

savvy caregiver training program

professional-level training for the non-professional

Savvy Caregiver Program Class overview

The Savvy Caregiver program is a unique approach to family caregiver education. This program has been developed by clinicians and educators who understand that caregiving is in many ways a form of clinical work, and have tailored the training accordingly. The central concept is the notion of strategy; throughout the program caregivers are urged to learn, develop and modify strategies that will be used to accomplish the goal for their particular caregiving situation. Another main tenant of the program is for the caregiver to integrate a contented involvement with the person they are caring for into their daily life. The program presents ideas from many disciplines and sources. Below are the areas of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are taught or developed in the program:

- ✓ *Information and Knowledge.* Because of the complexity of caregiving, the program goes through many details and scenarios that caregivers face in their journey.
 - How to manage a disease that does not improve
 - The course of the disease and progressive impact on the person with the disease.
 - How to tailor the caregiving strategies to the particular stage of the disease (e.g. beginning, mid-stage, late-stage).
 - Understanding the physical, mental and emotional impact of caregiving,

- ✓ *Skills.* Caregiving is a complex job and entails many tasks. It is a basic premise of the Savvy Caregiver program that few family caregivers have received any training for the work they do as caregivers. Since the principal task of the family caregiver is to manage day-to-day life with the person, these are the skills on which the program focuses. In particular, the program is designed to develop the following skills:
 - How to take into account the person's disease-produced losses in the manner in which they interact with the person.
 - How to take the person's disease stage into account in caregiving.
 - How to help the person become and remain involved in daily tasks and activities that allow the person to be contented throughout the day.

The program also provides instruction in:

- Important self-care skills – especially those related to understanding and managing caregivers' own feelings.
- Skills for making decisions as they continue their caregiving journey.
- Skills for navigating family issues that come up while providing care.

✓ *Outlook or Attitude.* The program aims to foster an increased sense of individual mastery in caregiving. There are at least three areas of attitude that the program tries to affect:

- Objectivity: ways to become less emotionally involved – at least when caregiving problems need to be solved – and more clinically detached, and how this benefits everyone involved.
 - We show them how to become more analytic and experimental in caregiving.
 - We show them how to step back from the person and the situation and to examine – objectively and dispassionately – just what they are seeing.
 - We want them to be able to put that observation together with other knowledge gained from the program to be able to create a plan that includes steps and tools to help them better manage the daily care of themselves and their family members.
- Self Confidence. The program fosters growth in self-confidence through the home exercises and in-group coaching that constitutes most of what happens in the latter part of the program. Caregivers will enhance their skills and confidence through various exercises.
- Self-Valuing. Ways to appreciate the work and worth of caregiving
 - Being clear about the caregiving role (motives), stating the objectives (what they hope to accomplish), and pinpointing the payback (rewards and satisfactions).
 - Recognizing the need for self-care – the obligation to themselves and the people for whom they are providing care to preserve themselves.