Caregiver Support
and
Empowerment

Author & Entertaining Motivational Speaker

Maria, a powerful, energetic speaker, ignites caregivers with tools to develop an outlook of strength and peace of mind, no matter what external events arise. An engaging storyteller, her audiences laugh and learn how to decrease stress and increase energy. Maria is an entrepreneur, author, trainer, keynote speaker—and a caregiver. When her father-in-law suffered a stroke in 1993, Maria became aware of the need for better information about how to care for an aging parent, a responsibility shared by millions of Americans. That experience led Maria to co-author the award winning guide, *The Comfort of Home:™ An Illustrated Step-by-Step Guide for Caregivers*, earning the Benjamin Franklin Award in the health category. Its popularity led Maria to publish other caregiver resources, including the *Caregiving Journal* and caregiver newsletters in multiple languages. She is a keynote speaker and workshop leader on caregiver topics to healthcare professionals and community groups. Her company, CareTrust Publications, provides government agencies, healthcare companies, church senior ministries, pharmaceutical companies, HMOs, and nonprofit organizations with resources for caregivers.

Maria lives in San Francisco and is the Northern California representative for the National Family Caregivers Association’s Caregiver Community Action Network.

Caregiving

Since over one in four Americans provide care to family and friends, caregiving in the home is the fastest-growing unpaid profession in America. More and more, the burden of caring for the frail parent or relative falls on a family member, most often women. Without training, and often with little time to spare, family members must learn the caregiver’s job, find health care financing, retrofit the home for a disabled person, and become both nurse and counselor. Maria's address focuses on empowering caregivers to recognize their value, take care of themselves, and be counted.

CareTrust Publications, LLC
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**Keynotes**

- An energetic presentation of the National Family Caregivers Association's *Principles of Caregiver Self-Advocacy*, empowering caregivers to care for themselves.
- Simple, practical advice that health care professionals and counselors should give to caregivers. The presentation underscores the unique contribution the caregiver makes to the family unit and society.
- Self-care and stress reduction tools, including the importance of humor and laughter therapy. Participants learn how to “laugh for no reason.”
- Maria shares the personal story of how a sudden caregiving responsibility led to co-authoring an award-winning book and founding a successful publishing company. This lively, humorous and fast-paced keynote address draws rave reviews. She leaves her audience energized and uplifted long after the nods of understanding and laughter subside.

**Workshops**

- **Communicating Effectively with Health Care Professionals**
  In this interactive workshop, caregivers learn the art of communicating with physicians through more effective communication techniques. Using the workbook provided and role-playing the skills learned, caregivers gain confidence to become better advocates for themselves and their care recipients.

- **Journaling**
  In this workshop caregivers learn to use *The Comfort of Home™ Caregiving Journal* to record and track the condition of the person in their care, and how to unburden themselves of their thoughts and concerns. The *Journal* becomes an easy place to express pain, struggles, frustration, fear and loneliness.

- **Meditation and Stress Reduction**
  This workshop teaches simple ways to meditate—anytime and anywhere—bringing peace of mind to those coping with the crush of caregiving responsibilities. Participants learn how to use laughter to relax, even when nothing in their lives seems funny, and learn how to develop an outlook that will be a source of strength and peace of mind no matter what external events arise.

“Your presentation here on Maui imparted not only knowledge to our family caregivers, but also allowed them to honor and nurture the multi-cultural milieu of our community, through which caregiving is delivered. You were very culturally sensitive and appropriate!”

John A. H. Tomoso, MSW, ACSW, LSW
Maui County Executive on Aging

“Very moving keynote! You hang on her every word because you can easily identify with what she is talking about.”

Arleen Evans-O’Reilly, Director
Virgin Islands Family Caregiver Support Program

“It is so important for both family and professional caregivers to have this information.”

Annette Stixrud, Executive Director
NW Parish Nurse Ministries

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