

Caregiver Response to Losses in Dementia

<i>Mild Dementia</i>		<i>Moderate Dementia</i>		<i>Severe Dementia</i>	
<p>Adult Child Caregiver</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach-Avoidance Conflict • Acknowledge caregiver role by seeking information and making concrete care decisions • Remain intellectualized, task oriented, and focused on parent strengths • May avoid discussing emotional effects • May want to keep grief contained • Stay present oriented and positively focused • Begins to affect family relationships 	<p>Spouse Caregiver</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realistic about own feelings and what to anticipate • Determined to get on with the work of caregiving • “We’re in this together” • Sense of togetherness is changing but still present • Accept present circumstances and adjust care responses accordingly • Focus of loss is less on self and more on couple 	<p>Adult Child Caregiver</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • True impact can no longer be avoided as demands mount • Grief focused most on what they have had to give up or change • Intense feelings of frustration and anger – leads to guilt • Parent-child roles become reversed • Worry about genetic transmission of the disease 	<p>Spouse Caregiver</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotions dominated by compassion, frustration, and a loving redefinition of the relationship • Determination to provide best care possible and not crumble under the challenges of care • Predominant feeling of sadness • Intense focus on tasks at hand and maintaining some relationship • No longer look back but won’t look forward 	<p>Adult Child Caregiver</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anger replaced by deep sadness • Grief is now associated with lost opportunities and with regrets over not having maximized experiences • Positive aspects of empathy and renewed philosophical perspectives on life, relationships and the caregiving experience emerge • Reflection on caregiving experience is that of being difficult but rewarding 	<p>Spouse Caregiver</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition to facility care relieves physical burdens but emotional struggles and sense of responsibility remain and heighten • Togetherness of past has given way to uneasy individuality • Losses: identity as couple, feeling disconnected from family and friends • Frustration or anger at being in “life-death limbo” • Uncertainty about future