

Curriculum Overview

Introduction:

Many families are faced with the care of multiple generations. They may not have models of caring to follow so they are unsure of how to handle the new responsibilities. Family members are busy with work and other responsibilities. When the task of caring for someone is added, they have little time to search for the needed information.

- The U S census reports that 23 million people provide long term care to an aged relative or loved one.
- Family caregivers provide free care valued at \$194 billion annually. (National Family Caregivers Association)
- Many older people needing care are at risk for abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation by family members and others closest to them.
- Caregiving is often done with little understanding of the emotional strain it has on relationships. Caregivers may say they are managing okay, but often feel more stress than do those who are not caring for family members.
- Caregiving may begin slowly with giving a little help and gradually increasing to providing assistance with activities for daily living. Many are not prepared for these difficult tasks.

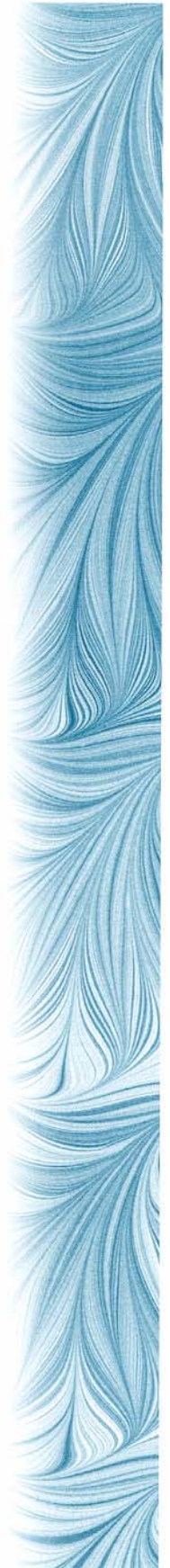
Different Experiences:

Caregivers have different points of view. Some of them will agree with your perception of caregiving. Others may not. Avoid imposing your beliefs on others and encourage caregivers in the group to understand that others may believe differently.

How caregivers perceive their role is influenced by their experience, age, ethnicity and gender. For more information refer to the references on page 3.

Age – Nearly a quarter of those who are age 45 – 55 are caring for older family members. About one-fourth to two-thirds of the caregivers in primary caregiving roles are grandchildren and young adults under age 40.

Ethnicity/culture – Expectations of one’s culture influences the perception of caregiving. To understand what caregivers may be feeling, it is helpful to have an understanding of their culture. *In the Middle* provides some general background information on different ethnic groups.



Gender – A slightly higher number of women provide care. Earlier perceptions about the type of care men provide and the emotional involvement of men with caregiving is changing as men take on more of the responsibility.

Marital status – Single caregivers say it has a negative effect on their social life. Married caregivers note more frequent disagreements with their spouses and children. Both groups also have more frequent disagreements with parents and siblings.

Different audiences:

Adult learners want to know that they will receive practical information that will fill a personal need. They learn best in a comfortable environment when they are adapting to a new situation. Recognizing their many experiences enhances adult learning.

The six units in the *Caregiving Relationships* curriculum can be presented in a series or in single sessions. The units can be taught to groups or individuals.

Support groups

Support groups encourage group interaction. Use the discussion questions to trigger discussions with participants. If your group setting makes using posters difficult, discuss the points verbally or print smaller posters to hold up as you discuss the content.

Educational Programs

Educational programs may be presented to large or small groups. Anticipate that your audience may be both caregivers and those who simply want more information.

Posters are less formal and may be used for smaller groups. Overheads or Power point presentations are more formal and easier for a large group to view.

One-to-one sessions

In conversation, caregivers may confide feelings that are upsetting to them. This is an opportunity to discuss the appropriate brochure on that topic. Do not overload the caregiver with too many brochures or topics at one time. Choose one topic or two at the most. Review the discussion guide and follow the layout of the brochure as you discuss it with the caregiver. The brochure is the only visual that is needed for this type of presentation.

Brochures:

Each of the fifteen brochures covers one specific topic. Several brochures accompany each discussion guide. Because it is often easy to accept the information without making direct application to a personal situation, the lines on the brochure allow the caregiver to set goals. There may be cases where writing is difficult or the caregiver objects to writing it. Ask those caregivers to share what they would write.



Posters:

Posters provide a visual focus for participants to help them stay with the topic. Key words on the posters also serve as a visual cue for discussion leaders.

Several posters accompany each unit. Discussion leaders may choose all of them or just a few, depending on the identified needs of the participants and the time allotted. The teaching tips for each unit have poster icons next to the discussion that corresponds with the poster.



Making the posters:

- Print slide and increase size 150%. Glue on a half of a sheet of poster board OR use a poster printer.
- Use markers to create them on poster board.

The teaching tips for the *Caregiving Relationships for People Who Care for Adults* were written by:

Rachel Schwarzendruber, University of Illinois Extension Educator, Family Life

Amy Griswold, University of Illinois Extension Educator, Family Life

Copy editor:

Cammy Seguin, University of Illinois Extension Educator, Family Life

References:

AARP study *In the Middle*. Online. Available: <http://www.aarp.org/inthemiddle>.

Delman-Jenkins, M., Blankenmeyer, M. & Pinkard, O. (2000). Young adult children and grandchildren in primary caregiver roles to older relatives and their service needs. *Family Relations*, 49, 177-186.

