

EDUCATING CAREGIVERS ABOUT CAREGIVING: AN EVALUATION OF THE COUNCIL ON AGING LEARNING ADVANTAGES PROGRAM FOR INFORMAL CAREGIVERS



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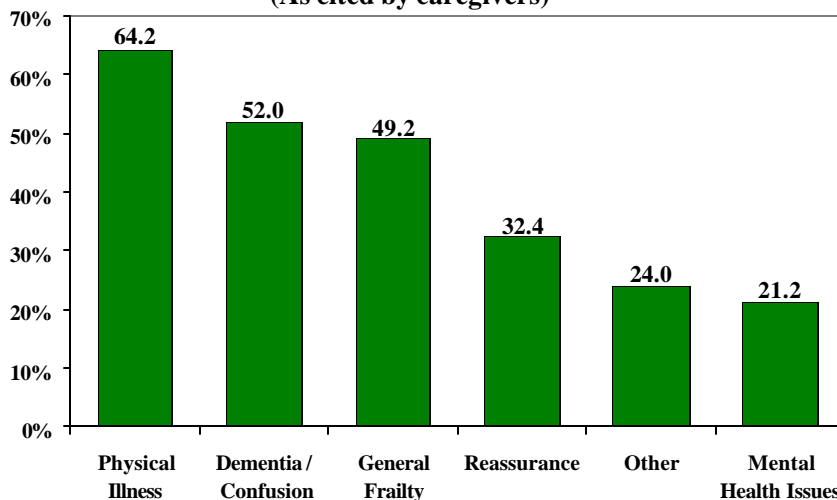
Purpose:

This research evaluates a collaborative project between Council on Aging of Southwest Ohio (COA) and the Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc., which expanded upon COA’s Learning Advantages (COALA) program. The goals of the COALA project, which provides in-home training for informal caregivers, are to reduce caregiver stress, burden, and injuries, and to increase caregiver knowledge of appropriate care strategies, thereby allowing caregivers to continue their role and to improve the quality of the care they provide.

Profile of COALA’s Informal Caregivers:

- In this study, the average age of caregivers was 59.5; the average care receiver was 79.5.
- 80.8% of the caregivers were female; 58.7% of care receivers were female.
- 38.5% provided care to their mother, 33.6% to their spouse, and 10.6% to their father.
- Most caregivers had limited educational backgrounds– 58.3% had a high school education or less.
- 26.9% were formally employed at least part-time.
- Most caregivers were married (59.8%) and lived with their spouses (58.7%).
- More than three-quarters (81.6%) shared their homes with a parent or other care recipient while 26.3% had children living in their homes.

Reasons Recipients Needed Care
(As cited by caregivers)



(Multiple reasons were given for providing care, so the responses sum to more than 100%)



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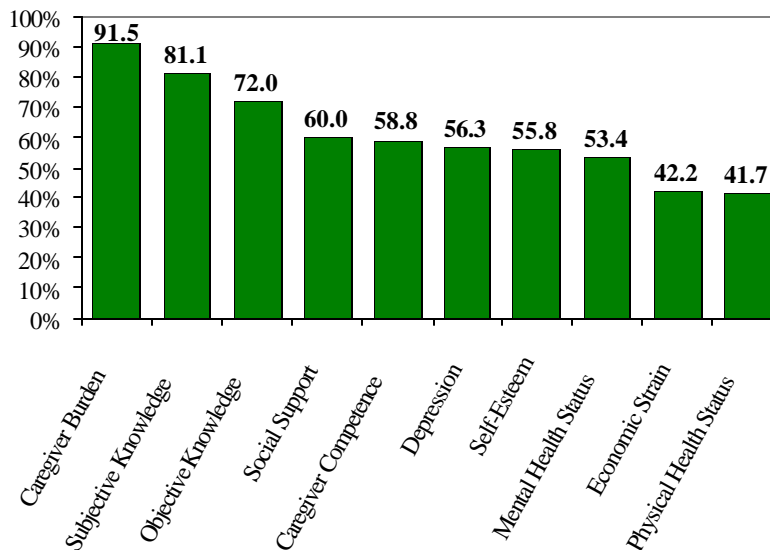
Findings:

The researchers performed caregiver assessments prior to the training intervention (Time 1), directly after the training (Time 2), and then again 3 months after the training (Time 3). Statistically significant changes occurred between Time 1 and Time 3. Specifically, self-esteem, competence, and knowledge of caregiving issues increased, burden and the hours of weekly care provided decreased, and economic strain increased slightly after the intervention.

Social support, injuries, mental health status, and depression showed no statistically significant changes with the training.

Over half of the caregivers improved on every measure except economic strain and physical health status. An overwhelming majority (91.5%) of caregivers improved on the caregiver burden score.

Proportion of Caregivers Who Maintained or Improved From
Time 1 to Time 3 on 10 Outcome Measures



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For information about purchasing the COALA program materials and training manual, contact Cindy Fischer at (513) 345 3304 or email @ cfischer@help4seniors.org.

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