



## The Central Needs of Dementia Care Partners

### **CENTRAL NEED #1: Tell and retell your story** – to others, out loud and/or in writing.

Purpose: Reduces isolation; enables you to vent about the demands and challenges of caregiving; clarifies and validates your thoughts and feelings.

### **CENTRAL NEED #2: Educate yourself** – about dementia and the many challenges of caregiving.

Purpose: Makes you a more informed, empathetic, and effective care partner; reduces fear of the unknown.

### **CENTRAL NEED #3: Adapt to changing relationships** – as your loved one's behaviors and abilities inevitably change and decline over the progression of dementia.

Purpose: Enables you to stay meaningfully connected to your loved one, and them to you; fosters well-being in both the care partner and their loved one.

### **CENTRAL NEED #4: Grieve your losses** – personal, relationship, and the loss of peace of mind.

Purpose: To acknowledge that grieving (internal thoughts and feelings) and mourning (the outward expression of your grief) are necessary parts of the dementia caregiving journey; with dementia, grieving begins prior to death.

### **CENTRAL NEED #5: Take care of yourself** – physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

Purpose: Enables you to reduce stress, medical problems, depression and anxiety, and social isolation; being intentional about self-care and wellness gives you the strength and endurance needed for the long caregiving journey.

### **CENTRAL NEED #6: Ask for and accept help from others** – allow others to be a part of the caregiving team.

Purpose: Being intentional about forming a team of care partners helps your loved one to receive the best care possible and reduces the burden you experience in providing care; it is okay to ask for help.

### **CENTRAL NEED #7: Prepare for what's ahead** – be proactive about planning for care needs, as well as for related legal and financial issues.

Purpose: Anticipating changes, challenges and transitions enables you to navigate the ever-changing dementia journey with less stress and more control.

### **CENTRAL NEED #8: Explore existential and spiritual questions to find meaning** – ask the “Why?” questions.

Purpose: Wrestling with the often unanswerable “Why?” questions allow you to find meaning and purpose in what otherwise seems like a senseless condition.