Community Stress-Busting Program for Family Caregivers of Patients with Dementia
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Objectives

• Describe the purpose, adaptation, and dissemination of the Community Stress-Busting Program for Family Caregivers of Patients with Dementia.

• Discuss the effectiveness of the dissemination of the Community Stress-Busting Program.
Costs of Caregiving

- Family caregivers perform incredibly valuable service
- At tremendous personal costs
  - Emotional
  - Physical
  - Social
  - Financial
Costs of Caregiving

*Burnout*

- Caused by excessive and prolonged stress
- Occurs when you feel overwhelmed and unable to meet demands
2002
Stress-Busting Program for Family Caregivers
Stress-Busting Program for Family Caregivers

- Psychoeducational support group
- 9 weeks
- 1 ½ hours/week
Multicomponent Focus
Stress-Busting Program

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Stress-Busting Program for Family Caregivers

A Path to Wellness
Session 1

Introductions

- Introductions to the program
- Hearing the caregivers’ stories and building support
Session 2

Stress and Relaxation – Part 1

• General concepts of stress
• Negative effects on caregiver’s physical and emotional health
Principle Underlying Stress Management

- You may not be able to change the stressors in your life
- But you can choose how you react or respond to them
Session 3

Stress and Relaxation – Part 2

- Stress related to being a caregiver
- Creating a relaxation environment
Session 4

Grief, Loss, and Depression

- Losses related to Alzheimer’s disease
- Ongoing grief
- Resulting depression
Session 5

**Coping Skills**

- Changing family relationships
- Humor
- Using coping strategies
Session 6

Challenging Behaviors

- Common behavioral problems of patient with dementia and ways to deal with them
For some caregivers just thinking about the positive aspects can “reframe” their role and help it seem more manageable.
Session 8

*Taking Care of Yourself: Healthy Living*

- Caregivers frequently devote themselves totally to their loved one.
- In the process, neglect their own needs.
# Session 8

## Taking Care of Yourself: Healthy Living

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Principle Underlying Stress Management

Key to being an effective caregiver

- *You can’t always choose your destiny in life…..
  but you can choose how you cope with it*
Session 9

Choosing a Path of Wellness

- Putting it all together
- Setting goals
Stress Management Technique

**Relaxation Breathing**

- One of the simplest and most effective ways to stop the stress response is to practice *relaxation* or *abdominal breathing*
Stress Management Technique

Meditation

- A state of
  - Thoughtless awareness
  - Profound, deep peace that occurs when the mind is calm and silent, yet completely alert
Stress Management Technique

**Imagery**

- Use of one’s mind to generate images that have a calming effect on the body
Stress Management Technique

Journaling

- Allows an individual to express self in writing
- Ask caregivers to write about the positive aspects of caregiving
Stress Management Technique

Art

Allows a person to nonverbally express and communicate feelings, emotions, and thoughts
Stress Management Technique

**Massage**

- Works well for relaxation of caregiver
- Hand massage also helps dementia patients who are agitated
Stress Management Technique

**Music**

- Music can help achieve a relaxed state
Stress Management Technique

Aromatherapy

- Use of essential oils for the beneficial effects on the mind, body, and spirit
Outcomes of Stress-Busting Program

“I was at a very low point in my life. The program saved me from going into a deep depression....it saved my life.”
2010
Community Stress-Busting Program for Family Caregivers

- To disseminate program
- Adapt the Stress-Busting Program (SBP) to a “lay leader” model delivered in community settings
- Funded by the Administration on Aging
Community Stress-Busting Program
Collaborative Effort

- University of Texas Health Science Center - San Antonio
- WellMed Charitable Foundation
- Alzheimer’s Association
- Area Agencies on Aging in the Coastal Bend and Capital Area
- South Texas Veterans Health Care System
- Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS)
Program Sites for CSBP

Hill Country
Austin
San Antonio
Corpus Christi
Lower Rio Grande Valley (McAllen, Harlingen, Brownsville)
Community Stress-Busting Program

Master Trainers

- Training (2 ½ days)
- Responsibilities
  - Recruit caregiver participants
  - Lead groups
  - Train “lay leader” group facilitators
  - Help to manage the project
Community Stress-Busting Program

Group (Lay) Leaders

• Training (2 days)

• Responsibilities
  • Lead groups
  • Assist in recruiting caregiver participants
Community Stress-Busting

Program Results

• Master trainers - 27 active
• Group (lay) leaders – 32 trained
Community Stress-Busting

Program Results

• Groups ongoing or completed – 52

• Caregiver participants – 206
Community Stress-Busting Program Results

Gender
Females 164
Males 42

Ethnicity
Hispanic 75
Not Hispanic 121
Choose not to answer 10
Community Stress-Busting
Program Results

Relationship to Patient
Spouse 104
Adult child 88
Others 14
Community Stress-Busting

Program Results
Stress
All Caregivers

[Bar chart showing stress levels at baseline and end of intervention, with a significance marker (*)]
Depression
All Caregivers

![Bar Graph]

- **Baseline**
- **End of Intervention**

*Statistically significant difference.*
Caregiver Burden - Subjective
All Caregivers

Baseline
End of Intervention
Depression

Spouse vs Child Caregiver

Baseline vs End Intervention

- Children
- Spouse
### Summary of Results

**Decreases in**
- Stress
- Depression
- Caregiver burden

**Improvements in**
- Quality of life
- Sense of control
Significance of Community Stress-Busting Program

- Provides a program for community-based organizations to expand outreach to family caregivers
- Recently certified as the highest level for evidence-based programs
SBP – the Life Preserver

“I was so overwhelmed and unable to cope that I truly felt I were swimming against a strong current with no hope of reaching my destination.

With SBP I felt I had been tossed a life preserver and could see a glimmer of hope on the horizon.

The current where I swim still gets rough sometimes, but I now have tools to handle it and join the flow instead of fight it.”
Contact Information

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When the health and well-being of caregivers are threatened,

the patient is in jeopardy.