



Powerful Tools for Caregivers - Program History

Powerful Tools for Caregivers (PTC), developed by Legacy Caregiver Services, is part of Legacy Health, a Portland, Oregon, non-profit healthcare organization. The PTC program and all materials were developed over 3 years of pilot testing, refinement and evaluative research to assess the program's effectiveness. Initiated through grant funding, the program has been offered for over 10 years. Currently, over 1,400 Class Leaders have been trained in 30 states. Since the program's inception, *Powerful Tools for Caregivers* has reached over 60,000 caregivers.

In 2007, PTC received the National Family Caregiver Award for innovation, responsiveness and effectiveness from the National Alliance for Caregiving and the MetLife Foundation. In 2009, PTC received the Network of Multicultural Aging Excellence Award from the American Society on Aging/AARP.

Research studies find high rates of depression and anxiety among caregivers and increased vulnerability to health problems. Caregivers frequently cite restriction of personal activities and social life as problems. They often feel they have no control over events, and that feeling of powerlessness has a significant negative impact on caregivers' physical and emotional health.

In the six weekly classes, caregivers develop a wealth of self-care tools to: reduce personal stress; change negative self-talk; communicate their needs to family members and healthcare/service providers; communicate more effectively in challenging situations; recognize the messages in their emotions, deal with difficult feelings; and make tough caregiving decisions (re: placement, driving issues, or finances). Class participants also receive a copy of *The Caregiver Helpbook* (2nd ed.), developed specifically for the class.

In the years since the program's conception, a great deal of research, evaluation and revision has been done to ensure its continued value and success. The 6-week PTC class has been shown to have a positive impact on caregiver health for a diverse group of caregivers including rural, ethnic minorities, adult children of aging parents, well-spouses/partners, caregivers at differing stages in their caregiving role, living situations, financial and educational backgrounds. Data from class participant evaluations indicates:

- Significant improvement in behaviors: increased exercise, use of relaxation techniques and health self-care
- Improved emotions, including reduced anger, guilt, and depression
- Increased self-confidence in coping with caregiving demands
- Increased use of community services

PTC is based on the highly successful *Chronic Disease Self-Management Program* developed by Dr. Kate Lorig and her colleagues at Stanford University's Patient Education Research Center. *Powerful Tools for Caregivers* is a national program sustained by extensive collaborations with community-based organizations.

For information about the PTC program, contact Leslie Congleton
Phone: 503/413-7032 (Toll-free 877/701-4999) – Email: lconglet@lhs.org