



Responding to Emotions that Emerge

By Liv Arafat, Counselor,
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In the process of teaching “Powerful Tools” class leaders may have to call on their skills, training and compassion when they encounter emotional reactions from participants at any time. But it is most likely to happen during the

fifth class, which deals specifically with emotions; it is probably the most challenging of the six sessions and requires both tact and tenderness on behalf of class leaders.

The module on emotions is presented as the second to last of the six sessions. Usually by this time, class participants have bonded and developed a sense of trust with each other and with the class leaders. This allows them to be more comfortable sharing some of the difficult emotions that may come up during class and feel less embarrassed about crying if that should happen. At this point they have also learned some new communication tools that could facilitate a more open expression of painful emotions and may be able to practice these.

Although everyone might have shared feelings in the four earlier sessions, there is no way to know what might happen in the fifth class, but there are some ways to prepare for this class that might be helpful. Make sure the class is informed and prepared for the emotional content of the class, communicate that you are ok with it, and of course have Kleenex available. By now you may have observed some personal patterns that will give you an idea of what to anticipate from various participants. Co-leaders could discuss these and plan some effective strategies for dealing with potential scenarios before the class. Various situations are dealt with in the manual, but these are generalizations and not always adequate to deal with the
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Latest Scoop on \$\$\$ for Powerful Tools

by Mary Brintnall, UW-Extension Specialist in Aging

As many of you know the Alliance Leadership group has been negotiating with Mather LifeWays to find a solution to their new fee structure. If you recall they wanted to charge class leaders an annual certification fee of \$50, Master Trainers an annual certification fee of \$250 and a one-time fee of \$75 for newly trained class leaders. These fees added up to over \$20,000 a year for us and would create additional barriers in expanding Powerful Tools throughout Wisconsin. As a result of our meeting with them and feedback from other states they altered their fees to:

Class leader certification

- There will be NO annual certification fee for class leaders. That includes all existing class leaders and newly trained class leaders.

Master trainer certification

- There will be fees for individuals and/or organizations. An organization will be loosely defined and could be a local AAA, a state organization such as AARP, or a consortium of groups such as the Wisconsin Alliance for Family Caregiving.
- Individual certification will be \$250 for a period of three years. This individual can teach class leader sessions in their state but if they move the certification goes with them.
- Organizational certification will be \$250 per individual and/or per slot for a period of three years. Organizations can determine the number of Master Trainers they will have in a three year period. If an individual is not able to be a Master Trainer for the entire three years another Master Trainer, who has met the requirements to be a Master Trainer, can assume that slot for the rest of the three years. Example—if Sue Smith changes jobs and is unable to continue being a Master Trainer for the rest of the two years of her organizational certification then Beth Jones can take her slot for the remainder of the three years. Beth would have to

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(continued from Responding to Emotions...) situation at hand. I believe it essential that class leaders know each other fairly well and agree on who is best suited to deal with a distraught participant while the other continues the class. Sometimes this depends on which leader the caregiver is most comfortable with, and leaders should be prepared to switch roles if necessary.

When a class participant breaks down crying, it challenges us to balance the needs of the individual with the needs of the group. It might be the first time a caregiver admits to and talks about negative feelings, and the experience can be intense and profound. As a mental health counselor, my first concern is providing the participant enough time to process before moving on, even if it might cause some time constraints later. Staying with the participant in silence or with comforting words conveys an atmosphere of acceptance and safety and illustrates the exact message we are trying to teach: emotions are important and expressing them is healthy. If the class leaders are uncomfortable with tears, or impatiently try to calm the person down, this message is lost. It can be difficult to remain compassionately detached if the issue is similar to one a class leader is also struggling with, and this is why having two class leaders make a lot of sense. Sometimes it is necessary to suggest that an emotional participant take a break, and ask if they prefer to have a class leader accompany them. In this case, the other leader must be prepared to continue the class alone. Or it may be a matter of allowing for a little extra time, offering to talk with the person during break or after class, and then gently and tactfully moving on. This may be a good time to talk about professional counselors and therapists, and to normalize the need to seek help for emotional stress.

Attempting to comfort an emotional caregiver can be challenging enough, but what if other participants get involved to make the person feel better or tell them that they should not feel what they are feeling? As the manual suggests, this can be a teaching moment that can be used to emphasize non-judgement of feelings, but it is important to do this without singling out any one for having done "the wrong thing". People who are uncomfortable with emotions will often start problem solving-

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offering solutions while a person is still crying. In this case, class leaders can ask if the group will take a break while the person recovers, or those who are comfortable staying with the group may do so. In some cases, the person is more comfortable leaving the room, either with a class leader, another participant, or alone, and then joining again after a while. It is important to check up on someone leaving the room under these circumstances and make clear that they are not being "abandoned" or "rejected" because they are too emotional.

Based on the feedback we have received, most caregivers have found the class on emotions to be the most valuable. Although this speaks to the format and content of "Powerful Tools", it also reflects the resourcefulness and sensitivity of our class leaders. As difficult as it may be, it is also the most rewarding class to teach, allowing participants and leaders to share their humanity and work toward deeper connections and meaningful support in our roles as caregivers.

Know Someone Who Wants to Become a Powerful Tools Class Leader?

Know someone who wants to become a Powerful Tools Class leader? Please have them contact Mary Brintnall-Peterson ASAP as classes are being formed NOW so we can complete training before the additional \$75 fee is required!

Going to ASA/NCOA

Mather LifeWays is hosting a meeting/reception at the April ASA/NCOA meeting on Thursday, April 15th from 12:30-2:00 pm to discuss suggested fees and to create a network of individuals involved in PTC. They hope to have representatives from Legacy and Stanford along with Vicki Schmall at the meeting. Let Mary Brintnall-Peterson know if you'll be able to participate so we can have everyone from Wisconsin at this meeting!

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meet the requirements of being a Master Trainer. It will be the responsibility of the organization to notify Mather LifeWays of the change.

Stanford licensing agreement with Mather LifeWays and how it affects us:

- Master Trainers will charge and collect \$75.00 per new class leader at the time of the class leader training—this is a one-time fee. This fee is used two ways, the first is that Stanford gets \$50.00 per person and then Mather LifeWays uses the other \$25.00 to help pay their annual licensing fee of \$5,000. Mather LifeWays is attempting to have this licensing fee reduced but they have not been successful to date.
- The Stanford licensing fee will not affect existing class leaders.
- The Stanford licensing fee will not go into affect until agreements have been signed with organizations or individuals who become Master Trainers. We expect to sign something in later summer or early fall.

Requirements to become Class Leaders and Master Trainers:

A. Class Leaders-Master Trainers certified by Mather LifeWays can teach class leader sessions in THEIR own state. This means that we can continue to provide class leader training throughout Wisconsin. Permission will be needed by Mather LifeWays to teach in a state other than their own. Individuals can also be trained by Mather LifeWays for \$895.00. Individuals trained by Mather LifeWays will be informed of other individuals and organizations involved with Powerful Tools in their state. They will encourage them to become involved in what's happening in their state.

B. Master Trainers-can only be taught by Mather LifeWays. To be qualified to participate in the Master Training sessions the individual needs to have good group facilitation skills and have taught the community six-week sessions as least two times. Currently the fee for the Master Trainer session is \$500.00 for a 1 ½ day training session. This means if one of our class leaders wants to become a Master Trainer they can. This wasn't an option for our class leaders in the past. During our meeting we discussed several other points such as gaining access to the newly designed materials, revisions they plan for the future, etc. We will be sharing these details as more information comes available.

A Caregiver's Story- Sheila Koca

from Sheila as told to Susan Meier, UW-Extension

My personal caregiver experience began like many others – taking care of kids and spouse. Then, ten years ago my son, Brandon, was in a car accident. He was paralyzed from the chest down. Before he went to live on his own, Brandon and I spoke at a Caregiver Support Group, on the contrast between the caregiver and care receiver duties and expectations. One year after Brandon went to live on his own, my dad had a heart attack and I became a long-distance caregiver. Now, I care for my mother in my home. Mother has dementia and has been with us for 3 1/2 years.

I live in rural Green Lake County. I was a Family Living Agent for 17 years and also taught adult education at the Tech College. For relaxation, I try to walk everyday and I practice Yoga, and it is the best relaxation method I know of.

What interested me in Powerful Tools was that I knew first hand of the need for this type of program. It seems that many people move into Waushara County to retire; then, when one spouse dies, the other is alone, far away from family. Realizing that I have made a difference in people's lives is one of the benefits of teaching Powerful Tools for me. I have made many new friends who have helped me in my life as a teacher and a caregiver. Another realization is the difference in people between Class 1 and Class 6. It is a super feeling knowing that Powerful Tools has made such a difference in their lives. Through Powerful Tools, I have given hope, support and tools, and in return, I have received support and care beyond words.

Caregiving at Life's End

by Mary Brintnall-Peterson, UW-Extension
Specialist in Aging

The Alliance is pleased to announce that the trainers of the new curriculum, *Caregiving at Life's End*, are coming to Wisconsin this summer. Chris Rode shared her experience of teaching this curriculum at the Caregiving Institute and recommended it highly!

Caregiving at Life's End was developed by The Hospice of Florida Suncoast through an Administration on Aging grant.

Caregiving at Life's End is a caregiver-driven train the trainer program designed to address end-of-life issues in a manner that helps caregivers find a sense of meaning, purpose, and value in the end-of-life caregiving experience. Participants are provided with the skills and training materials needed to implement an effective community caregiver training programs that focuses on the emotional, spiritual, and social aspects of caregiving at life's end. This program received the 2003 National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization Award of Excellence for Public Education Program for Patients and families and the 2003 Excellence in Research from The Center for Hospice, Palliative Care and End of Life Studies at the University of South Florida.

Melanie Ramey with *The Hope of Wisconsin* is providing leadership to the steering committee, who will meet for the first time on April 24th in Stevens Point. An application was approved through the Rallying Points (Improving Community End of Life Care Through Coalitions) to help underwrite the cost of bringing the trainers to Wisconsin.

Watch your e-mail for more details about the exact training date, cost, and location of this exciting new curriculum.

Future Caregiving Institute Date

The Second Annual Caregiving Institute will be held on August 8, 2005, at the Hotel Mead, Wisconsin Rapids. Yes, that is 2005!!

Individuals who have volunteered to be on the Steering committee include:

Nancy Holtz, Pauly Johnson, Claire Culbertson, Jane Weddig, Barb Lawrence, and Julie Seeman.

If you are interested in serving on or finding out more about serving on the committee, contact Mary Brintnall-Peterson at (608) 262-8083 or mary.brintnall-peterson@ces.uwex.edu

New Class Leaders in 2004

These are new Class Leaders trained in 2004-

Verona

March 2004

Rose Marie Albrecht
Lori Bernard
Sharon Clukas
Richard Dahl
Janice Gary
Kim Holbrook
Danielle Luethje
Claudia Miska
Carol Olson
Mary Jean Overend
Stephanie Payne
Rita Straub

Manitowoc

March 2004

Sally Beyers
Michelle Dax
Nancy Du Four
Susan Haase
June Harmann
Marge Katzenmaier
Andrea Mitchell
Lana Roever
Tracy Stafford

Marketing Idea

Create a single business type card with general information about classes and a contact phone number, but no specific dates. Then, place them in clinics, local libraries and wherever allowed. Contributed by Jan Braby.