

An Evidence-Based Intervention for Alzheimer's and Dementia Care

Savvy Caregiver is intended to train families and others for the unfamiliar role they face as caregiver for a relative or friend with Alzheimer's disease or another dementia. *Savvy Caregiver* is a 12-hour training program that is usually delivered in 2-hour sessions over a 6-week period. Available materials for the program include a detailed trainer's manual, a caregiver manual, a training videotape, and a CD-ROM. The program focuses on helping caregivers think about their situation objectively and providing them with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to manage stress and carry out the caregiving role effectively.

An evaluation of *Savvy Caregiver* found statistically significant positive outcomes for caregivers who participated in the program vs. those in the control group with respect to the caregivers' beliefs about caregiving, their reactions to the behavioral symptoms of their care recipient, and their feelings of stress and burden (Ostwald et al., 1999; Hepburn et al., 2001). This evaluation was conducted in an academic setting where the program was delivered by its developers.

Savvy Caregiver training has also been transformed into a self-contained version that can be delivered in many settings without direct involvement of the developers. This version was field tested with 140 family caregivers in rural Minnesota, Denver, and Anchorage, Alaska, with positive responses from the caregivers and the professionals who offered the training (health educators, nurses, social workers, recreation therapists, and geriatricians) (Hepburn et al., 2003).

For more information about the *Savvy Caregiver* program, contact Kenneth Hepburn, PhD, Emory University, Office Phone: (404) 712-9286, Email: khepbur@emory.edu

References:

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