

Class Details

Class #1: Taking Care of You

This class sets the stage for the entire course. It emphasizes that the focus is on you as a caregiver, not on the family member receiving care, and that caregivers will develop a self-care tool box. The challenges of caregiving are significant. Beginning in this class, caregivers make a weekly commitment to 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) 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. 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 for using the assertive style of communication. With Aikido, participants learn how to align and find “common ground” with a person who is distressed.

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.

For information about the PTC program: www.powerfultoolsforcaregivers.org

Course Description

Powerful Tools for Caregivers (PTC) Can Help. Caring for a family member or friend with a chronic condition can be physically, emotionally, and financially draining. This self-care educational program for family caregivers builds the skills caregivers need to take better care of themselves as they provide care for others.



Caregiver participants learn to minimize the stress of caregiving in a weekly program emphasizing self-care and empowerment. Research on Powerful Tools for Caregivers shows increased self-efficacy for caregiver participants. The PTC program meets the highest level criteria for evidence-based programs per the Administration on Aging. The PTC program has 4,600 certified class leaders in the US, Canada, and Korea.

Improve the lives of family caregivers in your community

Powerful Tools for Caregivers has served caregivers of adults with chronic conditions for over twenty years. PTC recently expanded the population of caregivers served to include caregivers of children with special health and behavioral needs (including minors and adult children). The program's self-care emphasis remains the same.



Caregivers who benefit from the PTC 6-week class series:

- Spouse or partner of an adult with a chronic condition
- Adult children of aging parents
- Parent of children with special health and behavioral needs
- Grandparent raising grandchildren with special needs
- Long-distance caregiver

“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.”

–PTC Caregiver Class Participant

Caregiver Classes

In the six weekly classes, caregivers develop a wealth of self-care tools to reduce personal stress, change negative self-talk, communicate their needs to family and healthcare or service providers, communicate effectively in challenging situations, recognize the messages in their emotions, deal with difficult feelings, and make tough caregiving decisions. Class participants also receive a copy of *The Caregiver Helpbook*.

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