

Caring for Our Kupuna

The Situation

Hawai'i residents who care for their elderly parents experience significant stress because older adults with chronic illnesses often require ongoing care over extended periods of time, sometimes over years. Many caregivers are not familiar with caregiving resources or effective caregiving strategies. The stress from extended caregiving also affects employee health and well-being, as well as workplace productivity. This is a serious and significant phenomenon across the nation.

Cooperative Extension's Response

Michael Cheang, Associate Professor in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, UH Manoa, has collaborated with UH

Human Resources to provide systemwide workshops on caregiving for employees who are caring for their elderly parents while working full time.

Workshops are done in two formats: In-person during a brown bag lunch session, and via Zoom for those who can only attend after hours or who work on other campuses.

Titles of Workshops:

- Caring for My Elder: Resources in the Aging Network (75 minutes x 4 workshops)
- Communicating with Someone with Alzheimer's Disease (75 minutes x 2 workshops)
- What are We Going to Do about Mom?: Pitfalls of Decision Making in Caregiving (75 minutes x 2 workshops)



Photo from [Freepic.com](https://www.freepic.com)

Impact and Outcomes

University employees who care for their elderly parents 1) gain knowledge about resources in the aging network they can access to help their parents or themselves as caregivers, 2) gain a better understanding of their parents' challenges, 3) develop a sense of empathy and change their approach in communicating and caring for their parents, and 4) learn how to better care for themselves while caring for their parents.

Examples of workshop attendee feedback:

"Helped me greatly to understand the different perspectives in these types of situations. It's important to base actions off of facts, not emotion. The session was extremely insightful and I'm very grateful that this was offered to UH! "

"Dr. Cheang provided a great example of how to thoughtfully and compassionately approach elder care through his presentation, demeanor, and interaction with attendees. He provided many helpful real-life examples of the kind of adjustments caregivers can make to take better care of their loved ones and themselves. In particular, the emphasis on maintaining dignity of the elders with dementia/Alzheimer's

Disease, as well as conveying how it's 'not appropriate to expect someone with dementia/Alzheimer's to live in our world' was very helpful."

For more information, please contact:

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