

Class Leader Training (CLT) Course Description

Day #1: Taking Care of You

This is the foundation for each of the six-community classes. Staff/volunteers learn how to emphasize that the focus is on the family caregiver, not on the family member receiving care, and they are introduced to the self-care tool box. The challenges of caregiving are significant. Staff/volunteers will experience portions of the six-week program as if they were family caregivers. This experiential learning is invaluable for Class Leaders to successfully serve as models for family caregivers when they co-lead the community class series. Beginning in this class, staff/volunteers will begin to make an Action Plan.

Day #2: Identifying and Reducing Personal Stress

Tools for effective modeling and facilitating continue to be shared for impactful implementation. Participants learn how to share the four steps for effective stress management: (1) Identifying early warning signs, (2) Identifying personal sources of stress, (3) Accepting what you cannot change, and (4) Taking action. Tools to reduce stress are discussed. Participants learn how to lead family caregivers to change negative self-talk – which increases stress and erodes confidence – to positive self-talk. Beginning in this class, staff/volunteers learn five relaxation activities that are easy for family caregivers to incorporate into their daily lives.

Staff/volunteers continue to learn teaching methodologies, program implementation, and strategies for effectively conducting the program. Participants learn how to empower family caregivers to communicate their feelings, needs and concerns more effectively. Through brief dramatizations, participants experience the impact of both “I” messages and “You” messages (which tend to sound blaming and put people on the defensive). They practice changing “You” messages to “I” messages and identifying when statements beginning with the word “I” are actually “Hidden You” messages.

Day #3: Communicating in Challenging Situations

The Class Leader Training is an intensive training program. Participants practice two communication tools – assertiveness and Aikido – which are helpful in difficult situations. They learn a four-step process for using the assertive style of communication. With Aikido, participants learn how to align and find “common ground” with a person who is distressed.

The overriding theme of this class is our emotions are messages we need to listen to. It emphasizes that feelings occur for a reason and that feelings are neither good nor bad. The focus is on identifying constructive ways for dealing with difficult feelings – especially anger, guilt, and depression – and resources for professional help. Staff/volunteers will participate in a guided relaxation exercise.

Day #4: Mastering Caregiving Decisions

Prior to the practice teaching, the final module will focus on the internal emotional process caregivers go through when they experience a life change. Tools for dealing with changes and for making tough decisions – including a seven-step decision-making model and the family meeting – are discussed.

Staff/volunteers will also be team paired assigned a practice teaching assignment. They will learn how to ensure program implementation is successful in communities they serve. They will continue to learn how to share the load of responsibilities and model activities using different teaching styles.

Day #5: Preparing for Success – Program Implementation

The CLT will conclude with each paired team completing their assigned practice teaching assignment. The purpose of the practice teaching is to give each participant an opportunity to become familiar with the format of the Class Leader Script as well as teaching techniques used in the PTC classes. This is a safe and supportive environment to practice and learn from each other.



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