

Feeling Stretched as a Caregiver?

CARE is now offering an exciting new program!!!

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is an educational series designed to provide you with the tools you need to take care of yourself.

This program helps family caregivers reduce stress, improve self-confidence, communicate feelings better, balance their lives, increase their ability to make tough decisions and locate helpful resources.

Classes consist of six sessions held once a week. Two experienced Class Leaders conduct the series (many are experienced caregivers themselves, who have successfully applied the techniques they teach). Interactive lessons, discussions and brainstorming will help you take the “tools” you choose and put them into action for your life.

You will receive a book, *The Caregiver Helpbook*, developed specifically for the class. A donation of \$25.00 to help defray the cost of the book is suggested, but not required to attend the class.

Classes will be held throughout the year. For more information or to register, please call Danielle at: **239-343-2751**. Class size is limited and pre-registration is required.

Class Description

Powerful Tools for Caregivers - Class Description

Class #1: Taking Care of You

This class sets the stage for the entire course. It emphasizes that the focus is on “YOU, the caregiver, not on the family member receiving care,” and that caregivers will develop a “box of self-care tools.” The challenges of caregiving and significance of caregiver self-care are dramatized through a video. Beginning in this class, caregivers make a weekly action plan for self-care.

Class #2: Identifying and Reducing Personal Stress

Four steps are presented for effective stress management: (1) Identifying early warning signs, (2) Identifying personal sources of stress, (3) Changing what you can change and accepting what you cannot change, and (4) Taking action. Tools to reduce stress are discussed. Participants learn how to change negative self-talk – which increases stress and erodes confidence – to positive self-talk. Beginning in this class, caregivers learn five relaxation activities that are easy to incorporate into their daily lives.

Class #3: Communicating Feelings, Needs, and Concerns

Participants learn how to communicate their feelings, needs and concerns more effectively by using “I” messages. Through brief dramatizations, participants experience the impact of both “I” messages and “You” messages (which tend to sound blaming and put people on the defensive). They practice changing “You” messages to “I” messages, and identifying when statements beginning with the word “I” are actually “Hidden You” messages.

Class #4: Communicating in Challenging Situations

Participants practice two communication tools – assertiveness and Aikido – which are helpful in difficult situations. They learn a four-step process, called DESC (**D**escribe, **E**xpress, **S**pecify, and **C**onsequence) for using the assertive style of communication. With Aikido, participants learn how to align and find “common ground” with a person who is distressed. A segment highlights guidelines for communicating with a person who is memory impaired.

Class #5: Learning From Our Emotions

The overriding theme of this class is “our emotions are messages we need to listen to.” It emphasizes that feelings occur for a reason and that feelings are neither good nor bad. Focus is on identifying constructive ways for dealing with difficult feelings – especially anger, guilt, and depression – and resources for professional help.

Class #6: Mastering Caregiving Decisions

Focus is on the internal emotional process caregivers go through when they experience a life change. Tools for dealing with changes and for making tough decisions – including a seven-step decision-making model and the family meeting – are discussed.

Quotes

Quotes from caregivers who have taken the Powerful Tools For Caregivers classes:

"After taking this class I am a more confident caregiver! Having tools to resolve problems is a definite advantage in becoming a better caregiver and a happier, wiser, healthier me...and a healthier 'us!'"

"There was a common bond. We were all dealing with some of the same issues. We shared our stories and learned ways to cope. I learned that it was important to take care of me."

"This is a very informative and educational program. I learned a lot of things so valuable to me as a caregiver."

"I hope to refer to this course (Powerful Tools for Caregivers) and the book for wisdom during many of life's challenges."

"By taking this course we have been given a list of places to look for help if needed. I hadn't been aware of all the organizations and people to help caregivers find answers and many solutions to their problems."

"Thank you for permission to think about me."