Powerful Tools for Caregivers

Program Origins and Development

Powerful Tools for Caregivers (PTC) and all materials were developed over 3 years of pilot testing, refinement and evaluative research to assess the program’s effectiveness. Initiated through grant funding, the program has been offered for over 12 years. Currently, over 2,200 Class Leaders have been trained in 36 states. Since the program’s inception, Powerful Tools for Caregivers materials have reached over 80,000 caregivers.

PTC is based on the highly successful Chronic Disease Self-Management Program developed by Dr. Kate Lorig and her colleagues at Stanford University. Powerful Tools for Caregivers is a national program sustained by extensive collaborations with community-based organizations.

Description of Caregiver Class Content

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 members and healthcare or service providers; communicate more 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, developed specifically for the class.

Below is a link to a 30-minute presentation which describes the PTC program, its class content, and how to become a class leader.

http://mmlearn.me/PowerfulTools4Caregivers

Research and Outcomes

Research studies find high rates of depression and anxiety among caregivers and increased vulnerability to health problems. Caregivers frequently cite restriction of personal activities and social life as problems. They often feel they have no control over events, and that feeling of powerlessness has a significant negative impact on caregivers’ physical and emotional health. In the years since the program began, a great deal of research, evaluation and revision has been done to ensure its continued value and success. The 6-week PTC class has been shown to have a positive impact on caregiver health for a diverse group of caregivers including rural, ethnic minorities, adult children of aging parents, well-spouses/partners, caregivers at differing stages in their caregiving role, living situations, financial and educational backgrounds. The PTC program is available in English, Spanish, and Korean. Data from class participant evaluations indicates the PTC program improves:

- Self-Care Behaviors: (increased exercise, use of relaxation techniques and medical check ups.)
- Management of Emotions: (reduced guilt, anger, and depression.)
- Self-efficacy (increased confidence in coping with caregiving demands.)
- Use of Community Resources: (increased utilization of community services.)
In 2012 the Powerful Tools for Caregivers program was deemed to have met the highest-level criteria of evidence-based disease prevention and health promotion programs by the Administration for Community Living/Administration on Aging. To access a listing on the NCOA web site go to the NCOA website’s AoA Title III D web page and scroll to the very bottom “Resources” section and click on the “Title III D Evidence Based ….Cost Chart.” Wait for a few seconds for the chart to load. Powerful Tools for Caregivers is listed on page 15 of the chart.

References


Recognition

In 2007, PTC received the National Family Caregiver Award for innovation, responsiveness and effectiveness from the National Alliance for Caregiving and the MetLife Foundation.
In 2009, PTC received the Network of Multicultural Aging Excellence Award from the American Society on Aging/AARP.

Order Our Book

Recognition

“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, and healthier me… and a healthier us!”