

A Free Course for Family Caregivers:

# Powerful Tools for Caregivers

A self-care program for family caregivers who are currently involved with providing care to an older person.

**In six weekly classes, caregivers develop a wealth of self-care tools to:**

- Reduce personal stress
- Communicate needs to family members and healthcare or service providers
- Communicate more effectively in challenging situations
- Deal with difficult emotions
- Make tough caregiving decisions

**Tuesdays** Feb. 26 – Apr. 2 **2:30 – 4 p.m.**

**Kaiser Manhattan Beach Medical Offices:** 400 S Sepulveda Blvd #100, Manhattan Beach, CA



This class is made possible by OPICA – Support for Older Adults with Memory Loss and Their Families.



**Registration Required:** Call BCHD  
Community Services at (310) 374-3426, X256.



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# Class Descriptions: Powerful Tools for Caregivers

## **Class #1: Taking Care of You**

This class sets the stage for the entire course. It emphasizes that the focus is on “YOU, the caregiver, not on the family member receiving care,” and that caregivers will develop a “box of self-care tools.” The challenges of caregiving and significance of caregiver self-care are dramatized through a video. Beginning in this class, caregivers make a weekly action plan for self-care.

## **Class #2: Identifying and Reducing Personal Stress**

Four steps are presented for effective stress management: (1) Identifying early warning signs, (2) Identifying personal sources of stress, (3) Changing what you can change and accepting what you cannot change, and (4) Taking action. Tools to reduce stress are discussed. Participants learn how to change negative self-talk – which increases stress and erodes confidence – to positive self-talk. Beginning in this class, caregivers learn five relaxation activities that are easy to incorporate into their daily lives.

## **Class #3: Communicating Feelings, Needs, and Concerns**

Participants learn how to communicate their feelings, needs and concerns more effectively by using “I” messages. Through brief dramatizations, participants experience the impact of both “I” messages and “You” messages (which tend to sound blaming and put people on the defensive). They practice changing “You” messages to “I” messages, and identifying when statements beginning with the word “I” are actually “Hidden You” messages.

## **Class #4: Communicating in Challenging Situations**

Participants practice two communication tools – assertiveness and Aikido – which are helpful in difficult situations. They learn a four-step process, called DESC (Describe, Express, Specify, and Consequence) for using the assertive style of communication. With Aikido, participants learn how to align and find “common ground” with a person who is distressed. A segment highlights guidelines for communicating with a person who is memory impaired.

## **Class #5: Learning From Our Emotions**

The overriding theme of this class is “our emotions are messages we need to listen to.” It emphasizes that feelings occur for a reason and that feelings are neither good nor bad. Focus is on identifying constructive ways for dealing with difficult feelings – especially anger, guilt, and depression – and resources for professional help.

## **Class #6: Mastering Caregiving Decisions**

Focus is on the internal emotional process caregivers go through when they experience a life change. Tools for dealing with changes and for making tough decisions – including a decision-making model and the family meeting – are discussed.

