

**20<sup>th</sup> Alzheimer Europe  
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**Improving skills through regular supervision  
of a group of home carers**

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# Comprehensive support for carers

- **Counselling and support:** two social workers
    - Evaluation, assessment, information and access to available structures (professional home help, day care, financial allowances, and accompanying persons from our programme)
  - **Respite and stimulation at home:** 40 accompanying persons (« Accompagnants à domicile »)
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# Accompanying persons for people with Alzheimer

- 40 home caregivers (36 women and 4 men)
  - Age from 29 to 75
  - Background: psychology and social work students - Red Cross auxiliary nurses - middle age persons with personal care experience - recently retired healthcare professionals
  - Specific initial formation about dementia, symptoms, emotional aspects, communication, family carers, etc.
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## Group supervision

- Supervisor: qualified and experienced psychologist  
(day care centre manager)
  - Monthly meetings in two groups
  - Initial training is a base, but further training is essential:
    - guidance, support, reassurance
    - improving specific skills and understanding of dementia
    - ethical / medical issues
    - peer-to-peer learning
  - Interface with family carers
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## The sequence of a meeting

- Each person is invited to formalize his/her experience:
    - **What is happening ?** Observing, telling, elaborating, « digesting » facts, with the supervisor and the group
    - **How do I feel ?** Satisfied ? Uncomfortable? Frustrated?
    - **Aim:** better understanding of
      - – the *disease*, how it affects this particular person
      - – the *person* with dementia
      - – the *family carers*
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## Subjects discussed - I

- When the affected person is supposed to ignore diagnosis
  - « Problematic » spouse
  - « Rivalry » spouse / accompanying person
  - Activities the carer doesn't think of / is not able to realize
  - Tasks which accompanying persons shouldn't do
  - How to deal with incontinence
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## Subjects discussed - II

- What am I responsible for ? What are the risks ?
  - When do I have to use authority ?
  - How does the accompanying person feel about a younger person with Alzheimer ?
  - Important differences between possible activities with one or other person (possible « jealousy » between home caregivers...)
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## Subjects discussed - III

- Aggressiveness
  - Disinhibition
  - Home care where « nothing happens »: recognize the value of a « quiet presence »
  - How does the home carer face decline, separation, grief ?
  - Overcoming the end of the accompanying time (entering nursing home, death) and opening oneself to a new person
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## Further training

- Occupational therapy and dementia
  - First aid at home
  - Medical aspects of dementia
  - Counselling of family carers
  - Fictional and documentary films
  - Visit of specialised, purpose-built nursing home
  - Frequent contacts with specialised day care centre
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## Outcome and success

- « Accompanying a person is a bliss, a pleasure, even a passion, but I surely would do it less well if I were not so carefully supervised, coached, directed... »
  - « We feel listen to, encouraged and supported »
  - « It is a great resource to share our experiences »
  - « I particularly appreciate the open and sincere atmosphere »
  - « I don't fear to be judged or criticised »
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