



CREATING CONFIDENT CAREGIVERS®

Study Finds Creating Confident Caregivers Program Works

The Michigan Aging & Adult Services Agency (AASA), under the Creating Confident Caregivers® (CCC) projects (90AE0322 and 90AE0341), gathered data from caregivers of persons with dementia who participated in the six week program between 2009 and 2013. AASA and partner area agencies on aging provided the evidence-based Savvy Caregiver Program (SCP). SCP, delivered with fidelity, should find positive outcomes for caregivers. Based on pre- and post-program surveys, using tested caregiver assessment tool, the CCC project found significant improvement of caregiver well-being, self-care, attitude, and skills. These findings replicate, and in some cases, exceed the original SCP random control trial results.

Findings: The data analysis was done on paired surveys of 796 caregivers, a robust sample size. Overall, participants reported statistically significant:

- **Increase in well-being**
- **Significant decrease in symptoms of depression**
- **Increased self-care**
- **Significantly more confident in their abilities to manage the situation**

These results align with the core objectives of the program, to provide caregivers of persons with dementia with knowledge, skills, and perspective. The findings attest to the program's effectiveness and Michigan's fidelity.

Summary: Dementia caregiving is especially stressful for family caregivers due to the person's cognitive losses. Cognitive changes during the six-month post-program are likely, due to the progressive aspect of dementia. These results support Michigan's ability to consistently provide a tested, time-limited group intervention to caregivers and produce positive outcomes for their well-being six and more months post-intervention.

Caregivers adapted their expectations of their family member, based on their understanding of dementia (knowledge). They learned to adapt tasks, situations, and communication to the person's abilities (skills). They also learned to re-connect with their family member (contented involvement), while caring for their own health, (self-care) to make caregiving less stressful (attitude).

Measurement instruments: The surveys included items on depressive symptomology (Center for Epidemiologic Studies-Depression, CES-D, Radloff, 1997), items to measure stress and effectiveness (Pearlin, et al., 1990), and the Revised Scale for Caregiving Self-Efficacy (Steffen, et al, 1999), to measure perceived self-efficacy for caregiving tasks, e.g., obtaining respite, responding to disruptive behaviors, and controlling upsetting thoughts. Analysis is available upon request.

Data collection: Program practitioners collected participants' pre-surveys at the program's first session. Six months after the program, AASA mailed the post-survey directly to participants with a business reply envelope. The program has excellent participation, serving caregivers in all Michigan counties, across all income levels and ages.

“Caregivers learn to manage the situation, not the person, so that they can both feel calm, safe, and secure.”

Do you have an implementation tip to share or a topic suggestion? Send your comments to Sally Steiner at steiners@michigan.gov

CCC practitioners: Empowering caregivers with knowledge, skills, and perspective!