***Powerful Tools for Caregivers*** surprises most participants. A six week, 2.5 hour a week, series of classes is a time commitment most family caregivers cannot add to their already jammed schedules. It is a hardship for everyone to attend. The surprise is how important those hours can be for the family caregiver and then, ultimately, the care-receiver. The underlying premise is that too many family caregivers experience burnout and harm their own health because of the demands of care giving. The tools that are tested and tried over the six weeks in the course can be life saving for both the caregiver and care receiver. We also learn together that we are not alone in caregiving and you cannot just survive caregiving but thrive.

The idea behind ***Powerful Tools for Caregivers*** is to create a supportive environment in which caregivers are taught how to care for themselves. There are moments that it feels like a support group, but there is also a piece of discipline in that the program holds participants accountable for learning how to be better in their own self-care. Caring for yourself, allows you to provide better care for your loved. It is done through the Action Plan but also through the lessons that cover topics like self care principles, community resources, stress management, communication, family meetings and dealing with anger, guilt and depression. The course concluded with looking at accomplishments and future planning.

Feedback from the past five series of classes has been very positive. Caregivers share that they are better able to cope with the demands whether it is caring for a parent, a spouse or a child. Many have left the program saying that understanding cognitive impairments and memory issues in their loved one has helped them immensely. Here are some of the things we’ve heard:

*“Makes me step back to figure out what I am feeling and why I am feeling that way. It is not about finding blame but figuring out how to deal with the situation.”*

*“I found more patience, more information and I felt less alone.”*

*“From the readings and discussions I felt good about how I’ve been a caregiver thus far.”*

*“It was great to meet people who were struggling with some of the things I have been dealing with every day.”*

The complimentary book and supplementary materials enhance the program. During the sessions, participants share and relate their experiences through the content. The book is able to broaden the discussion. The Caregiver’s Handbook becomes a tool participants can take with them as the series ends but the challenges continue.

Join us for the next series of Practical Tools for Caregivers. Registration is required.

To register contact Mary Holmes 508-560-6012 or [PowerfulToolsMV2016@gmail.com](mailto:PowerfulToolsMV2016@gmail.com).