

Leader Guide

Caregiving, Part 2

Overview:

This leader guide is Part 2 in a series on caregiving that is designed to be delivered by HCE members in a group setting in approximately 25 minutes. It focuses on taking care of yourself when caregiving.

Materials Needed:

- 1 copy of Appendix A: *Serenity Prayer* Mini poster
- 1 copy of Appendix B: *Solution Seeking Approach* Mini poster
- 1 copy of Appendix C: *Volcano of Anger Activity* (see list of supplies needed and prepare activity in advance)
- 1 copy **per participant** of Appendix D: *Self-Care Questionnaire*
- Writing utensils

Timeline:

ACTIVITY	TIME
Opening, Welcome, Introductions	2 minutes
Take Responsibility for Getting Your Own Needs Met	2 minutes
Have Realistic Expectations	2 minutes
Focus on What You Can Do and Change ** <i>Serenity Prayer</i> Mini Poster ** <i>Solution Seeking Approach</i> Mini Poster	5 minutes
Communicate Effectively With Others	1 minute
Learn From Your Emotions ** <i>Volcano of Anger Activity</i>	5 minutes
Get Help When Needed	5 minutes
Set Goals and Work Toward Them	1 minute
Conclusion ** <i>Self-Care Questionnaire</i>	2 minutes
Total Lesson Time	25 minutes

**Note: You may want to identify a time keeper from among your participants to ensure that you stick to the timeline. If your group is more flexible, simply utilize the above timeline as a guide.

Teaching Guide:

- I. Opening, Welcome, Introductions (2 minutes)**
 - a. Begin by welcoming participants to this lesson about caregiving. Tell participants that, although we may not be able to stop chronic illnesses or diseases in others, but we can be responsible for our own physical and emotional health.
 - b. Ask each participant to introduce him/herself and, if time allows, share one thing they presently do to take care of themselves.

- II. Take Responsibility for Getting Your Own Needs Met (2 minutes)**
 - a. Tell participants that it is important for caregivers to maintain their own relationships and activities that have meaning and bring happiness during caregiving. When you board an airplane, the flight attendant gives several safety instructions. One of them is, “If oxygen masks drop down, put on your oxygen mask first before helping others.” This is because if you don’t take care of yourself first, you may not be able to help those who need your help. It’s the same thing with caregiving. When you take care of yourself, everyone benefits.
 - b. Review the self care activities mentioned during the introductions. Take a few moments now to brainstorm other activities to add to the list. Remember to add having regular health check-ups, eating a balanced diet, getting enough sleep and exercising.

- III. Have Realistic Expectations (2 minutes)**
 - a. Tell participants that it is important for caregivers to have realistic expectations of both themselves and the person they are caring for. When we fully understand the medical condition of the person we are caring for, we can be realistic about what they can and cannot do. We can use this information to plan successful caregiving strategies. Knowledge is power.
 - b. Tell participants that another key strategy to coping with caregiver stress is to learn to take control of their caregiving situation. It’s important to be proactive, developing tools and techniques to manage the situation. Here are some suggestions that might help caregivers take control of the situation:
 1. Use a calendar to schedule appointments and other commitments
 2. Keep a list of medications and when they should be given
 3. Develop a plan for end of life decisions

4. Keep a caregiving journal
5. Join a family caregiver support group

IV. Focus on What You Can Do and Change (5 minutes)

- a. Tell participants it's important to be clear about what you can and cannot change in caregiving situations. For example, you can't change a person's illness, but you can control your response to it. You have to accept some things while letting go of issues out of your own control. Ask participants to think about their caregiving situation (if they are currently in a caregiving role). Have them list the things about their situation that they can change, as well as the things about their situation that cannot be changed. Share Appendix A - "*Serenity Prayer*" mini poster and have the participants read it out loud.
- b. Introduce the solution seeking approach by showing the participants Appendix B - "*Solution Seeking Approach*" mini poster and reading through each step. You have to be willing to seek solutions to what you can change.

V. Communicate Effectively With Others (1 minute)

- a. Tell participants it's important to communicate effectively with family members, friends, health care professionals, and the care receiver. Don't expect others to know what you need. Most people are willing to offer help, if they know what the other person needs. Remember to communicate in ways that are positive and avoid being demanding or blameful of others in your requests.

VI. Learn From Your Emotions (5 minutes)

- a. Tell participants to expect emotional ups and downs during caregiving. Learn to listen to your emotions and what they are telling you. Don't bottle up your emotions.
- b. To demonstrate the affect of emotions on caregivers use Appendix C - "*Volcano of Anger Activity*."

VII. Get Help When You Need It (5 minutes)

- a. Tell participants an important part of self-care is finding help when you can't do it yourself, whether it's in the community, with family, friends or professionals. Don't wait until you are overwhelmed and exhausted. Reaching out for help is a sign of personal strength.
- b. Ask participants to volunteer ideas out loud of names of people or agencies in your community to call for help while caregiving.

VIII. Set Goals and Work Toward Them (1minute)

- a. Tell participants to be realistic in the goals that they set and take steps toward reaching those goals. Seek solutions to problems. You may not have to make major changes in your life in order to make a difference in how you cope with your role as a caregiver.

IX. Conclusion (2 minutes)

In summary, self-care means you seek ways to take better care of yourself. This is an important skill for everyone. Distribute a copy of Appendix D - "*Self-Care Questionnaire*" to all participants. If time does not permit the participants to complete the questionnaire, ask participants to take it with them to complete at a later time. Thank participants for their time and attention. Tell them there is another lesson related to caregiving in this series.

Leader Guide developed by Nancy Crevier, Family Living Educator, UW-Extension Marinette County, June 2008.

Reviewed by Mary Brintnall-Peterson, Ph.D., Program Specialist in Aging, UW-Extension and Molly Spaulding, Family Living Educator, UW-Extension, Green Lake County.

Adapted from "Taking Care of the Caregiver-Managing Caregiver Stress," developed by Christine Kniep, Family Living Educator, UW-Extension Winnebago County, March 2005. With adaptations from: The Caregiver Helpbook: Powerful Tools for Caregiving and the Taking Care of You: Powerful Tools for Caregiving Class Leader Guide, by Vicki L. Schmall, Ph.D., Marilyn Cleland, R.N., and Marilyn Sturdevant, R.N., M.S.W., L.C.S.W.

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Appendix A

Serenity Prayer

"...grant me the
serenity to accept the
things I cannot change,

courage to change
the things I can,

and the wisdom to
know the difference."

~ Reinhold Niebuhr, 1934

From: The Caregiver Helpbook: Powerful Tools for Caregiving, by Vicki L. Schmall, Ph.D., Marilyn Cleland, R.N., and Marilyn Sturdevant, R.N., M.S.W., L.C.S.W.

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Appendix B

Solution Seeking Approach

1. **Identify the problem.** The most important step in seeking solutions is to accurately define a problem. This also can be the most difficult step.
2. **List ideas** to solve the problem.
3. **Select one idea to try.** Look over the list of ideas and select one to try. Then, do it.
4. **Evaluate the results.** Ask yourself, "How well did my choice work?"
5. **Substitute another idea.** If the first idea didn't work, either substitute another idea or re-look at the idea you selected. Sometimes, an idea just needs "fine-tuning." It's important not to give up on an idea just because it didn't work the first time.
6. **Utilize other resources.** Ask friends, family, and professionals for ideas if your solutions didn't work.
7. **Accept that the problem may not be solvable now.** You can revisit the problem at another time.

If at first you don't succeed...try, try again

Adapted from: Taking Care of You: Powerful Tools for Caregiving Class Leader Guide, by Vicki L. Schmall, Ph.D., Marilyn Cleland, R.N., and Marilyn Sturdevant, R.N., M.S.W., L.C.S.W.

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Appendix C

Volcano of Anger Activity

Supplies:

White vinegar

Two soda bottles labeled Caregiver 1 and Caregiver 2

Food coloring - red for Caregiver 1 and blue for Caregiver 2

Baking Soda in small Dixie cups

2 Stemmed glasses

Paper towels for clean up

Tray with sides

Demonstration:

Caregiver 1 - Yelled and cursed his wife for having been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. (Pour red vinegar into Caregiver 1 glass. Stress hormones are building up.)

Caregiver 2 - Used community and chronic illness organizations to learn more about his wife's disease. (Pour small amount of blue vinegar into Caregiver 2 glass.)

Caregiver 1 - Experienced upset stomach along with headaches. He started to drink more alcohol. (Pour more red vinegar in Caregiver 1 glass as stress is increasing.)

Caregiver 2 - Used relaxation techniques like progressive muscle relaxation and power of optimism to calm himself when situations became stressful. (Pour small amount of vinegar in Caregiver 2 glass.)

Caregiver 1 - He started to experience depression. He found it difficult to take care of his wife. (Pour more red vinegar in Caregiver 1 glass as stress continues to increase.)

Caregiver 2 - Sought out a support group and practiced using positive communication techniques. (Pour small amount of vinegar into Caregiver 2 glass.)

Caregiver 1 - Pain and fear were boiling internally and anger erupted. (Pour baking soda in Caregiver 1 glass so the mixture boils over.)

Caregiver 2 - Pain and fear were there, but he was able to gain control by recognizing that his feelings are neither right or wrong, good or bad. They just are, and that's normal. (Pour baking soda in Caregiver 2 glass with the small amount of vinegar. The mixture will bubble up a bit and settle down.)

Developed by Donna Doll-Yogerst, Oconto County UW-Extension, Family Living Agent, 2007.

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Appendix D

Self-Care Questionnaire

Ask yourself the following questions about your caregiving:

YES NO

- Do you ever find yourself trying "to do it all?"
- Do you ever say to yourself "I should be able to ...," "I can never...," or similar statements?
- Do you ever ignore your feelings or find that they are overwhelming?
- Do you ever get frustrated because of something you can't change or someone who won't change?
- Do you resist seeking, asking for, or accepting help?
- Do you feel that your family or others just don't understand what you are going through as a caregiver?

A "yes" answer to any of these questions indicates an area of self-care you might want to work on.

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