

COMPONENT 6:

Caregiver Support Guide

Purpose

Caregiver education and support activities completed through this component should be promoted using **Component 3** outreach strategies and incorporated into **Component 8** implementation, evaluation, and sustainability planning efforts.

Why It Matters

Caregivers play a critical role in supporting individuals living with dementia. Providing education, support, respite information, and peer connections can reduce isolation, improve caregiver confidence, and strengthen community support systems.

Expected Outcomes

- Increase caregiver knowledge and confidence
- Improve awareness of available resources
- Promote caregiver self-care
- Increase access to respite opportunities
- Establish support groups or peer connections
- Reduce caregiver isolation
- Strengthen community support networks

Key Actions

- Offer Caregiver Education
- Establish Support Groups or Peer Connections
- Promote Respite and Self-Care

Estimated Time to Complete

Ongoing throughout implementation. Caregiver education and support activities should continue throughout Healthy Brain Community efforts and evolve based on community needs.

Who to Involve

Family Caregivers • Individuals Living with Dementia • Aging Services Organizations • Healthcare Providers • Public Health Professionals • Social Workers • Community Health Workers • Faith Communities • Senior Centers • Libraries • Volunteer Organizations • Tribal Health Organizations • Respite Providers

Tools Included in this Component

Tool Number	Tool Name
6.1	Caregiver Support Event Planning Checklist
6.2	Caregiver Support Event Planning Template
6.3	Support Group Toolkit
6.4	Caregiver Support Checklists & Guides
6.5	Caregiver Support Infographics
6.6	Caregiver Support Resources

Step 1: Plan Caregiver Education Activities

Purpose: Identify educational opportunities that support caregivers and address community needs.

Tools to Use: Tool 6.1 Event Planning Checklist and Tool 6.2 Event Planning Template

Recommendations for Success:

- Use assessment findings from Component 2.
- Offer activities at convenient times.
- Consider virtual and in-person options.
- Partner with caregiver-serving organizations.

Step 2: Provide Caregiver Education

Purpose: Increase caregiver knowledge, skills, and confidence.

Tools to Use: Tool 6.4 Caregiver Checklists & Guides, Tool 6.5 Caregiver Support Infographics, and Tool 6.6 Caregiver Support Resources

Recommendations for Success:

- Focus on practical information.
- Provide easy-to-use resources.
- Offer opportunities for discussion.
- Reinforce self-care messages.

Step 3: Establish Support Groups or Peer Connections

Purpose: Create opportunities for caregivers to connect, share experiences, and support one another.

Tools to Use: Tool 6.3 Planning & Implementation Template, Tool 6.3 Dementia Support Group Toolkit, Tool 6.3.9 Facilitation Guide, and Tool 6.3.8 Quick Start Guide

Recommendations for Success:

- Start small.
- Build trust and consistency.
- Engage participants in developing group norms.
- Adapt the model to community needs.

Step 4: Support Effective Facilitation

Purpose: Help facilitators create a welcoming, supportive environment.

Tool to Use: Tool 6.3.1 Facilitator Guide

Recommendations for Success:

- Encourage participation without requiring sharing.
- Use active listening.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Avoid providing medical, legal, or financial advice.

Step 5: Promote Respite and Self-Care

Purpose: Help caregivers recognize the importance of caring for themselves while caring for others.

Tool to Use: Tool 6.6 Education and Resources

Recommendations for Success:

- Discuss caregiver stress and burnout.
- Share respite resources.
- Encourage caregivers to develop self-care plans.
- Normalize asking for help.

Step 6: Connect Caregivers to Resources

Purpose: Provide access to educational materials, support services, respite programs, and community resources.

Tool to Use: Tool 6.6 Education and Resources

Recommendations for Success:

- Provide resources at every educational activity.
- Offer information in print and electronic formats.
- Encourage resource sharing.
- Review resources regularly.

Tool 6.6 Education and Resource Directory Includes

Caregiver Education Resources

- Alzheimer's Foundation of America Care Connection Series
- Caregiver Action Network – Caregiver Toolkit
- Family Caregiver Alliance
- South Dakota Alzheimer's Association Education Programs
- University of South Carolina Office for the Study of Aging

Caregiver Support Resources

- Dakota at Home
 - State Respite Resources
 - Local Support Services
 - Guide to Navigating Dementia
- Dementia Friendly America
 - Memory Café Alliance Online Training
 - Dementia Friendly America Resources
- South Dakota Alzheimer's Association
 - Caregiver Support
 - 24/7 Helpline
- National Institute on Aging Caregiver Resources

Tips for Success

- Meet caregivers where they are.
- Keep resources practical and easy to access.
- Promote self-care consistently.
- Create opportunities for connection.
- Partner with trusted organizations.
- Recognize and celebrate caregivers.

Component Completion Checklist

- ☐ Caregiver education activity planned
- ☐ Educational materials distributed
- ☐ Caregiver resources shared
- ☐ Support group or peer connection opportunity established
- ☐ Facilitation tools identified

- ☐ Self-care and respite information provided
- ☐ Community partners engaged
- ☐ Caregivers connected to resources

Additional Resources **(Component 9)**

- Alzheimer's Foundation of America
- Caregiver Action Network
- Dakota at Home
- Family Caregiver Alliance
- Helpline Center
- National Institute on Aging
- South Dakota Alzheimer's Association
- South Dakota Department of Health Head Forward
- University of South Carolina Office for the Study of Aging

Next Steps

After completing this component, communities may continue with Component 7: Dementia-Friendly Community Practices. Information and lessons learned from this component can also support future planning, evaluation, and sustainability activities in Component 8.