

## **Powerful Tools for Caregivers**

Eastern District Innovative Grant Report  
**Fiscal Year 2005-06**

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is a six part training program to enable caregivers to better care for themselves by improving their own self-confidence and problem solving skills. Powerful Tools for Caregivers was co-facilitated by Donna Doll-Yogerst, Oconto County Family Living Agent and July Knudsen, Brown County Family Living Agent in April and May, 2006. Twenty-four (24) caregivers participated. What are the affects of this program on Caregivers? Caregivers were overall very pleased with this program. They felt it gave them the tools they need to better relate in their positions as caregivers. It was helpful for them to be able to talk to other caregivers with similar problems and “vent to people who were in their shoes”. One participant said, “Informative, great networking opportunity, let me know that the challenges faced as a caregiver are as individual as we are and yet universal in scope”. Many participants felt the sessions gave them tools for time management and handling emotions. They also stated that the presenters were “always upbeat and very friendly” and “understanding and informative”. What did the Caregivers that participated like best about this program? “Talking to people that have similar problems” “Everything” “Knowing we are not alone” “The group leaders had a lot of leads” “It was for US!” Caregivers’ reactions regarding the confidence they gained from these sessions. Participants feel they are more able to take care of themselves; are able to deal with stress and difficult issues; they have gained more coping skills and will be applying positive suggestions. One person said, “I’m more relaxed. The group leaders and everyone in class gave a lot of advice “. Caregivers’ reactions to how helpful the tools will be in caring for themselves. 80% felt that what they learned from group discussion and using “I-You” messages for communicating will be extremely to very helpful. 84% of participants felt extremely to very strongly that they will benefit from using positive self-talk. 100% of the caregivers filling out evaluation forms felt that making an action plan and doing relaxation exercises will be extremely to very helpful tools. ALL (100%) of the responding participants would consider recommending the Powerful Tools for Caregivers course to someone! The manager of the Adult Foster Care Program, Brown County Human Services, has asked that another series be offered in spring 2007 and another session is being planned for Oconto County in 2007. In Oconto County the Department of Health and Human Services did not feel they had a large enough group of adult foster care providers to warrant a separate program. However, DHSS will help promote the 2007 program with their providers.