

“How Simple Telephone Technology Can Bring Your Support Group Into Participants’ Homes”

Telephone Caregiver Support Groups


An AoA Innovation Grant Project
of Senior Services of Albany &
The University at Albany,
Institute of Gerontology

www.SeniorServicesofAlbany.com/AOA.cfm

Project Partners

Senior Services of Albany

Non-profit
Community-based
Seniors & Caregivers

 *Meals on Wheels,
Senior Centers,
Transportation,
Wellness Programs,
Adult Day Care,
I&R etc.*





University at Albany, Institute of Gerontology

Multidisciplinary
Applied Research




 *Collaborates in
gerontological research,
education & practice at
University*

 *Fosters policy & practice
relevant research with
national significance*


Project Goals

-  Research effectiveness of TSG for caregivers
-  Reach-out to and serve isolated, low-income, rural and minority caregivers who are unable to attend traditional groups
-  Refine TSG intervention model
-  Share findings and information on implementation so that similar groups may be available to caregivers around the country

Group Participation Barriers

Barrier	In-Person	TSG
Unaware of groups and benefits	<i>Barrier</i>	<i>Barrier</i>
Distance	<i>Barrier</i>	
Transportation	<i>Barrier</i>	
Time of group (i.e. working)	<i>Barrier</i>	<i>Barrier</i>
Inability to leave loved one alone	<i>Barrier</i>	
Physical limitations	<i>Barrier</i>	<i>Barrier</i>
Discomfort in group setting	<i>Barrier</i>	<i>Barrier</i>
Disinterest/Unwilling to commit	<i>Barrier</i>	<i>Barrier</i>

TSG Model

 Separate spouse & adult child groups

 8 member maximum


 12 weekly meetings

 Specific agendas

 Focus on coping skills & taking care of oneself

 Group Problem-Solving

 “Telephone Buddies”

 Participant workbooks: agendas & ‘homework’






Problem Solving Steps:

One member takes a turn each meeting

- 1) Name the problem
- 2) Identify barriers to its solution
- 3) Brain Storming as a group
 - Without judging the suggestions
- 4) Weigh pros and cons of options
- 5) Develop a plan
- 6) Evaluate the results

Recommendations

~ Leading Groups ~



-  Leader should be active and directive, keep group focused
-  Limit potential chaos of conference calls
 -  i.e. everyone says their name when speaking
-  Less attention to problems, more to solutions
 -  i.e. taking care of self

TSG Conference Call Technology



In order to have a conference call you need a bridge or provider

Providers :

 3 basic types of service

-  Dial-in
-  Dial-out Operator Assisted
-  Dial-out Leader as Operator

TSG project used:

-  Dial-out Leader as Operator, web-assisted
-  Provider: www.TheConferenceDepot.com

TSG Conference Call Costs

 Range of prices of different providers/services:





 \$.10 - \$.36/minute/person

 Our cost = \$.15/minute/person (leg)


Price (per minute, per person)	Length of call	Number of participants on call	Total cost per call/meeting
\$.15	60 minutes	8	\$72

Recommendations

~ Using Conference Call Technology ~

-  Make calls as user-friendly as possible for participants
-  Prepare participants for technical difficulties
-  Give leader control and flexibility
-  Leader should have comfort with technology and ability to think on their feet

TSG Marketing/Recruitment

 Caregivers will not seek out a service they have never imagined and of which they are unaware

 Nor will Professionals refer to such a service







	Mass-Marketing	Referrals from other Agencies	Direct Contact with Caregivers
Percentage recruited (approx.)	50%	25%	25%

Recommendations







~ Marketing/Recruitment ~

- 📞 Do not expect the floodgates to open
- 📞 Explore all potential avenues
- 📞 Successful efforts included:
 - ① paid ads, tabling, referrals from agencies, own I&R line
- 📞 Expect to dedicate staff and funds if goal is to reach isolated caregivers in large numbers

TSG Numbers






-  Geographic area = 11 counties
-  Duration of project = 3 years
-  Callers to intake line = ~200
-  Project participants = 98 (Treatment & Control)
(Rural = 35%; Minority = 8%)
-  Groups = 12 (8 Child & 4 Spouse Groups)
-  Group members = 76 (50 Children & 26 Spouses)

Challenges

-  Cost of conference calls
-  Marketing/getting referrals for a new type of service
-  Changes in status of caregiving situation
 -  i.e. institutionalization, death
-  Challenges specific to research project
 -  i.e. randomization, eligibility

Research Outcomes

Significant Differences for Adult Children: (Treatment vs. Control)

-  More reduction in strain, stress and depression
-  More effectiveness in dealing with pressing problems
-  More knowledge of community services and of how to access them
-  More use of community services
-  More positive social interaction and emotional/informational support

Research Outcomes

 TSG found to be more effective for adult children than for spouses







① Spouses in the intervention versus those waiting as controls had few differences between them

 Possible explanations include:

① Spouses do not benefit as much from the telephone modality

① Spouses do not benefit as much from support groups as an intervention

Adaptations / Modifications *to consider*

-  TSG currently provided as part of III-E funded caregiver program in Albany County; approx. 2 groups/year
-  Integrate all caregivers into one group; i.e. adult children, spouses, nieces etc.
-  Offer dementia-specific group co-led with Alzheimer's Association
-  Schedule meetings on monthly basis vs weekly
-  Open vs closed groups
-  Other applications: caregiver seminars, patient groups i.e. cancer treatment recipients/survivors

How-to Information

Download Manual from Website -

 www.SeniorServicesofAlbany.com/AOA.cfm

Also on website: these slides, participant workbook, outcomes information, testimonials

Project Contact -

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