



# CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY TOPICS

No. 9 September 2003 Human and Community Development UC Davis, CA 95616

California Community Topics, an occasional publication series of the California Communities Program (CCP), provides useful information to citizens and local leaders about important issues of community governance, leadership, and economic development. The CCP is a statewide unit of the University of California's Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, with applied research and outreach responsibilities. It is housed by the Department of Human and Community Development, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, at UC Davis. David Campbell is director of the CCP. He may be reached at (530) 754-4328; FAX 752-5855; E-Mail dave.c.campbell@ucdavis.edu.



## Caregiver Training Program

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California's population is growing older. The California Department of Aging reports that the elderly population in the state is expected to grow more than twice as fast as the total population. As the state's population ages, the demand for in-home caregivers has increased dramatically. The caregiver workforce provides in-home supportive services to seniors and other individuals who are incapacitated to some degree.

County social service departments oversee the delivery of In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS), a public program that matches eligible recipients with county-funded caregivers. IHSS is mandated to provide education to caregivers in their registry, but in many cases lacks adequate staff to handle the demand for training. An innovative partnership between IHSS and the Cooperative Extension office in Sacramento County has made caregiver training more readily available.

The IHSS contacted UCCE Sacramento County because they learned that UCCE had training programs already in place. An initial meeting determined IHSS's training needs, and concluded that UCCE had the staff and expertise to provide the necessary caregiver training. An agreement stipulated that IHSS would be responsible for promoting the program and UCCE would provide the training and the participant evaluation from each session. UCCE and IHSS signed an agreement to provide 150 hours of training at \$100/hour. The training was open to Sacramento and Yolo County IHSS caregivers.

Aided by a graduate student intern from the California Communities Program at UC Davis, the Sacramento County UCCE office designed, delivered, and evaluated a caregiver training program for adults focusing on the care of the elderly. The training was conducted from September 2002 through May 2003, and consisted of skill improvement in the areas of activities of daily living, nutrition, and resource management. The participants received a UCCE Sacramento County certificate upon completion of six hours of instruction in

Activities of Daily Living, six hours of instruction in Nutrition, and four hours of instruction in Resource Management. One hundred twenty-four (124) certificates were awarded in Nutrition (62), Activity of Daily Living (41) and Resource Management (21). Pleased with the results, the partners will continue the training during the 2003-2004 year. A summary of the curriculum follows.

### ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING

#### Wound Care

This session focused on the importance of good skin care and promotion of wound healing. Participants learned how to:

- assess the skin for decrease in circulation,
- practice the importance of daily skin care, and
- demonstrate proper technique in wound care.

#### Bowel and Bladder Care

This session is designed to assist the caregiver in maintaining healthy bowel and bladder function. The session also taught participants special needs for bowel and bladder care. Participants learned how to:

- identify activities that promote healthy bowel function,
- determine foods that promote bowel and bladder function,
- assist residents with elimination, and
- utilize procedures to promote hygiene.

#### Diabetes

This session provided caregivers with an overview of diabetes. The caregiver were also given an opportunity to discuss their concerns when providing care to residents with diabetes. Participants learned:

- what diabetes is,
- the symptoms of diabetes,
- how to identify people at risk, and
- how to create a healthy meal plan for diabetics.

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## **Infection Control**

This session taught caregivers the importance of preventing infections.

Participants learned how to:

- describe the four types of infectious microorganisms,
- how microorganisms invade the body, and
- recognize the signs and symptoms of septic shock.

## **Dementia/Memory Loss**

This session focused on the signs and symptoms of dementia and memory loss. Participants learned:

- what dementia is,
- how to identify safety factors associated with care of residents with memory loss,
- how to prevent injury, and
- tips to help residents with memory loss.

## **Preventing Falls**

This session provided caregivers with methods to prevent falls in the home. Participants learned how to:

- assess the home on potential areas for injury,
- assist residents to sit upright and prevent falls from bed or chair, and
- properly use soft protective devices.

## **RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND SELF-NEGLECT**

This session focused on the need for the caregiver to be alert to changes in emotional and physical status of residents. Participants learned:

- the importance of positive attitude,
- behaviors that reflect self-neglect, and
- how to identify community resources to address self-neglect.

## **Finding and Keeping a Job**

This session introduced the caregivers to techniques for finding and keeping a job. Participants learned how to:

- complete self-assessment skills,
- prioritize skills and identify strengths, and
- match their skills to job classifications.

## **Community Assets**

This session introduced participants to the method of community development. Participants learned:

- the concepts of community development,
- about the assets in their communities, and
- how to develop a plan to enhance quality of life and economic capacity in their community.

## **NUTRITION SERIES - FOOD GUIDE PYRAMID**

This session focused on the healing benefits from following the USDA Food Guide Pyramid. Participants learned:

- how the Food Guide Pyramid can be used to provide variety, proportionality, and moderation in daily meals,
- how to identify the ranges in the number of servings from each food group,
- the reasons for the ranges and how to apply the ranges based on the age and health status of different family members, and
- the major nutrients contained in each food group.

## **Meal Planning and Shopping on a Fixed Income**

This session focused on how careful planning can help families and individuals on a fixed income meet their nutrient needs and save money and time. Participants learned:

- to become aware of their knowledge and practices in meal planning and food shopping,
- how to develop additional skills needed for effective meal planning and food shopping,
- how to use these skills to provide low-cost, healthy meals for their families, and
- how the Nutrition Facts food label and Food Guide Pyramid can be used to plan more healthful meals.

## **Food Safety**

This session taught participants about the importance of food safety, the skills necessary to maintain food safety, and how to apply these skills at home and away from home. Participants learned how to:

- identify common symptoms of food-borne illness,
- identify the population groups at the highest risk of food-borne illness,
- identify the “danger zone,” the conditions under which foods spoil the fastest,
- how to safely thaw meat, poultry, and seafood, and
- how to practice the steps necessary for handling leftovers to keep food safe to eat.