

Powerful Tools
FOR Caregivers

Participant
Handouts

Adults with Chronic Conditions
90-minute classes

powerfultoolsforcaregivers.org

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Powerful Tools for Caregivers

COURSE OVERVIEW

CLASS 1: Taking Care of YOU

- Introductions and Course Overview
- Challenges of Caregiving
- Managing Self-Care: Principles
- Using Community Resources
- Making an Action Plan

CLASS 2: Identifying and Reducing Personal Stress

- Feedback and Solution-Seeking
- Managing Caregiving Stress
- Identifying Signs and Sources of Caregiver Stress
- Taking Action: Stress Reducers
- Using Positive Self-Talk
- Making an Action Plan
- Breathing for Relaxation

CLASS 3: Communicating Feelings, Needs and Concerns

- Feedback and Solution-Seeking
- Good Communication: How to Best Express Yourself
- Using “I” Messages
- Avoiding “Hidden You” Messages
- Making an Action Plan
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Class One

CLASS 4: Communicating in Challenging Situations

Feedback and Solution-Seeking
Being Assertive, Not Aggressive
Assertive Communication: DESC
Aikido Communication Style
Making an Action Plan

CLASS 5: Learning from Our Emotions

Feedback and Solution-Seeking
Listening to Our Emotions
Dealing with Anger and Guilt
Dealing with Depression
Guidelines for Managing Emotions
Making an Action Plan
Guided Imagery Relaxation

CLASS 6: Mastering Caregiving Decisions

Feedback and Solution-Seeking
The Transition Process
The Family Meeting
Using the Power of Optimism
Future Goals and Action Plans
Sharing Accomplishments

Class One

Class 1 Summary

TAKING CARE OF YOU

Agenda

- Introductions and Course Overview
- Challenges of Caregiving
- Managing Self-Care: Principles
- Using Community Resources
- Making an Action Plan

Principles of this course

You This course focuses on you and your needs/interests

Tools A tool is anything that helps us accomplish what we want to do

Powerful You can't control all of the situations life hands you, but you do have power to manage those situations and your reaction to them and to seek and find solutions

Acute Illness vs. Chronic Illness

Acute

Cures available

Short-term

Return to normal

Dealing with certainty

Chronic

No cures

Long-lasting

Change is normal

Dealing with uncertainty

Class One

Managing Self-Care

- Take responsibility
- Have realistic expectations
- Focus on “what I *can* do”
- Communicate effectively with others
- Deal with our emotions
- Set goals and work toward them

Using Community Resources

Help is available from:

- Disease-related organizations
- National caregiving associations
- Hospitals and health or residential care facilities
- Phone book/newspapers/internet
- Family/friends
- Government/public organizations
- Schools, county extension services
- Faith-based communities
- Hotlines
- Support groups
- Libraries

Making an “Action Plan”

- Something you want to do
- Reachable
- Behavior specific
- Answers these questions: What? How much? When? How often?
- Confidence level

Class One

TOOLS FOR RELEASING STRESS

Walking in the park	Hiking	Walking at twilight or early morning
Having a manicure	Singing	Watching the sunrise or sunset
Being with children	Playing tennis	Making small house repairs
Sharing with a friend	Praying	Going to an outdoor market
Watching a movie	Painting	Taking leisurely, warm baths
Crying at a movie	Volunteering	Buying yourself flowers
Writing your story	Exercising	Getting out of town for a short time
Buying favorite music	Traveling	Deep breathing for relaxation
Writing in a journal	Planting flowers	Trying out a new restaurant
Sleeping or napping	Golfing	Reading something inspirational
Watching television	Yoga	Spending time with family
Knitting or crocheting	Bird watching	Eating a favorite dinner by candlelight
Reading a good book	Doing aerobics	Watching a fire in the fireplace
Playing the piano	Going fishing	Giving a hug (you get one back)
Sitting in the backyard	Baking bread	Listening to the radio
Cleaning the house	Sewing	Trying out a new recipe
Browsing in a bookstore	Dancing	Cleaning the car
Buying a book	Laughing	Playing softball
Reading a mystery	Flying a kite	Doing genealogy
Taking photographs	Bowling	Having a massage
Going for a drive	Meditating	Going to a football game
Collecting coins	Going hunting	Going to the symphony
Playing with a pet	Quilting	Visiting with a neighbor
Going to the beach	Playing cards	Playing an instrument in a band
Going to the mountains	Holding a baby	Singing with a group
Buying new clothes	Gardening	Doing crossword puzzles
Collecting antiques	Building models	Talking with a trusted friend
Working with clay	Reading poetry	Playing on the computer
Decorating a cake	Writing letters	Starting an herb garden
Arranging flowers	Having a picnic	Saying "I can" to yourself
Shopping	Walking the dog	Stretching your body (like a cat)
Browsing in a store	Reading Facebook	Spending time online
Listening to favorite music	Visualizing a pleasant situation	Pouring out feelings on a recorder (then erase)

Class Two

MANAGING STRESS EXERCISE

Question 1: What are one or two major sources of your stress? Write them down.

1.

2.

Question 2: Can I change anything about these stressors? If so, what can I change?

Question 3: What actions can I take to reduce or manage stress?

1.

2.

3.

Question 4: Write an example of your negative self-talk.

Rewrite the above example as a positive statement.

Class Two

Class 2 Summary

IDENTIFYING AND REDUCING PERSONAL STRESS

Agenda

- Feedback and Solution-Seeking
- Managing Stress
- Identifying Signs and Sources of Caregiver Stress
- Taking Action: Stress-Reducers
- Using Positive Self-Talk
- Making an Action Plan
- Breathing for Relaxation

Solution-Seeking Approach

- Identify the problem
- List ideas
- Select one idea to try
- Evaluate the results
- Substitute another idea
- Utilize other resources
- Accept that the problem may not be solvable now

Managing Stress

- Recognize warning signs early
- Identify sources of stress
- Identify what you can and what you cannot change
- Take action

Class Two

Changes I Can Make

- Change a situation
- Change my perception
- Change my response

Barriers to Taking Action

- Can't think of what to do
- Choosing a difficult activity
- Postponing stress reduction

Using Positive Self-Talk

Steps to changing negative self-talk to positive self-talk:

- Write down self-defeating thoughts
- Change thoughts to positive statements
- Rehearse positive statements
- Practice in real-life situations

Breathing for Relaxation

Class Two

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

Give yourself permission to take the next few minutes for yourself. For just a little while let go of all outside concerns. Make yourself as comfortable as possible. Uncross your legs, ankles, arms.... Allow your body to feel completely supported by the surface beneath you.

You may want to close your eyes as a way of closing out any unnecessary distractions. Begin by taking a deep breath in, filling your chest with air.... and breathing all the way down to your abdomen.... When you're ready to breathe out, breathe slowly and completely through your mouth... As you breathe out, let the tension flow out with your breath.

Now, let all your muscles feel heavy.... And let your whole body just sink to the surface beneath you.... Good. This exercise will guide you through the major muscle groups from your feet to your head. You will be asked to first tense and then relax those muscles. If you have pain in any part of your body today, don't tense that area. Instead, just notice any tension that may already be there....and let go of that tension.

Become aware of the muscles of your feet and calves. Pull your toes back up towards your knees. Hold your feet in this position....noticing the sensations. Now, relax your feet and release the tension. Observe any changes in sensations as you let go of that tension....Good.

Now tighten the large muscles of your thighs and buttocks. Hold the muscles tense and as you do, be aware of the sensations...And now release these muscles, allowing them to feel soft as if they are melting into the surface beneath you....Good.

And, now turn your attention to your abdomen and chest. Tense these muscles by holding in your abdomen and tightening the muscles on your chest wall. Notice a tendency to hold your breath as you tense these muscles....Now release the tension. You may feel a natural desire to take a deep breath and release even more of the tension....so do that now. Breathe in deeply through your nose....and when you breathe out, allow your chest and abdomen to soften....Good.

Class Three

Now, straighten your fingers straight out....and tighten the muscles of your hands and arms. Hold. And, now relax your hands and arms....and feel the tension flowing out....and the circulation returning.

Next, press your shoulder blades together, tightening the muscles in your upper back, shoulders and neck. This is a place many people carry tension....And now, relax those muscles. You may notice that your muscles feel a little warmer and more alive.

Finally, tighten all of the muscles in your face and head. Notice the tension around your eyes and in your jaw especially. And now, release the tension and relax, allowing the muscles around your eyes to soften and your mouth to remain slightly open as your jaw relaxes. Notice the difference.

Now take another deep breath in, and when you're ready to breathe out, allow any remaining tension to flow out with your breath...and your whole body to be even more deeply relaxed....

And now, just enjoy this feeling of deep relaxation for a little while. Remember this pleasant feeling....You can quiet your mind and body in this way any time you do this activity. With practice, you'll be able to create this feeling just by taking a deep breath. As you prepare to end this exercise, picture yourself bringing this feeling of quiet and calm to whatever you're going to do next. Now...take one more deep breath....and breathe out....When you're ready, open your eyes.

(Adapted from: The Chronic Disease Self-Management Course, K. Lorig, Patient Education Research Center, Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA)

Class Three

Class 3 Summary

COMMUNICATING FEELINGS, NEEDS & CONCERNS

Agenda

- Feedback and Solution-Seeking
- Good Communication: How to Best Express Yourself
- Using “I” Messages
- Avoiding “Hidden You” Messages
- Making an Action Plan
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Good Communication

- Prevents misunderstandings
- Builds relationships
- Increases chances of being heard
- Reduces stress and frustration
- Enhances problem-solving

How to Best Express Yourself

- Use “I” messages
- Respect the rights and feelings of others
- Be clear and specific
- Speak directly to the person
- Be a good listener

Class Three

Using “I” Messages

Comparison of messages:

“**YOU**” You really upset me. You say you’ll mow the lawn, but you don’t remember to do it.

“**HIDDEN YOU**” I feel upset when you don’t remember to mow the lawn.

“**I**” I feel upset when the lawn is not mowed.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Class Three

DESC PRACTICE WORKSHEET

Instructions: Think about a person – a family member, a health care professional, in-home helper, a staff member of a care facility or the care receiver – with whom you would like to communicate more assertively, set limits, or ask for help. Then:

1. Describe the situation to your partner.
2. Pretend your partner is the person you want to talk to.
3. Talk with this person using the DESC steps.
4. You may first want to write down ideas for what you will say, using each of the DESC steps. You can work on this together.
5. When you talk to your partner, **use a calm, matter-of-fact voice** similar to the voice you would use when asking someone to pass the salt.

You will have a total of ten minutes, five minutes each, to practice. We will tell you when to switch roles. Help each other to apply the four steps of DESC.

Describe observable behavior or problem. (Clearly state what happened or is bothering you. Do this *without* emotion, evaluation, or exaggeration. Focus on the behavior or the problem, *not* the person.)

Express how you feel. (State your feelings *without* blaming the other person and *without* giving your opinion about the reasons for the person’s behavior. For example, state: “I feel _____ about what happened.”)

Specify what needs to happen or to be done. (For example, state: “I want/I need _____.”)

Consequence. (A consequence is saying what will happen if what you said under “Specify” does or does not happen. It’s important *not* to blame, bluff, or threaten. You want to say something like, “If _____ happens, then I will _____”). Remember: A consequence can be either negative or positive.

Class Four

AIKIDO DRAMATIZATION

- Caregiver:** *(Upset)* Last night my spouse woke up and didn't recognize me. She started yelling and threatened to call the police if I didn't get out of **her** bed.
- Friend:** You did remind her that you **are** her spouse, didn't you?
- Aikido Friend:** *(Align)* That must have hurt and been very upsetting.
- Caregiver:** *(Sadly)* Actually, I was hurt. After all these years together, my own spouse doesn't even know me. Although I know it's the disease, it's still hard to take.
- Friend:** Well, at least you still have a spouse.
- Aikido Friend:** *(Agree)* You're right, it's really hard when your spouse no longer recognizes you, even when you understand the reason for it.
- Caregiver:** Frankly, sometimes I feel like I don't have a spouse.
- Friend:** You just need to get out and meet people. Be thankful for what you do have.
- Aikido Friend:** *(Redirect)* That's understandable. Many people who feel this way find a support group helpful.
- Caregiver:** I would feel awkward going to a support group by myself.
- Friend:** You'll get used to it. Just give it a try.
- Aikido Friend:** *(Resolve)* I'd like to go to a support group too. Would you like to go together?

Class Four

AIKIDO COMMUNICATION PRACTICE

SITUATION: Your 84-year-old mother has Parkinson’s disease and lives in an assisted living facility. You are responsible for overseeing her care and managing her finances. She is upset because she feels you are trying to control her life. She says to you: “You never listen to me or what I want. You make all the decisions because you think you know what’s best for me. I am not a child just because I can’t do what I used to do.”

Use Aikido to respond to mother.

PARTS OF AIKIDO

Align (You put yourself in the other person’s shoes and ask yourself, “What does this person need or want from me to feel better?” Is it to feel heard and understood? to be appreciated? to be right? to express emotions? to receive recognition? to save face? or to ...?)

Agree (You look for areas of agreement or common ground, no matter how small.)

Redirect (You redirect the conversation to those areas of agreement or common ground. The idea behind redirecting is to move the conversation in a positive direction so that you can work toward resolution or change.)

Resolve (You seek to resolve differences by finding a middle ground you can live with, a common concern you can work on, or agreeing to disagree.)

Remember: It’s important to focus on what the other person needs and on finding common ground. Alignment is the key to Aikido. Without aligning, you cannot move forward. You may move back and forth between the parts of Aikido and apply the parts of Aikido simultaneously.

Class Four

DESC/AIKIDO REFERENCE CARDS

Print and cut out on solid lines, then fold on dotted lines to create 2 wallet-size reminder cards for how to do DESC and Aikido Communication Styles.

<p>Assertive (DESC) Style of Communication <i>“Standing Tall” – direct, clear, straight-forward</i></p> <p>Describe observable behavior or problem. No emotion, evaluation or exaggeration. Focus on the issue, <i>not</i> the person.</p> <p>Express how you feel. Don’t blame or speculate about reasons for the other person’s behavior. For example, state: “I feel ___ about what happened.”</p> <p>Specify what needs to happen or to be done. Use “I” statements, and avoid “You” messages. For example, “I want/I need _____.”</p> <p>Consequence of the behavior. What will or won’t happen if the person does or doesn’t follow through. For example: “If _____ happens, then I will _____.” Or “Because of _____, this happened.” Do not blame, bluff, or threaten.</p> <p>Useful to: Set limits; ask for help; advocate for another; make difficult decisions; deal with difficult styles of communication</p>	<p>Aikido Style of Communication <i>“Standing With” – positive, gentle, and supportive</i></p> <p>Align As you listen and observe, put yourself in the other person’s place, and ask: “What does this person need from me to feel better?”</p> <p>Agree Look for areas of agreement and common ground.</p> <p>Redirect Redirect the exchange to areas where you have agreement.</p> <p>Resolve Seek to resolve by finding a middle ground you can both live with; working on areas of common concern, or agreeing to disagree.</p> <p>Useful to: Defuse emotionally charged situations; help others feel understood, reduce anger; balance emotions so you can deal with issues.</p>
<p>Assertive (DESC) Style of Communication <i>“Standing Tall” – direct, clear, straight-forward</i></p> <p>Describe observable behavior or problem. No emotion, evaluation or exaggeration. Focus on the issue, <i>not</i> the person.</p> <p>Express how you feel. Don’t blame or speculate about reasons for the other person’s behavior. For example, state: “I feel ___ about what happened.”</p> <p>Specify what needs to happen or to be done. Use “I” statements, and avoid “You” messages. For example, “I want/I need _____.”</p> <p>Consequence of the behavior. What will or won’t happen if the person does or doesn’t follow through. For example: “If _____ happens, then I will _____.” Or “Because of _____, this happened.” Do not blame, bluff, or threaten.</p> <p>Useful to: Set limits; ask for help; advocate for another; make difficult decisions; deal with difficult styles of communication</p>	<p>Aikido Style of Communication <i>“Standing With” – positive, gentle, and supportive</i></p> <p>Align As you listen and observe, put yourself in the other person’s place, and ask: “What does this person need from me to feel better?”</p> <p>Agree Look for areas of agreement and common ground.</p> <p>Redirect Redirect the exchange to areas where you have agreement.</p> <p>Resolve Seek to resolve by finding a middle ground you can both live with; working on areas of common concern, or agreeing to disagree.</p> <p>Useful to: Defuse emotionally charged situations; help others feel understood, reduce anger; balance emotions so you can deal with issues.</p>

Class 4 Summary

COMMUNICATING IN CHALLENGING SITUATIONS

Agenda

- Feedback and Solution-Seeking
- Being Assertive, not Aggressive
- Assertive Communication: DESC
- Aikido Communication Style
- Making an Action Plan

Use Good Communication Techniques

- Use “I” messages
- Respect the rights and feelings of others
- Be clear and specific
- Speak directly to the person
- Be a good listener

Being Assertive, not Aggressive

Assertive	≠	Aggressive
“I” messages		“You” messages
Asks for needs		Demands wants/needs
Values others’ needs		Focuses only on self
Respects others’ rights		Violates others’ rights
Builds relationships		Destroys relationships

Assertive Communication: DESC – 4 steps of Assertiveness

1. **Describe** observable behavior or problem
2. **Express** how you feel
3. **Specify** what needs to happen
4. **Consequence**

Class Four

Aikido Communication Style

- Align** Ask yourself, “What does this person want or need from me to feel better?”
- Agree** Where can you find common ground?
- Redirect** Move the conversation forward in a positive direction based on the areas of common ground.
- Resolve** Seek to resolve differences through: a) middle ground, b) a common concern, or c) agreeing to disagree.

Assertive vs. Aikido Style (*The Caregiver Helpbook*)

Assertive

“Standing tall,” positive style, direct, clear, straightforward

Especially useful in

- Setting limits
- Asking for help
- Advocating for another
- Making difficult decisions
- Dealing with difficult styles of communication

Aikido

“Standing with,” positive style, less direct; more gentle and supportive

Useful to

- Defuse emotionally-charged situations
- Help others feel they are understood
- Reduce anger
- Balance emotions so you can deal with issues

Communicating with the Memory-Impaired Person

- Have realistic expectations
- Don’t rush; allow the person time to “tune in”
- Keep directions simple; use concrete words
- Use multi-sensory cues
- Never argue (you won’t win); be willing to take the blame for misunderstandings
- Limit choices
- Be aware of non-verbal language (yours and theirs); people with dementia tend to be highly sensitive to body language and tone of voice

Class Four

GUIDED IMAGERY: A WALK TO THE BEACH

It's time to relax now. For just a short time, let go of all outside concerns. In this guided imagery exercise, prepare yourself for a summertime stroll to a beach.

Make yourself as comfortable as possible in your chair...uncross your legs and ankles. Relax your arms at your side. Close your eyes as a way of closing out any unnecessary distractions.

Now imagine yourself walking barefoot down a sandy path...

In the distance you can hear the waves rumbling onto the beach. The soft sand feels slightly cool between your toes. The plants on each side of the path tickle your legs as you take this leisurely walk.

As you get closer, the sound of the waves gets louder...you can see the sun slowly beginning to set above...it is making the sky and the few clouds turn to pink and orange colors...

As you continue down the path, you can see the water now...it's brilliant blue color is sparkling in the sunset...the calming ripples closest to the shore invite you to take a closer look...

As you walk towards the water...leaving footprints behind...you start to feel the soft sand become more solid under your feet...it feels a little wet from the water near the shore...

The edge of the water gleams with white foam. You notice a few sea shells in the sand...you bend over to pick up one and see its perfect shape and pearly insides...

With the warm water trickling between your toes...you look up and out across the water as far as you can see...realizing now how small we are in the vastness of the universe.

Just a few feet from the water's edge sits an empty chair...as you walk toward the chair, you can see small crabs sticking their heads out of tiny holes in the sand and running away as you draw near...

Class Five

After you take a seat in the chair...you're impressed by the harmony of the surroundings...the warmth of the summer air, the sweet smell of the water, your toes in the sand, your ears listening to the sound of the waves and your eyes watching the sunset over the water...a feeling of peace cascades over you...you take a deep breath to take in more of this relaxing time.

You sit here and rest awhile...relaxed in the feeling that nothing else in the world matters at this moment...This is a time of pure enjoyment, just for you. Listen awhile and relax some more.

(Music only for about 30 seconds)

When you're ready...you begin to stand up...feeling the soft sand between your toes again...thankful that you've had this time to yourself... Remember...that you can return to this place in your mind's eye whenever you want to...

(Pause with more music for 15 seconds)

You begin to walk back along the sandy path that brought you to this peaceful place. You are grateful for this time of refreshment.

Take a deep, cleansing breath and then slowly exhale.

When you're ready, slowly begin to open your eyes.

Class Five

Class 5 Summary

LEARNING FROM OUR EMOTIONS

Agenda

- Feedback and Solution-Seeking
- Listening to Our Emotions
- Dealing with Anger and Guilt
- Dealing with Depression
- Guidelines for Managing Our Emotions
- Making an Action Plan
- Guided Imagery Relaxation

My most difficult feelings are...

On the other hand, I have grown/gained strengths such as...

Feelings are ...

- A normal response to a situation
- Changeable
- An outgrowth of our perspective
- A tool for self-understanding when we
 - ✓ Identify our feelings
 - ✓ Accept our feelings
 - ✓ Learn from our feelings

The Volcano of Anger

When pain and fear build up, anger and hurt may erupt with

- Yelling and cursing
- Stomach/head/back aches
- Abusing alcohol and legal or illegal drugs
- Getting depressed

Class Five

Dealing with Anger

Some examples of ways to constructively deal with anger:

- Calming down/cooling down
- Taking a break/doing something pleasurable
- Crying (or laughing)
- Writing in a journal
- Meditating
- Practicing relaxation exercises
- Engaging in a physical activity
- Talking with a trusted friend
- Seeking counseling

Dealing with Guilt

Some examples of ways to constructively deal with guilt:

- Admit mistakes. Apologize
- Correct the situation, if possible
- Forgive yourself. Accept your humanity.
- Ask for forgiveness (directly from the person wronged, when possible)
- Learn from the experience
- Seek counseling as needed

Some Signs of Depression

- Pervasive sadness
- Appetite changes
- Sleep difficulties
- Loss of pleasure in previously enjoyed activities
- Fatigue/loss of energy/exhaustion
- Abnormal restlessness
- Decreased concentration; difficulty with decision-making
- Low self-esteem
- Preoccupation with thoughts of suicide/pervasive feelings of hopelessness

Class Five

Dealing with Depression

Some examples of ways to keep your spirits up:

- Contact a friend
- Participate in a pleasant activity
- Do something nice for myself
- Exercise
- Use a relaxation technique
- Talk to a trusted friend
- Write in a journal
- Seek professional help as needed

Guidelines for Managing Our Emotions

- Identify your emotions
- Accept your emotions
- Express your emotions
- Examine your emotions
- Respond to your emotions
- Seek professional help as needed

Guided Imagery Relaxation

Class Five

WORKSHEET FOR MAKING A DECISION

Step 1: Identify the problem. [What has been observed? Why is it a problem? Whom does it affect? How widespread is the problem?]

Step 2: Gather information. [Ask questions about resources, finances, health concerns and the relative's needs and remaining abilities.]

Step 3: Generate options. [Brainstorm options and ideas.]

Step 4: Evaluate options. [Objectively weigh the benefits and limits of each option from your relative's perspective, and from a financial and availability standpoint.]

Step 5: Create a plan. [Remember to seek a decision that preserves the greatest freedom and control for your relative.]

Step 6: Act on the plan. [If possible, give your plan a trial period. Expect that the plan will be subject to changing conditions. Revising the decision or refining the plan does not mean the initial one was wrong; it means there are no easy or perfect answers in caregiving.]

Step 7: Evaluate the plan. [Ask, "How well is the plan working?"]

EVALUATING OPTIONS

You may find the following chart useful for step 4, evaluating options.

OPTIONS	BENEFITS	LIMITATIONS

Class Six

Class Six

Class 6 Summary

MASTERING CAREGIVING DECISIONS

Agenda

- Feedback and Solution-Seeking
- The Family Meeting
- The Power of Optimism
- Future Goals and Action Plans
- Sharing Accomplishments

Change vs. Transition

Change is external

Involves:

- Roles
- Situations
- Abilities
- Care needs
- Events

You usually can't control

Transition is internal

Involves:

- Emotions/feelings
- Thoughts
- Attitudes
- Learning
- Acceptance

You can control

Phases of transition

- Endings (Letting go of the old)
- Wilderness Period (The time between old and new; learning to accept change)
- New Beginnings (Ready to move forward)

Class Six

Guidelines for Family Meetings

- Involve the care receiver. (Plan “with”, not “for”, recognize the decision-making ability of a person with dementia may be limited)
- Involve everyone in person or by phone, including, if appropriate, paid caregivers and friends.
- Consider a facilitator
- Plan an agenda in advance

Tools of Optimism

- View setbacks as temporary
- View misfortune as specific, not universal (what can you still take pleasure in?)
- Seek solutions to problems
- View mistakes as opportunities
- Give yourself credit
- Recognize beliefs are not facts (challenge your self-criticism)
- Practice positive self-talk

Don't Let Realism Slip into Pessimism

- Pessimism says, “I can't get good help; it never works out.”
- Realism says, “The last person I hired didn't work well. I don't know how I'm going to do it, but I know I need more help than I have now.”

Future Goals and Action Plans

- Use actions plans to keep up the good work.

Class Six

Caregiver Resources



Canadian Centre for
Caregiving Excellence

Centre canadien d'excellence
pour les aidants

Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence – tools and resources compiled by caregivers and caregiver organizations across the country. Visit <https://canadiancaregiving.org/>



THE ONTARIO

caregiver
ORGANIZATION

Ontario Caregiver Organization – provides a single point of access to information, support and services so caregivers are empowered with the information they need to be successful. They also offer a 24/7 helpline at 1-833-416-2273. Visit www.ontariocaregiver.ca

caregiver
exchange.ca

Caregiver Exchange – an online list of current support services across Ontario, along with tips and insights for family caregivers. Visit www.caregiverexchange.ca

Help starts here.



211 – provides information and referrals to Ontario's community, social, health-related and government services, assisting people with services and government benefits. 211 also provides an interpreter in over 150 languages. Also available online at www.211ontario.ca

thehealthline.ca

thehealthline.ca – an online compilation of health related resources that are regularly updated including services, supports, exercise classes, day programs and workshops, with the capacity to complete searches by service, community, county, or region. Visit www.thehealthline.ca

Ontario 

A Guide to Programs and Services for Seniors – information on resources available for seniors in Ontario, including tax credits, health, caregiving, housing, driving and staying safe. Visit www.ontario.ca/page/guide-programs-and-services-seniors

BounceBack®
reclaim your health

BounceBack – offered through the Canadian Mental Health Association, designed to help adults and youth 15+ manage symptoms of depression and anxiety. Contact by phone: 1-866-345-0224, or online at www.bouncebackontario.ca



Healthy Aging in South West Ontario – designed to help adults find resources on staying healthy, fit, and living in their own homes safely. Visit www.swhealthyaging.ca



OTN telehomecare – designed to help those with Chronic Heart Failure (CHF) or Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) stay at home and manage their condition with fewer visits to the Emergency Department. Contact by phone: 1-800-811-5146, or visit <https://healthcareathome.ca/home-care/telehomecare/>



ConnexOntario - provides free and confidential health services information for people experiencing problems with alcohol and drugs, mental illness or gambling by connecting them with services in their area. <https://www.connexontario.ca/en-ca/>



Elder Abuse Ontario
Stop Abuse - Restore Respect

Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario – site provides list of tools and resources, webinars and training, information about the Senior Safety Line, current networks in Ontario, and a directory of programs and services. <http://www.eapon.ca/>



Finding Balance – designed to increase awareness of fall prevention, promoting real life strategies older adults can implement to reduce their risk of falling. Includes downloadable tools and videos like Exercises at the Kitchen Sink. Visit www.findingbalanceontario.ca

ONTARIO CAREGIVER HELPLINE: 1-833-416-2273

Single point of access to information, support and service in English and French 24/7. Live chat is available 7am-9pm (Mon – Fri) at ontariocaregiver.ca. Caregivers can speak to a Community Resource Specialist to connect to community based services and supports across Ontario based on their individual needs.

SCALE PROGRAM: CAREGIVER NEEDS AND WELL-BEING

Eight weekly webinars, online group coaching and one-on-one telephone counselling. [SCALE \(Supporting Caregiver Awareness, Learning and Empowerment\)](#) focuses on topics relevant to new or experienced caregivers, including caregiver stress, managing feelings of anxiety or guilt, and self-care for the caregiver. Registration is required.

ONLINE SUPPORT GROUPS

An opportunity for caregivers to connect with other caregivers to discuss the challenges they are facing. Support groups are offered several times a week including a group for young caregivers. Option to join online or by phone. [For caregivers seeking an online support group](#)

1:1 PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM

Peer support program that connects caregivers with trained peer mentors for 1:1 phone or virtual support. Caregivers with lived experience and knowledge to share are trained to become peer mentors to provide support to another caregiver seeking support with the challenges they are facing.

- [For caregivers seeking to become a peer mentor](#)
- [For caregivers who need the support of a peer mentor](#)

EDUCATIONAL WEBINARS

One-hour webinars offered two times per month on a wide range of topics for caregivers. Recordings of past webinars are also available online [here](#).

TOOLKITS AND RESOURCES FOR CAREGIVERS

Our website offers a wide range of tools, tips sheets and resources including:

- [*I am a Caregiver Starter Toolkit*](#) focuses on how the caregiver can be empowered to take care of themselves.
- [*Work & Caregiving – A Balancing Act: Toolkit for Working Caregivers.*](#)

CAREGIVER 101

Learn about caregiving roles, conflicts in caregiving, caregiver burnout, what to expect, developing resilience, and what supports are available. Access the online course [here](#).

YOUNG CAREGIVERS CONNECT

Young Caregivers Connect is a website to help young caregivers aged 15-25. The website was designed in collaboration with, and for, young caregivers and offers information and resources and a way to connect that address their unique needs. Visit the website [here](#).

TIME TO TALK PODCAST

Join host [Michelle Jobin](#) along with experts and caregivers, to discuss things that matter most to caregivers. Access the podcast [here](#).



CCSMH
Canadian Coalition for
Seniors' Mental Health

9

Helpful Resources for Caregivers

Your Mental Health Matters

Caregiving can be rewarding. Yet, most caregivers experience conflicting feelings of isolation, grief, compassion, joy and overwhelm as they provide care. A caring role can increase risk for depression and chronic illness, and lead to emotional and physical exhaustion.

Protecting your own mental health is one of the most important things you can do for the person you are caring for:

- ✓ Regular breaks help maintain your physical and mental health.
- ✓ Reducing personal stress will enable you to be a care partner for much longer.
- ✓ Maintaining family and social connections will help you feel less alone.
- ✓ Caring for yourself will directly improve quality of life for the person you are caring for too.

Protect Your Mental Health

Visit the following pages on our website to explore free evidence informed information and resources from CCSMH that support older adults to improve and maintain their wellbeing:

- **Anxiety**
- **Depression**
- **Social Isolation & Loneliness**
- **Substance Use**
- **Wellness in Aging**



8 Million

Canadians identify as caregivers.

You are not alone. The important role of caregivers is increasingly recognized and supported across Canada.

One-on-one emotional support, peer support groups, health care system navigation and free educational resources are available online and in-person to support caregivers.

More Self-Care Resources

[Caregivers: Self-Care Helps You Cope](#)

Baycrest

[10 Tips to Avoid Caregiver Burnout](#)

Care Channel

[Practical Insights for Busy Caregivers: Staying Happy](#)

Caregiver Exchange

[Self-Care Tips at Home in Stressful Times](#)

Fountain of Health

[Caregiver Self-Care Tool](#)

National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly (NICE)

[Recognizing and Managing Caregiver Stress](#)

Sage Link

[Cultivating Mindfulness for Well-being Among Caregivers](#)

Ontario Caregivers Organization

[Caregiver Resources](#)

Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence

[Caregiver College](#)

Alberta Health Services



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Connecting People, Ideas and Resources

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