Supporting Family Caregivers
Through Their Uncertain Days

A One-Hour Workshop for Family Caregivers, Former Family Caregivers, and Professionals Who Serve Family Caregivers

The Caregiving Years Training Academy | Denise Brown

Workshop Objective

> *To equip professionals who serve family caregivers with a practical framework and language tools for supporting family caregivers through the uncertainty that defines their caregiving journey.*

> *To empower family caregivers with the confidence to manage their uncertain days.*

By the end of this workshop, you will leave with language, tools, and a new lens for your work.

The Central Truth

The certainty of caregiving is its uncertainty.

Family caregivers rarely know how long their journey will last, how much it will cost, or what tomorrow will bring.

They also show up. Again and again.

Learning Objectives

1. Identify the four dimensions of caregiving uncertainty and how each shows up in the family caregivers you serve.
2. Apply the Seven Certainties framework to help family caregivers find solid ground.
3. Use specific language and conversation tools that acknowledge uncertainty without abandoning hope.
4. Distinguish between when a family caregiver needs to be heard and when they are ready to move toward action.
5. Describe at least one way you will use the Seven Certainties framework in your next interaction with a family caregiver.
6. Empower family caregivers with the confidence to manage their uncertain days.

The Four Dimensions of Caregiving Uncertainty

Open-Ended

How long will this last?
How will I last as long as needed?
No one can say and we struggle to understand.

Financial

How much will this cost?
How long do we need the money to last?
The horizon is foggy.

Medical & Care

How will this disease process progress?
What's the right level of care?
When is the right time for the next level of care?
Planning without a clear map.

Emotional & Relational

Who loves me?
Who do I love?
Who will I be when this is over?
What will family look like?
Relationships shift.
Focus changes.

INTERACTIVE EXERCISE

Write a six-word story about your uncertainty.

Six words. One true thing. Yours.

Example: "Still here. Still showing up. Still."

Your Role Is Not to Eliminate Uncertainty.

It is to help family caregivers develop a sustainable relationship with it.

Find solid ground	See what is certain	Stay present
inside an unstable situation	about themselves	without needing to resolve what cannot be resolved

The Seven Certainties

Framework

Even when family caregivers cannot know what tomorrow holds, we can know them. We see them with confidence, with clarity, with certainty.

What We Know About Every Family Caregiver

1. You do everything you can.
2. You take care of yourself as best you can.
3. You are a wonderful resource for other family caregivers.
4. You make the days better for everyone you encounter.
5. You have an important, meaningful future ahead of you.
6. ***You continue.***
7. You are changing the conversation about caregiving.

Sitting With

The Consultant's Role in Uncertain Times

Sitting with is an active, intentional choice to be fully present with a family caregiver in their experience without rushing to change it.

- Tolerate the discomfort of not having answers
- Resist the impulse to reassure too quickly
- Trust that your presence is itself a form of help

Language That Sits With

"I don't have an answer to that, and I don't want to pretend that I do. What I do know is that you don't have to figure it out alone."

"I can't tell you how this will unfold. I can tell you that I'm not going anywhere."

"We don't have to solve anything today. What do you most need to say out loud?"

Conversation Tools for Overwhelmed Family Caregivers

The Brain Dump

invite the family caregiver to say everything on their mind without filtering or organizing.

"Tell me everything that's weighing on you right now. Don't organize it — just say it."

The One Thing

Help identify the single most important thing in this moment, not this week, this moment.

"If you could only address one thing today, what would it be?"

The Already Done

Redirect attention to what has already been accomplished to restore a sense of competence.

"Which challenges have you already resolved this week?"

The Size Check

Help distinguish between what is truly urgent and what only feels urgent.

"Which of these things actually needs to happen today?"

The Future That Hasn't Been Lost

Caregiving takes.
And caregiving builds.

Both are true at the same time.

What Caregiving Builds

Advocacy	Navigating complex systems on behalf of others
Crisis Management	Calm decision-making under sustained pressure
Emotional Intelligence	Reading needs before they are spoken
Systems Thinking	Managing interconnected, complex logistics
Empathy at Depth	Understanding what it means to be vulnerable
Patience & Presence	Being present in situations that cannot be hurried

Expanding the Conversation

100

million

family caregivers in the U.S. alone

Many feel completely alone.

Community is medicine.

Connection with people who truly understand caregiving is one of the most powerful buffers against stress.

Naming matters.

Every family caregiver who tells the truth about their experience makes it safer for the next person to do the same.

You are part of this too.

Every session you facilitate contributes to a cultural shift that is desperately needed.

INTERACTIVE EXERCISE

Write a six-word story about your certainty.

Six words. One true thing. Yours.

Example: "I know I will continue."

What You're Taking With You

The Four Dimensions	Open-ended, financial, medical, and emotional uncertainty operate simultaneously.
The Seven Certainties	A lens for seeing every family caregiver with confidence, clarity, and certainty.
Sitting With	Presence without rushing to resolve. Language that acknowledges without abandoning.
Grounding Tools	Brain Dump, One Thing, Already Done, Size Check for family caregivers who've lost their footing.
The Future	Caregiving builds real, transferable, deeply human capacities. Help family caregivers see them.

Go do the work.
It matters.

The list of certainties is never finished.
The conversation about caregiving is always expanding.
Every honest voice makes it truer.

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How will you add **certainty** to your day?

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