



Education Preferences of Caregivers of Newly Diagnosed People Living with Dementia



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Background

- Although family caregivers consistently report a need for education and guidance early in the dementia journey, caregiver education is rarely delivered at the time of diagnosis.¹
- Most dementia caregiver interventions are introduced later in the disease course, potentially leaving caregivers unprepared to manage early-stage challenges, uncertainty, and emotional distress.^{1,2}
- In response to the need for earlier caregiver support, we developed and piloted the *Caregiver Bootcamp* Program.
- The purpose of this presentation is to report evaluation outcomes from caregivers in the first three cohorts of the *Caregiver Bootcamp* Program.

Caregiver Bootcamp Program

- **Objective:** To build caregiving competence and confidence (mastery) among primary caregivers of persons living with dementia during the first year following diagnosis.
- **Design:** User-centered design.
- **Prototype Testing:** 22 seasoned/former caregivers participated in five live or recorded 120-minute sessions over 6 weeks and completed five program evaluations to guide program refinement.
- **Final Program Structure:** Co-facilitated, 6-week synchronous online psychoeducational program with~ weekly 90-minute interactive sessions; between-session application exercises; and a course workbook.
- **Session Topics:** (1) *Processing the Diagnosis and its Implications*; (2) *Understanding Dementia Conditions*; (3) *Taking the First Legal and Financial Logistical Steps* (4) *Building a Support Network* & (5) *Comprehensive Review of Material*

Caregiver Participants

- 22 caregivers participated in the first three cohorts and provided feedback after program completion.
- Participants were predominantly white (50%), female (86%), and caring for a spouse (59%).
- Nineteen caregivers attended all 5 sessions of the program, and two attended 4 of 5 sessions.

Figure 1. Program Roadmap



Pilot Evaluation Outcomes

- Caregivers found education at diagnosis helpful and beneficial.
- Nearly all participants rated the program as “Very Good” or “Excellent.”
- Caregivers reported improved understanding of the support their person will need.
- Peer interaction was highly valued, helping normalize challenges and reduce isolation.

References

1. Pleasant, M., Molinari, V., Dobbs, D., Meng, H., & Hyer, K. (2020). Effectiveness of online dementia caregivers training programs: A systematic review. *Geriatric Nursing*, 41(6), 921-935.
2. Alzheimer's Association. (2025). *2025 Alzheimer's disease facts and figures*. <https://www.alz.org/alzheimers-dementia/facts-figures>

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