



# Patience and Love

Being a Caregiver is Born from the Heart

Keck School of  
Medicine of **USC**



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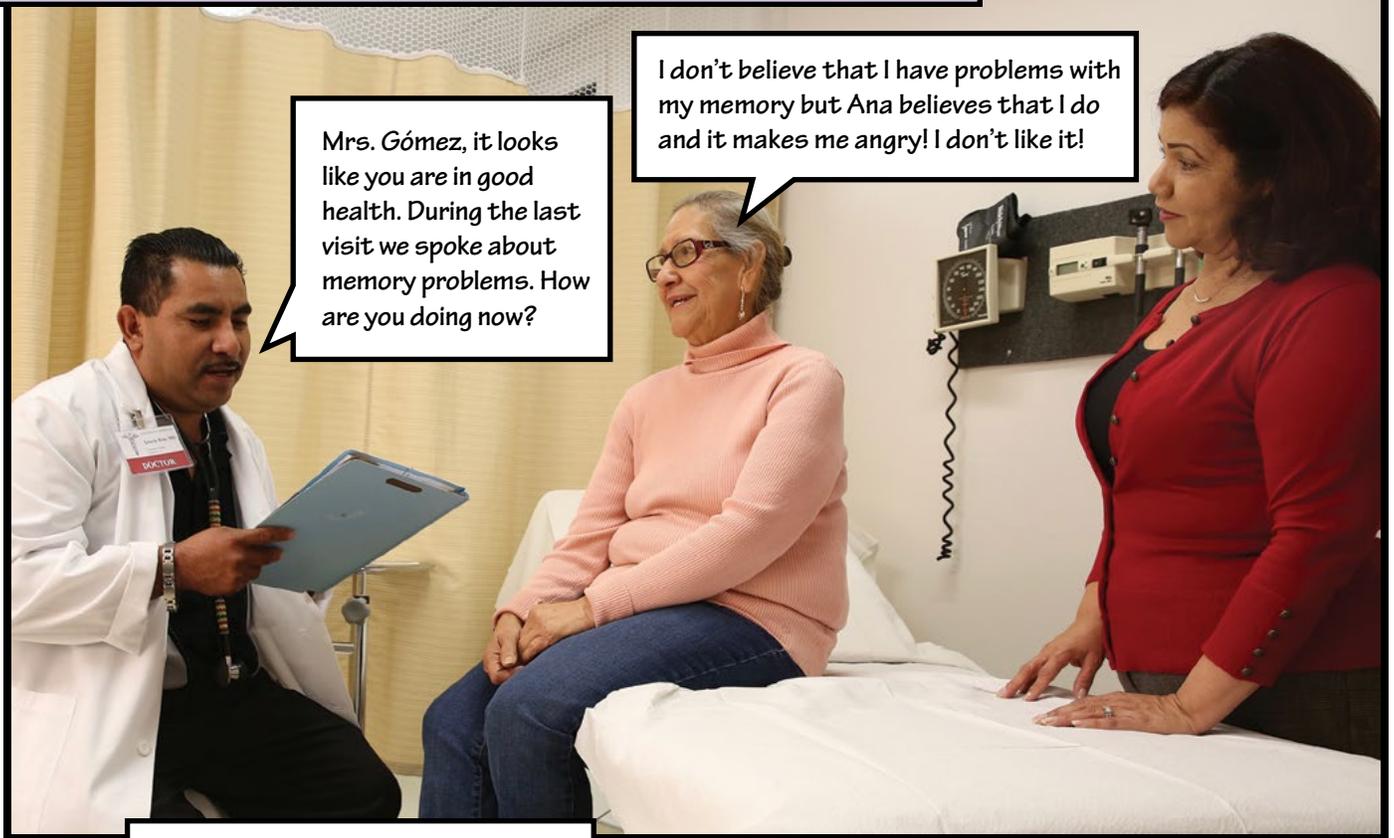
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**MRS. GÓMEZ AND HER DAUGHTER ANA VISIT DR. RUÍZ.**



Mrs. Gómez, it looks like you are in good health. During the last visit we spoke about memory problems. How are you doing now?

I don't believe that I have problems with my memory but Ana believes that I do and it makes me angry! I don't like it!



I don't know how to help her. I love her very much but she has problems with daily tasks. Can you help us?



It's so good that you told me.



Mrs. Gómez, would you give us a few minutes? I want to speak with Ana.

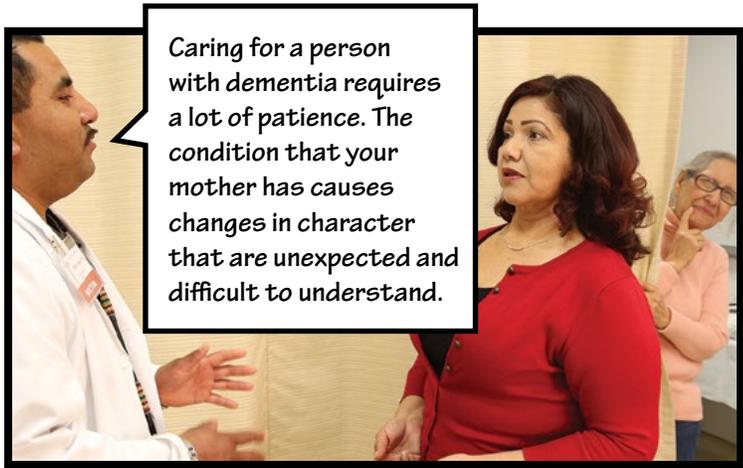
Of course, please go ahead.



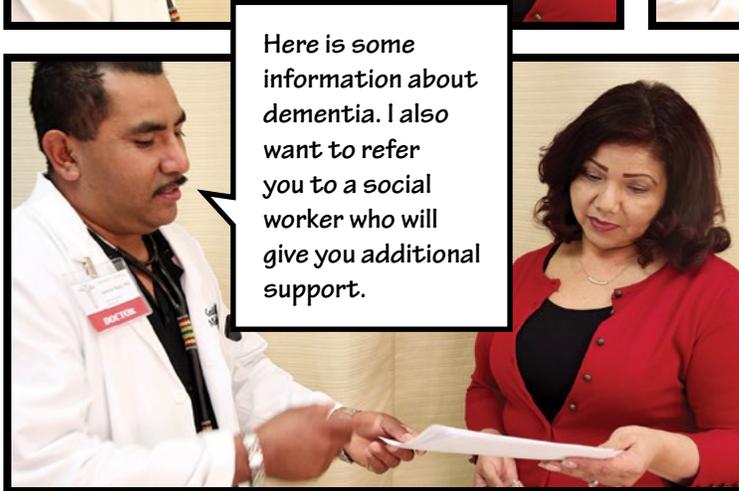
I hope that the doctor can set her straight. She is a good daughter but she is exaggerating!



It's been difficult. I know that she has dementia but I feel like I am the one that has to carry all of the responsibility.



Caring for a person with dementia requires a lot of patience. The condition that your mother has causes changes in character that are unexpected and difficult to understand.



Here is some information about dementia. I also want to refer you to a social worker who will give you additional support.



Thank so much for your help.

**ANA VISITS A SOCIAL WORKER.**



Hi Ana! It's great to meet you! I want to recommend a caregiver support group. Many caregivers I have spoken to have found this to be helpful. What do you think?



Why do I have to go if it is my mom that is unwell?

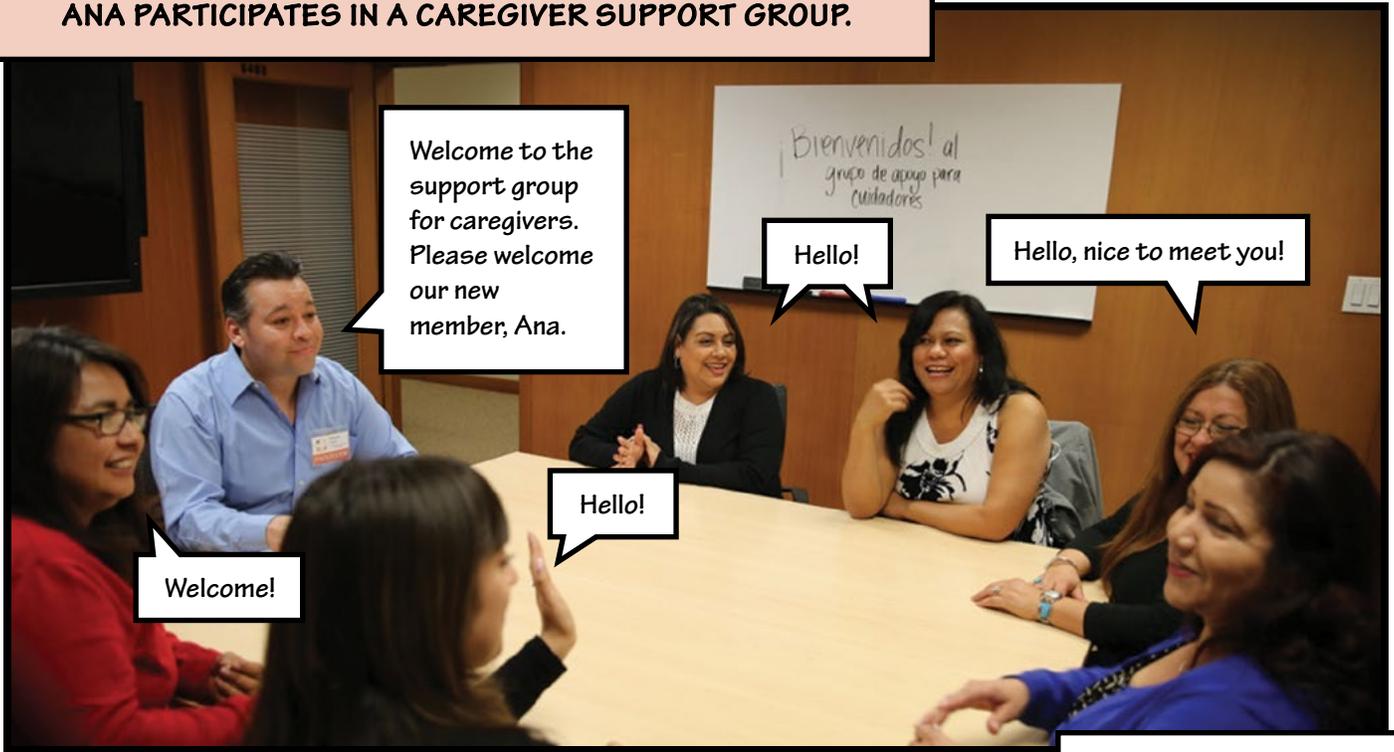


I understand how you feel and I think this can be of help to you. No one expects you to know everything.



If you think it is the best for her, I will give it a try.

ANA PARTICIPATES IN A CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP.



I have to say that I have been having trouble having enough patience. I do all the things I need to like making sure my mother has a bath and she gets all her meals and medication but...I am getting impatient when she asks the same question over and over. When she tosses her food and won't let me change her clothes, sometimes I lose my temper and I yell at her. I feel terrible and I don't know what to do.



You describe something that can happen to anyone in this situation, but yelling at the person with dementia does not help. This is considered a form of mistreatment. The person feels hurt. When you yell at them, it only makes problems worse.



I came close to this kind of thing too. Sometimes I have felt like I no longer want to continue caring for my dad. I know it's wrong and would make my father feel terrible. So, to avoid this, I try to take a small break outside in the garden. I also take into account that I should care for him and treat him the way I would want to be treated.

Maybe some of you have ideas that may help?



I call my sister and I ask for her help when I feel defeated. Together, we can try to look after our mother.



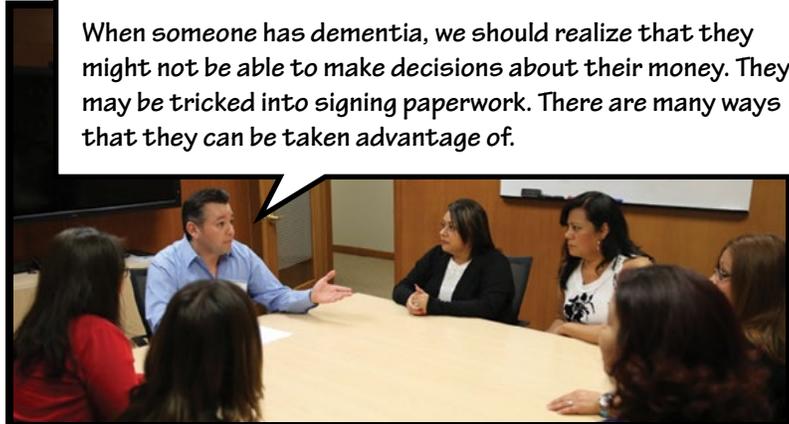
These are all good suggestions. It's important to take care of yourself so you can take care of your family member. This is very hard work that is easier when you recognize your own limitations. If we don't do this, it's possible to become abusive, even without realizing it. What we have been talking about is emotional abuse, but there are other forms of abuse as well, like physical, sexual and financial abuse.



I heard about financial abuse on TV! There was a daughter who took her mother's money because she believed that she had the right since she was providing care.



When someone has dementia, we should realize that they might not be able to make decisions about their money. They may be tricked into signing paperwork. There are many ways that they can be taken advantage of.



Being a good caregiver is a lot more than just meeting daily needs. We have to protect them and ensure that they can enjoy life and feel safe and not alone.

I also think it is important to show them respect. That can be difficult when they do not cooperate.





Ana, you look like you are very tired. How is it going caring for your mother?

Thank you for asking. My mother has not been sleeping well and I have to stay up all night with her. It is making me cranky because I am so tired and I have so many things to do in the morning. I am listening to all of you and now I know what I have to do but...



Oh dear, you should have called the doctor! My mother had the same problem and we found a medication that works very well to help with sleeping. In the meantime, you don't have someone to help you? You need to rest!

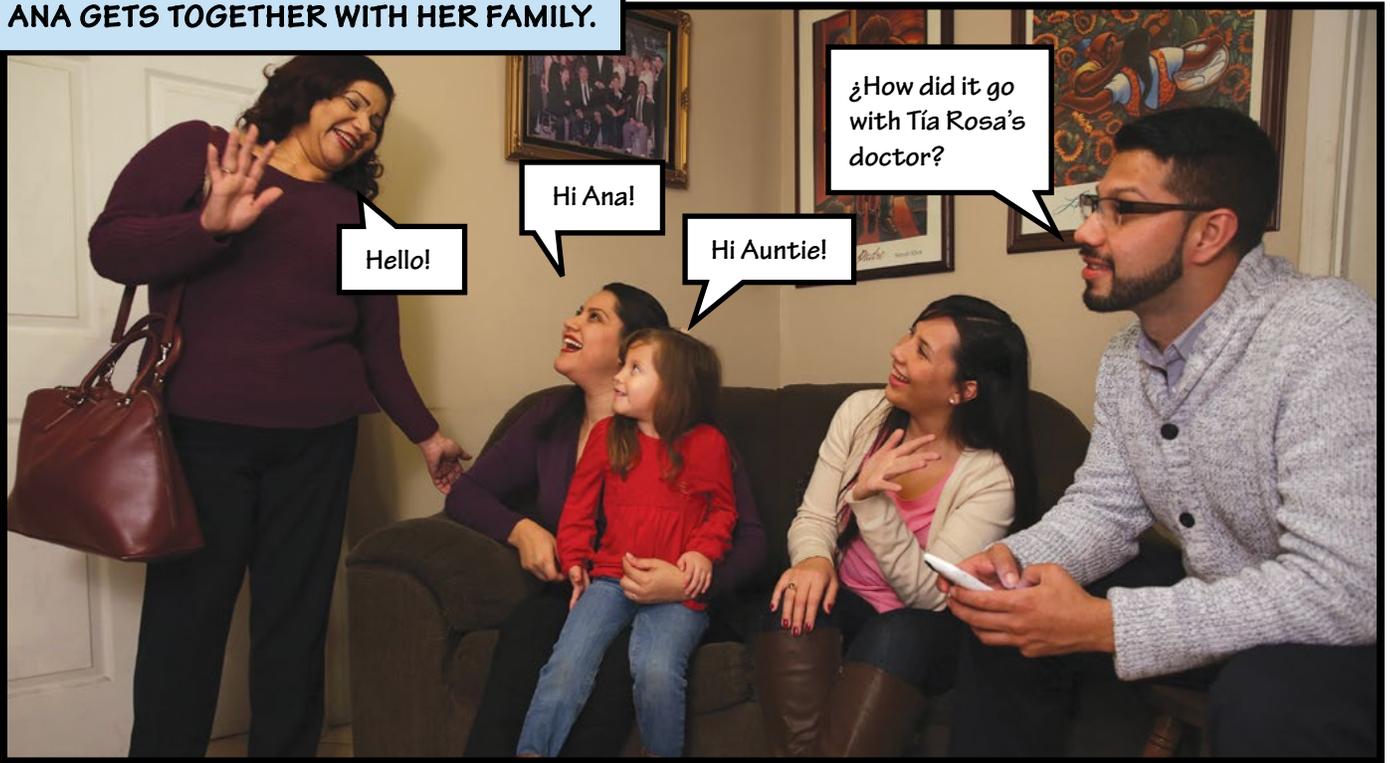
I think you are right. I have not mentioned it to the doctor but I believe he would help. And I have a cousin who has offered to take care of my mother while I rest. All I need to do is say, "Yes!"



A good caregiver knows when to ask for help! Ana, I hope you will follow through with these ideas and come back to the group next week.

Thank you so much! I have learned a lot. I'll come back next week and tell you how my mother and I are doing.

**ANA GETS TOGETHER WITH HER FAMILY.**



Hello!

Hi Ana!

Hi Auntie!

¿How did it go with Tía Rosa's doctor?



Well, I spoke with mom's doctor and participated in a support group that has helped me learn how to better care for my mom. I also learned that I should ask for help!

Ana, it's great to hear that! My offer still stands. Please, call me when you need me to stay with her. I can look after your mom. I don't want you to get exhausted!



Yes, thanks for your help José. I have realized that I cannot do this alone and that I need to take time for myself.

What's happening with grandma? She doesn't make my favorite flan anymore. Maybe she is angry with me?



No sweetheart, it's hard for grandma now to do some things like cooking. But there are still things she can do and we can enjoy spending time with her. She needs our company and we need her company too.



What about her getting angry at times? Is that still happening?



No, the new medication has helped that, but I am also learning that I should not correct her when she says something that is not true or tell her she forgot something. That helps a lot.



I realized that if I just change the subject, she forgets what she was upset about.



Yes, we cannot let ourselves get angry at her for the things she cannot help. She needs us to love her and protect her.





Protect her from us? We are family!

What do we need to protect her from?



I learned that there are different ways in which people with dementia can be mistreated. For example, some people take their money or abandon them. Sometimes caregivers like us, even though we are family, get frustrated and yell at them. This is mistreatment. It's not acceptable for this to happen to my mom.



Yes, it is our responsibility to protect her and treat her well. It is how I want to be treated as well. After all, I will get older too!

Someday maybe I will be a grandmother too and I want to be treated well.

Yes, that's true!



Having patience, wisdom and love is important. Young or old, we all deserve to live with dignity and respect.

## RESOURCES FOR CAREGIVERS OF LOVED ONES WITH DEMENTIA

Are you looking for resources for caregivers? Here are some organizations you can contact:



The **Alzheimer's Association** offers free and confidential advice and trusted information for people with memory loss, caregivers, health care professionals and the public.

24/7 helpline: [\(800\) 272-3900](tel:8002723900)

Website: [www.alz.org/espanol/overview-espanol.asp](http://www.alz.org/espanol/overview-espanol.asp)

The **Family Caregiver Alliance** supports and sustains caregivers with national, state and local programs and resources.

Phone: [\(800\) 445-8106](tel:8004458106)

Website: [www.caregiver.org/spanish](http://www.caregiver.org/spanish)

Fact Sheets in Spanish: [www.caregiver.org/fact-sheets](http://www.caregiver.org/fact-sheets)

The **Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving** provides advocacy, education, research, and services for family and professional caregivers.

Phone: [\(229\) 928-1234](tel:2299281234) (English only)

Website: [www.rosalynncarter.org](http://www.rosalynncarter.org) (English only)

Are you looking for more information about dementia and elder abuse?  
Here are some organizations you can contact:



The National Institute on Aging's **Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral Center** provides information and resources for people that are caring for a person with Alzheimer's disease.

Phone: [\(800\) 438-4380](tel:8004384380)

Websites: [www.nia.nih.gov/espanol](http://www.nia.nih.gov/espanol)

[www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers](http://www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers) (English only)

If you suspect that an elder is being mistreated by someone, you should call the Adult Protective Services Agency (APS) in your community to report the incident. To find APS in your community, call the **Elder Care Locator**. The **Elder Care Locator** can also connect you to services for older adult and their families in your area.

Phone: [\(800\) 677-1116](tel:8006771116)

Website: [www.eldercare.acl.gov](http://www.eldercare.acl.gov) (English only)

If you would like more information about elder mistreatment you can contact the **National Center on Elder Abuse**, a national resource center for information on elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Phone: [\(855\) 500-3537](tel:8555003537)

Website: <https://ncea.acl.gov> (for Spanish, click the blue icon on the right  and select "Spanish" in the drop-down menu above)