

CARE Coaching Online: Communicate, Advocate, Relate, and Encourage

CARE Coaching Online Syllabus

According to the American Society on Aging:

- One out of every four households - 22 million in the U.S. – has a family caregiver providing some form of care or service to a relative or friend over the age of 50 years
- 40% of these family caregivers are also raising children
- Nearly two-thirds of these family caregivers are working either full- or part-time

Working caregivers provide many types of help to older parents, relatives, or friends including shopping for groceries, running errands, paying bills, or even physical care in some cases. The most common type of caregiving relationship is an adult child caring for an older parent. For many of us, it may be difficult to think about your aging parents:

- Facing health care issues;
- Maneuvering the health care system;
- Needing long-term care; or
- Communicating about end-of-life care.



Unfortunately, many caregivers wait until a catastrophic event occurs – a serious illness or severe fall – before initiating discussions of what it is their aging parents may want related to their future lives. To complicate matters, many aging parents may not be thinking about their future potential need for care and services and thus be resistant to these discussions with their children.

Learning Objectives

CARE Coaching Online was developed by Mather LifeWays Institute on Aging with the support of the American Business Collaboration for Quality Dependent Care (ABC). The focus of this course is to provide working caregivers – both current and future – with essential tools, knowledge, and behaviors to effectively deal with a variety of issues arising from caring for older relatives or friends through application of effective coaching skills. This 7-module online educational course that will help you:

- Identify and understand needs and preferences of older adults;
- Manage health information and record keeping;
- Understand aspects of the health care system and utilization by older adults;
- Better prepare for potential relocation of older adults and transfers within the health care system;
- Promote the safety of older relatives and friends in caring for themselves; and,

- Support personal choice and preferences of older relatives and friends in health and care decision making.

A fundamental learning approach that is used throughout this course is that of “coaching.” CARE Coaching is a model developed specifically for working caregivers that combines the best of what we know about coaching methods. CARE Coaching improves working caregivers’ abilities to:

- **Communicate**
- **Advocate**
- **Relate**
- **Encourage**

Various activities provided in this online course may be valuable in different ways for different people. They are for guidance only, and you should take the advice of suitably qualified health professionals if you have any concerns about illnesses or health of yourself or of those for whom you provide care.

Optional Textbook

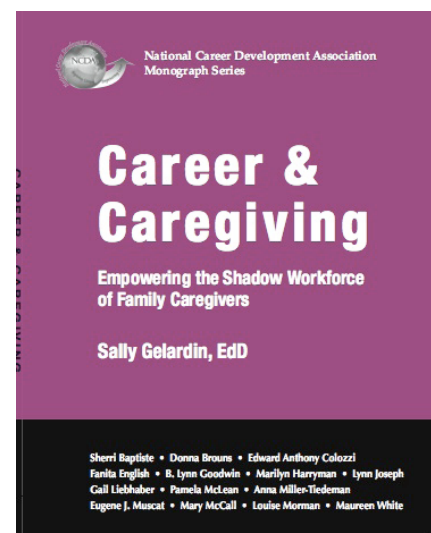
Career & Caregiving: Empowering the Shadow Workforce of Family Caregivers (2009). Sally Gelardin, EdD. National Career Development Association Monograph Series. Broken Arrow: Oklahoma.

Cost: \$29 for a digital copy. Please contact Jon Woodall to order (jwoodall@matherlifeways.com)

Overview of the Textbook

The chapters in this monograph detail how career professionals have handled caregiving responsibilities. The contributors describe how they have balanced the needs of family members with their own needs and with their work responsibilities. They discuss the emotions they experienced, the challenges they have faced, and the support they have learned to access.

In the organization of this monograph, caregiving is broken down into chronological stages. Each stage has its own set of characteristics. For example, “Preparing for Caregiving” most likely would not require the emotional and physical demands of being “In the Midst of Caregiving.” Therefore, it would make sense to research accessible housing before becoming immersed in a caregiving situation. “Moving in and out of Caregiving” and “Caregiving – A Continual Life Process” reflect the pervasiveness of the caregiving role throughout one’s life and career.



The last unit, “Where Do We Go from Here?” offers a compassionate career and caregiving process for career counselors to support eldercare clients. Each stage is introduced, followed by the stories and strategies of dedicated working professionals who have experienced, first-hand, the challenges of caregiving while earning a living.

Like other life and career roles, caregiving is an opportunity for learning, for enhancing the care of loved ones, for self-care, and for deepening family relationships. The stories that follow are all about people who had some resources—financial, educational, emotional—that may not be available to everyone. For example, the choice to work less, work at home, etc., may not be a viable option for people who work in manufacturing or retail, or who cannot afford to work fewer hours.

You are invited to journey through these pages to pick up whatever life lessons you would like to carry and to leave behind baggage that you no longer find useful for your career, caregiving, and care-receiving journey. Donna Brouns, our youngest contributor, who helped her mother cope with a life-threatening illness, says, “caregiving may be one of the most important jobs anyone can do” (Chapter 8). Louise Morman says, “Although it may not seem evident in the midst of the experience, caring for a frail older parent has the potential to provide a learning experience superior to any other” (Chapter 7).