

# Module 9

## Supporting Families and Caring for Ourselves



alzheimer's  association®

# How Do Families React to a Terminal Diagnosis?

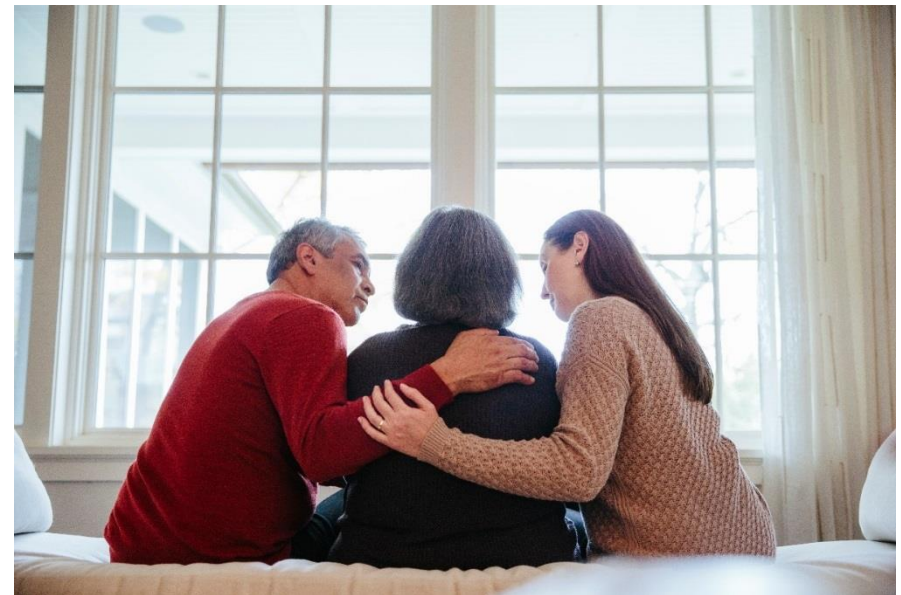


# What You'll Learn

- Identify two emotions that families often feel
- Discuss a common family concern
- Describe two ways to better partner with families
- Identify two ways to prevent burnout and compassion fatigue

# How Alzheimer's Disease Affects the Family

- Struggle to understand and accept
  - Stigma
  - Denial
- Grief and loss:
  - “The long goodbye”
  - Changing roles
  - Loss of control
- Guilt, shame and anger
- Physical and emotional exhaustion
- Family dynamics



# Common Family Concerns



## Trusting others to provide care:

- Lack of trust with outside care providers
- Prior negative experience
- Worry about voicing concerns

# Build Trust with Families

- Frequent contact
- Influence
- Empathy and concern
- Reassurance
- Engagement and support



# What We Can Do



- Provide updates
- Involve the family
- Offer support
- Be consistent
- Capable team

# Working with Families Who are Upset or Angry

- Remain calm and professional
- Acknowledge a family's concerns and emotions
  - “I’m sorry...” always helps. It doesn’t mean it was your fault.
- Don’t blame the person living with dementia
- Remember:
  - If you can’t answer a question, let them know & connect them to someone who can help
  - If they are still upset, notify your Supervisor



# Burnout and Compassion Fatigue

- **Burnout**
  - tends to develop over time
  - emotional and physical exhaustion, feelings of negativity and indifference and feeling like you're not getting the job done.
- **Compassion Fatigue**
  - typically comes on suddenly
  - caused by empathy and is the result of providing continuous care to individuals who are experiencing serious illness.

# What Are the Stresses?

- **Stress related to Alzheimer's or dementia**
  - The disease gets worse and is terminal
  - Families are grieving, upset or angry
  - It is difficult to provide care when person doesn't realize they need assistance
- **Stress related to job, family life and our own health**
  - So much to do and not enough time
  - Juggling work, family and health can be hard

# Taking Care of Yourself

## To take care of ourselves we can:

- Ask for help from your supervisor or coworker
- Help others—they'll help us
- Seek out education
- Take a deep breath, take a moment and count to ten
- Take time for the important people in your life
- Take time for yourself

# Preventing Burnout and Compassion Fatigue

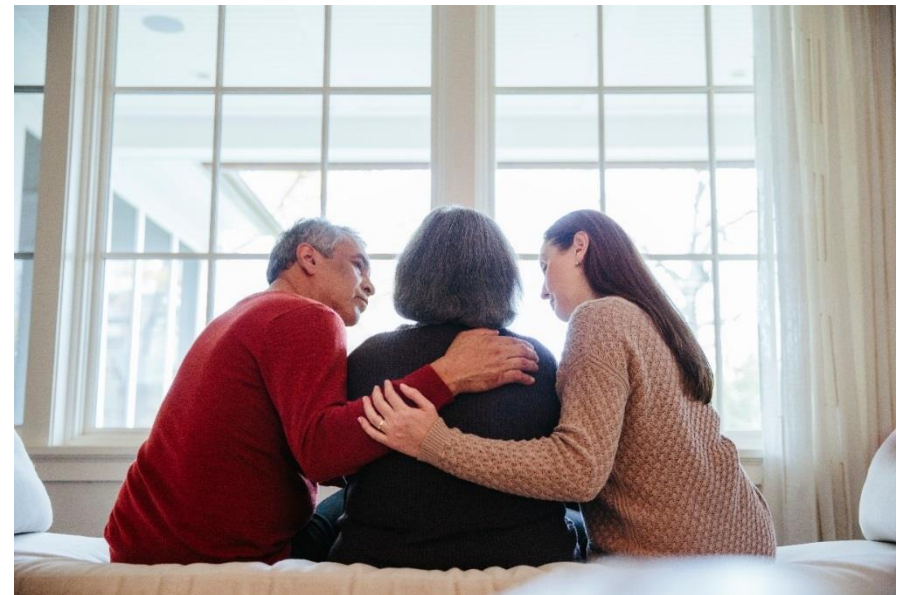


# What Did We Talk About Today?

Let's Review...

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# Let's See What You've Learned

## Test 9: Understanding and Working with Families