

Powerful Tools for Caregivers Program **Benefits North Dakota Family Caregivers**

The Situation

The vast majority of older North Dakotans want to continue living in their home as they age. In 2013, North Dakota had 62,100 family caregivers who provided 58 million hours of unpaid care to older adults. This care was valued at \$860 million. These family caregivers provide a range of daily activities, such as transportation, personal care, finances management and grocery shopping. Caregiving can be a rewarding experience, but it also can be filled with enormous physical, emotional and financial challenges. For caregivers, maintaining their own health and well-being while managing caregiving responsibilities is essential. Yet most caregivers receive little or no training to care for themselves.

Extension Response

Powerful Tools for Caregivers (PTC) is a national evidence-based program that the NDSU Extension Service brought to North Dakota. Extension agents, along with their local community leaders, have been trained as class leaders to offer six-week workshops to family caregivers caring for adults with chronic illness.

Impacts

Participants completing the PTC workshop reported significant improvements in the following areas:

- 53 percent increase in their confidence in asking for help with caregiving tasks
- 43 percent increase in understanding that their emotions are a normal response to caregiving
- 44 percent increase in asserting themselves with others to get their needs met
- 54 increase in taking time for themselves without feeling guilty
- 54 percent increase in finding positive ways to cope with the stress of caregiving
- 45 percent increase in their ability to find caregiving resources in their area

Survey results indicated participants' intent to use newly learned "tools" in the future:

- 77 percent plan to use action plans
- 80 percent plan to use positive self-talk

- 80 percent plan to use relaxation tools
- 69 percent plan to use "I" messages
- 57 percent plan to use a family meeting
- 63 percent plan to use long-range goal planning

Participant Feedback

- "My 'toolbox' is now full of new ways to care for me and my loved one."
- "I have learned so many things to try to make things better for both of us."

Public Value Statement

Improving the health and well-being of family caregivers can save North Dakotans money by helping caregivers keep their loved ones at home longer and delaying more costly levels of care.

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Participants in the June 2016 class leader training in Fargo, N.D.

Non-Extension Collaborators

North Dakota of Human Services –
Division of Aging Services
Community class leaders