

# Building Better Caregivers

## WHAT IS IT?

A group-based, participatory class led by two trained peer leaders over six weekly sessions. The program includes topics such as self-care methods to improve caregiver's health, dealing with difficult motions, managing difficult care partner behaviors, planning for the future, finding resources, improving communication skills with family and friends, family meetings, communicating with health professionals and health care system, action-planning, problem-solving, and decision-making.

## WHO IS IT FOR?

Most caregiver programs are specifically designed for those navigating dementia. However, **Building Better Caregivers** is suitable for individuals dealing with dementia-related conditions, stroke, or any other cognitive conditions that involve challenging behaviors. Care recipients do not need to live with the caregiver for the caregiver to benefit from the program, and the caregiver does not need to be the primary caregiver.

## WHAT DOES IT DO?

The program was developed by geriatricians, social workers, registered dietitians, occupational and physical therapists, and other health professionals, all of whom have extensive caregiving experience. The program is effective in reducing caregiver stress, depression, fatigue, and burden, decreasing days lost from work, and improving sleep, healthful behaviors, and self-efficacy. Care partners had fewer visits to medical doctors and emergency departments. These outcomes were consistent across different community organizations during six and 12 month follow ups.



## What participants say:

***"The booklet has some very good information and exercises and resources. It was also helpful to connect with others and discuss various options for dealing with a variety of problems."***

- 92% would recommend this program to a friend or family member
- 100% agreed the class helped them achieve the goals set in their action plan(s)



To make a referral or register for an upcoming workshop, visit [healthylivingforme.org](http://healthylivingforme.org)

## HOW TO DISCUSS WITH PATIENTS

*Encouraging family caregivers to attend caregiver training programs involves addressing their needs, concerns, and motivations. Emphasize the practical benefits of training, such as reduced stress, better management of caregiving tasks, and improved health outcomes for both caregivers and care recipients. Discuss how flexible scheduling options, including evening and weekend sessions, can be made available. Promote the program as a way to connect with other caregivers, share experiences, and build a support network. Highlight the opportunity for peer support and learning from others facing similar challenges. Explain how the skills and knowledge gained can directly benefit the caregiver and care recipients daily routine and overall well-being.*