

Alzheimer's Association to host statewide caregiver symposium in April

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Staff report



RALEIGH — A free four-part virtual educational series for Alzheimer's disease patients and their caregivers will be offered in April.

The Alzheimer's Association, Eastern North Carolina Chapter and the Alzheimer's Association, Western Carolina Chapter will be the hosts of the Confident Caregiver Symposium.

More than 11 million family and friends, including 358,000 in North Carolina, provide unpaid care to people with Alzheimer's or other dementias in the United States, according to the Alzheimer's Association.

Part one of the series is titled "Understanding the Progression of Alzheimer's and Dementia" and will take place 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. April 12. This program will cover the progression of Alzheimer's and other dementias particularly as the disease evolves in the middle stage. The presentation will explain what is occurring in the brain so that caregivers better understand what is driving changes in their loved one. Information about treatments on the horizon and clinical trials will also be shared. Dr. Claire Sexton, director of Scientific Programs & Outreach at the Alzheimer's Association, will be presenting.

Part two, "Caregiving in the Middle Stage of Alzheimer's and Dementia: From Care Partner to Caregiver," will take place 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. April 14. This program will cover how to balance safety with autonomy for the individual living with Alzheimer's and tips for changes in daily activities and medication management. Bobbi Matchar, director of the Duke Dementia Family Support Program, will be presenting.

Part three, "Caregivers Talk, A Panel: Experiences and Insights of Caregiving," is scheduled for 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. April 14. This program will include panelists who will share their experiences and insights of caregiving from a variety of perspectives, such as spouse and adult child caregiver/care partner. The panel will include Dr. Paul Brown, caregiver/speaker/author; Barbara Ivey, certified dementia practitioner/author; and Elizabeth Reinstein, caregiver.

Part four, "Communication, Behavior, and Intimacy: A Deeper Dive into Interpersonal Changes," is to take place 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. April 15. This program will cover changes in communication and behavior and how these affect our relationships, including intimacy. Alyssa Szymanski Botte, a psychotherapist at New Day Counseling, will be presenting.

The four-part series is open to individuals with a recent diagnosis and/or in the middle stages of Alzheimer's and related dementia diseases, their families and care-partners. General public interested in learning more about planning, resources, and services that are available may also attend. Registrants will be automatically enrolled in all four sessions and may attend all or just those sessions that fit best their schedule and interests. Attendees can attend via video/webinar or through a toll-free number. There is no charge to participate, but registration is required. To sign up, visit tinyurl.com/ConfidentCare or call 1-800-272-3900.

"Our research shows a growing financial, physical and emotional toll on Alzheimer's caregivers, which is why the Alzheimer's Association aims to enhance care and support for all those affected by Alzheimer's and other dementias," said Lisa Roberts, executive director of the Eastern North Carolina Chapter. "Programs like the Confident Caregiver Symposium are extremely helpful for preparing families and caregivers to meet the changes ahead and live well for as long as possible."