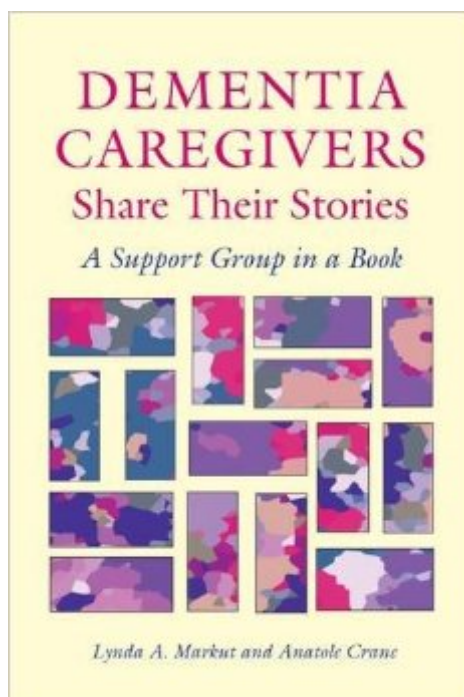


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Dementia Caregivers Share Their Stories: A Support Group In A Book



Synopsis

Replete with the powerful words of experienced caregivers, *Dementia Caregivers Share Their Stories* is an essential guidebook for anyone who must attend to the needs of a loved one suffering from Alzheimer's disease or another form of dementia. In these pages, members of caregivers' support groups - representing twenty-six families and a variety of professions and income levels - speak candidly about the challenges they have faced at every step in the caregiving process, from recognizing early symptoms of dementia to dealing with its advanced stages. Highlighting the ingenuity and resourcefulness of caregivers, the book brims with inspirational stories, practical advice, and creative approaches to problem-solving. Among the issues addressed are: Becoming a caregiver, whether for a spouse or parent; Dealing with the personality changes caused by dementia, from anxiety and paranoia to hallucinations and impulsive behavior; Keeping dementia sufferers meaningfully involved in life; Handling the emotions and stresses of caregiving; Seeking help through support groups and other sources, including medical professionals, clergy, and other family members. The authors, who have both been caregivers themselves, augment their interviewees' stories with connective commentary and their own personal stories. A useful resource section is included to refer readers to associations and help-lines.

Book Information

Paperback: 272 pages

Publisher: Vanderbilt University Press; 1 edition (June 10, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0826514804

ISBN-13: 978-0826514806

Product Dimensions: 6.9 x 0.7 x 8.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (18 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #739,214 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #84 in [Books > Textbooks > Medicine & Health Sciences > Allied Health Services > Caregiving](#) #343 in [Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Diseases & Physical Ailments > Alzheimer's Disease](#) #353 in [Books > Parenting & Relationships > Aging Parents](#)

Customer Reviews

This is a fantastic book. It is a collection of anecdotes by caregivers, sometimes spouses, sometimes children, of people suffering from dementia (of various causes: Alzheimer's, Lewy Body,

Vascular Dementia, MID, Pick's), and was put together by two caregivers themselves. It's organised chronologically by the various stages of dementia, from early memory loss and confusion, through behavioural changes, physical and emotional support systems, in-home and nursing home care, to death and grieving. Between each of the anecdotes, which are plainly and heartbreakingly told, the editors summarise, analyse, and support. Their motto is repeated throughout - get help early and often. For example, male caregivers are less likely to seek help unless it's somehow tied to education and information gathering. They also find it harder to express themselves or break down, and both are essential components of getting through the tragedy of watching someone you love "die" while still living. Other oft repeated advice: have patience, get enough rest and exercise, keep living your own life, and most importantly, give yourself a break. One of the caregivers said she'd remind herself every time she'd drive to the nursing home to see her husband, that today was going to be the best day she would have with him. Of course, this is because dementia only gets worse, it's a diminishing disease, and the only end is worsening symptoms, and death. And for someone to understand that and take heart in the present is unbelievably strong and inspiring. By the end of the book, it was like having followed a dozen or more families through ever smaller successes and myriad failures, and the strength and empathy that grows from surviving ordeal.

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