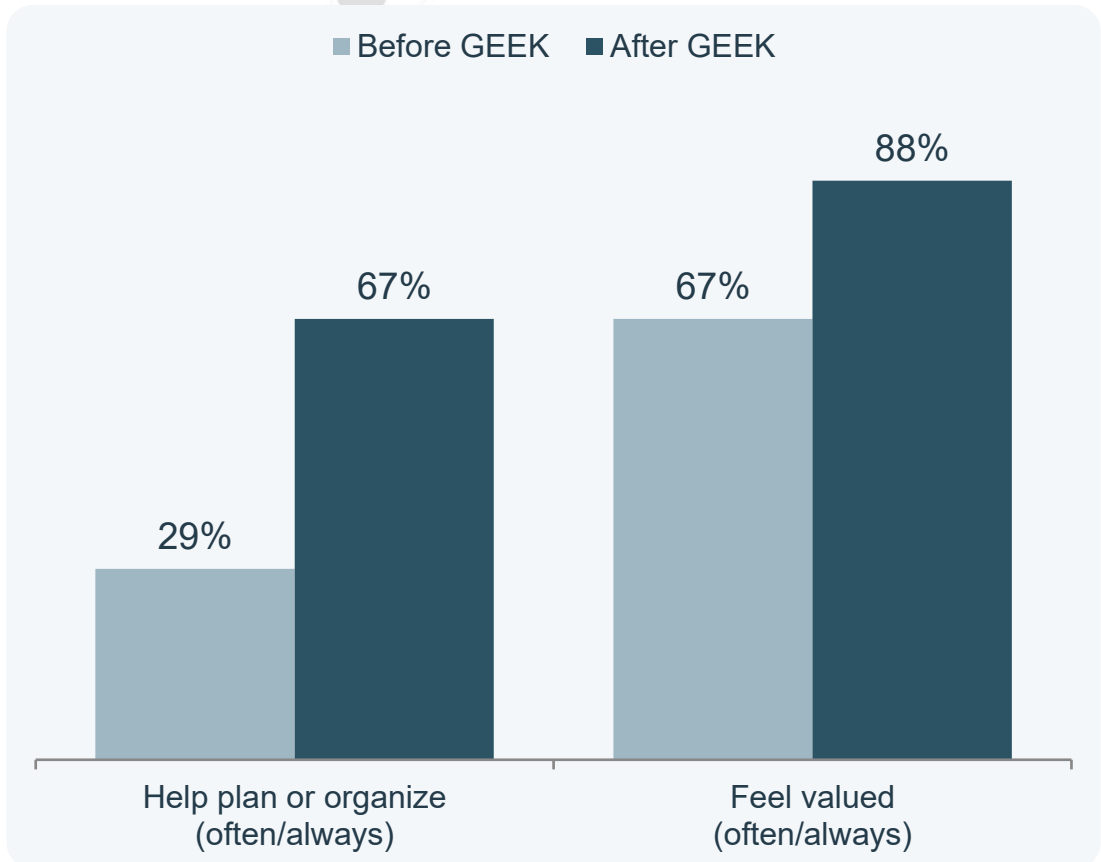
Members reporting “often or always”, before vs. after GEEK

A mental health wellness centre that operates on a Clubhouse model.

Seniors Corner extends the model to support aging in place. They aim to enhance computer literacy, reduce stigma, enhance social connection, and help with appointments.

38% increase

in members who help plan or organize activities (29% → 67%)





A Success Story: *Progress Place*

Share of members reporting positive outcomes after the program



100%

feel more connected since joining — none felt more isolated



90%

report better mental well-being — none reported feeling worse



88%

are satisfied or very satisfied with the program



88%

feel their contributions are valued (up from 67% at baseline)



88%

improved their ability to manage daily tasks



100%

feel supported by their peers (80% very, 20% extremely)



Eligibility Criteria



Applicant inclusion

- A community organization seeking to grow its ability to conduct and use **evaluation**
- An incorporated organization with prior or existing funding
- Not a previous GEEK recipient (past applicants who weren't funded may reapply)



Initiative inclusion

- The program or service is brain-health related (includes mental health)
- **Community-led** and delivered outside a hospital or primary-care setting
- Activities take place in Ontario or across Canada, with the head office in Ontario



Preference given to programs that address unique or unmet community needs, implement evidence-informed services in new contexts, or grow capacity to deliver their services.



Previous GEEK recipients



Recipients span Ontario and across Canada, working across four areas of focus:



**System
Navigation**



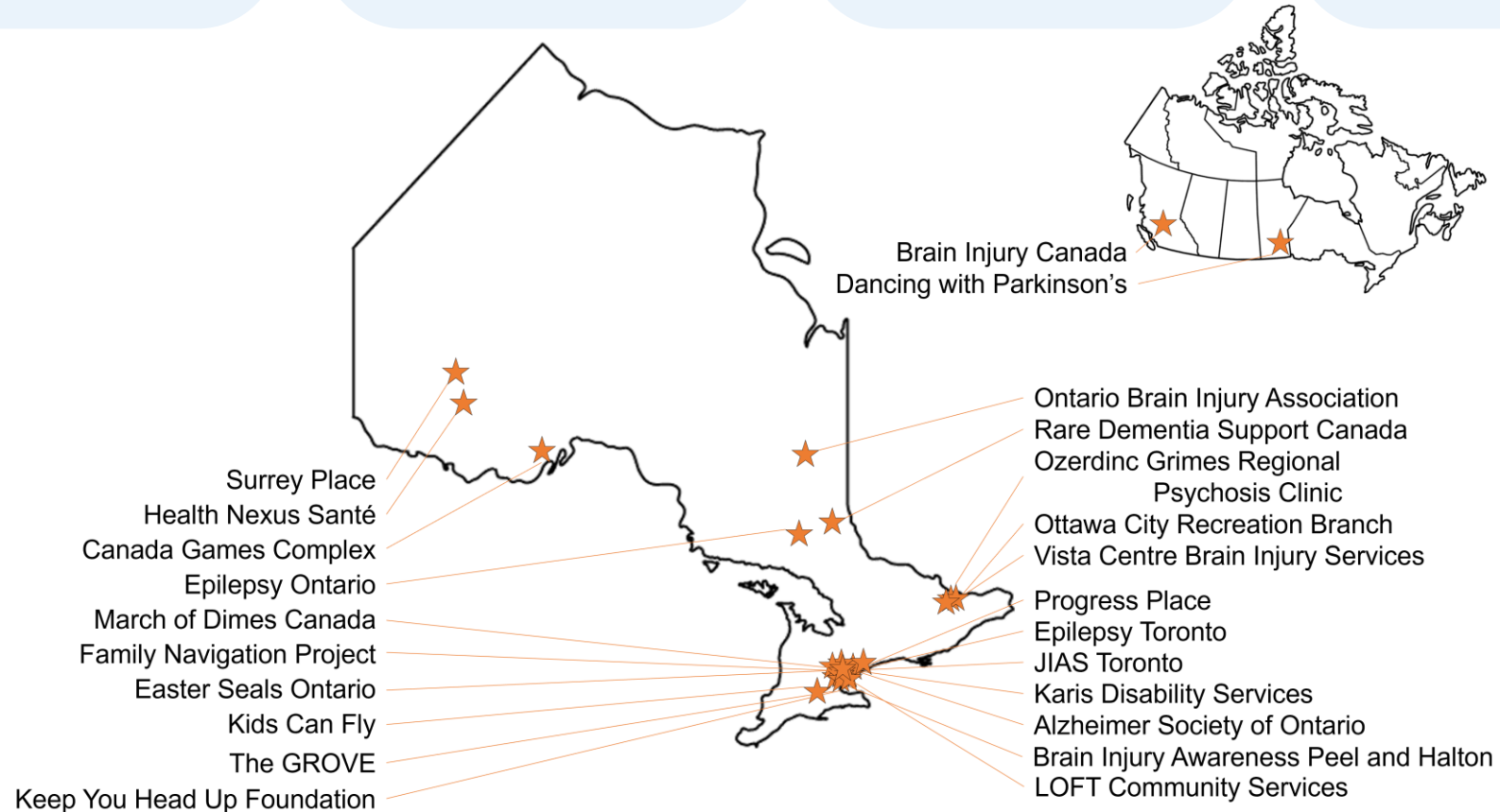
**Education &
Skill Building**



Support



Intervention





Recipients Quotes



“

We are clearer on what we are trying to learn, how to structure that work, and how to align our methods with the realities of a drop-in, youth-facing environment.

— The Grove Youth & Wellness Hub

“

To stop and look at what is really important. It's beneficial for the organization and the client.

— Vista Centre's ABI Transition Program

“

What do we want to get out of each program? How will we measure it? And how can we highlight our successes for potential funders?

— Epilepsy Toronto's Functional Seizure Program

GEEK changes attitudes, behaviours, and the ability to advocate.



Important Dates

From Letter of Intent to program start



PHASE 1 · Letter of Intent



PHASE 2 · Full Application & Interview

Mid-August 2026

Application portal
opens



Sept 30, 2026

Letter of Intent (LOI)
due



Mid-October 2026

LOI decision &
invitations



**End of October
2026**

Matched with evaluator
· two info webinars



Dec 19, 2026

Full application due



February 2027

Interviews



End of March 2027

Final decision



GEEK Cohort 8
Announcement in May



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WELCOME TO BRAIN CENTRAL

Questions?

Website: braininstitute.ca/geek
Contact email: geek@braininstitute.ca

Ontario 

Funding provided, in part,
by the Government of Ontario