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Professional caregivers receive certified dementia care training at a seminar in Michigan



April 27, 3:27 PM Grand Rapids Caregiver Examiner Clarice Cook

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Caring for persons with dementia related disease requires special skills.

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The National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners are educating caregivers through dementia care training and certification in order to give dignity to both patient and family.

On April 22, 2010, a conference room at the Holiday Inn Suites in Oskemos, Michigan came alive with the powerful, insightful presentation of Dee Mayfield. Caregivers, owners and associates of Comfort Keepers in home care agencies from Michigan and the home office in Ohio received the best training possible to become Certified Dementia Practitioners.

Dee Mayfield is a Certified Dementia Practitioner and trainer with a passion to educate caregivers on how to give unique quality of life to Dementia patients and inspire caregivers to take care of themselves. She is an authorized trainer for the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners and trainer of the Techniques for Intervention Procedures program with Health Communications, Inc. of Alexandria, VA

As a family caregiver for persons with Alzheimer's, a Nursing Home Activity Professional, Dee has been a home school teacher for grades 4 through 12, and has extensive experience in the business industry, giving her the expertise to open doors to learning.

Care giving professionals were empowered by Dee's examples and experiences of conflict and intervention that occurs when a family member is diagnosed with a dementia disease. She explained that dementia can be a condition of illness, injury or other reversible conditions. Aging leads to the amyloid plaques - but not necessarily dementia. Diagnostic and lab testing can determine if the dementia is irreversible and a result of Alzheimer's, Vascular, Parkinson, Huntington's, Pick's, Lewy's Body or Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease.

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The conflict is in the disease, not the patient. The caregiver is the one who has to change. With skilled role playing, Dee introduced ways to communicate and empathize with the patient's feelings. She explained how to deal with the patient's nightmares of paranoia, hallucinations, depression, repetitive behaviors, aggression and catastrophic reactions. She addressed issues of wandering, hoarding, intimacy and sexuality.

The different stages of the dementia bring the gradual changes of body and mind functions. "One day the patient might be able to get dressed, the next day brings total dependency --and yet the next day, the patient may be able to dress or partially dress by himself." Dee stated. "What occurs one day, may be better or worse the next. Professional Caregivers need to be flexible in the care they give." It is like communicating with a different person every day. But the soul of the person remains the same. One moment there will be tears and with a cue, laughter begins. Caregiver's are challenged to first empathize, connect and then maneuver the patient to more stability in their own reality.

With humor and common sense, Dee brought a sense of reality to life with a person with dementia. She explained that **the process could cover many years** and suggested ways to cope in order to provide quality of life for the afflicted person. It is up to all others responsible for care to provide a safe environment and activities as the disease progresses.

Professional caregivers are responsible for taking care of the entire family. In order to do that, staff members have to be able to care for themselves. In order to be successful, training in the art of dementia care is essential.

To contact Dee Mayfield, CDP, TIPs, Mayfield Health Care Seminars call: 1-217-491-0532
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