



AT THE CROSSROADS

The Support Group Kit
on Alzheimer's Disease, Dementia & Driving

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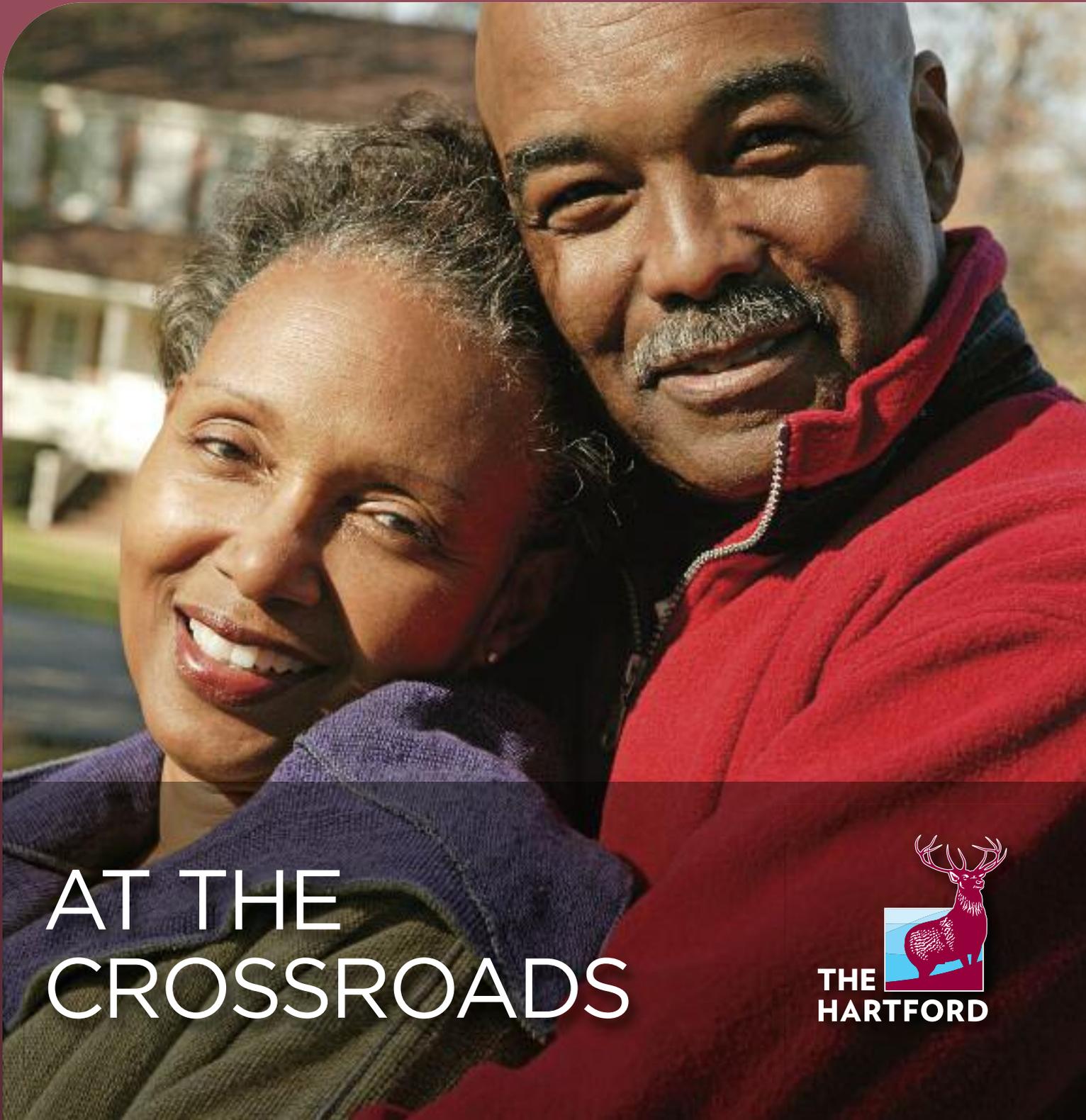
The Support Group Kit on Alzheimer's Disease, Dementia & Driving

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Introduction

For Support Group Leaders

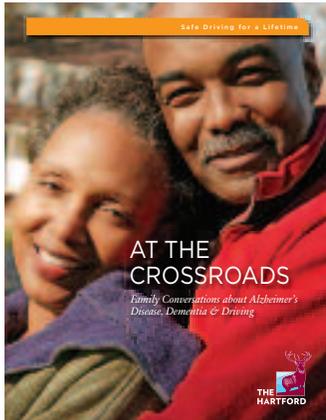


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The Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc., produced this course to help family members decide when and how individuals with dementia should limit or stop driving. The goal is to prolong independence while protecting the safety of drivers with dementia.



This course corresponds to the publication, *At the Crossroads: Family Conversations about Alzheimer's Disease, Dementia & Driving*, which offers practical suggestions for monitoring, limiting and stopping driving. Organizations serving caregivers of persons with dementia can use this tested model of instruction and support.

History of Involvement

The information in this course comes from several years of focused, collaborative work. Beginning in 1999, The Hartford, together with the MIT AgeLab and Connecticut Community Care, Inc., began investigating how family caregivers of persons with dementia handle driving and transportation issues. The first edition of the booklet, *At the Crossroads: A Guide to Alzheimer's Disease, Dementia & Driving*, is based on in-depth, structured interviews with 50 family caregivers of drivers with dementia and input from experts in medicine, gerontology and transportation.

In 2003, The Hartford produced the booklet, *We Need to Talk: Family Conversations with Older Drivers*, based on findings from the first nationally representative survey of its kind of more than 3,800 drivers age 50 and older, conducted in collaboration with the MIT AgeLab.

In 2009, The Hartford partnered with MIT AgeLab and the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) on a study with specially trained Occupational Therapists who conduct comprehensive driving evaluations and the drivers who completed this kind of evaluation. The guidebook *Your Road Ahead: A Guide to Comprehensive Driving Evaluations* was produced based on findings from that study.

Results from *At the Crossroads* Program Evaluation

In 2005, The Hartford worked with the MIT AgeLab and Boston University School of Medicine's Alzheimer's Disease Clinical and Research Program to develop, pilot and test a four-session course for caregivers on dementia and driving. Comparisons were made among three groups: those who attended the course; those who received only the *At the Crossroads* booklet; and those in a control group.

Compared to the other two groups, those who attended the *At the Crossroads* course reported that they:

- Felt more certain they would be able to handle driving-related issues
- Felt better prepared to address the issue of limiting or stopping driving with their relative
- Were more likely to have made a plan to talk with their relative about limiting or stopping driving
- Were more likely to express their feelings about the situation
- Were more likely to have talked to their relative about his or her driving

More detailed summaries of the findings can be found at www.bu.edu/alzresearch/driving.

Based on participant feedback, the piloted course was modified to the current version by changing the order and formatting of some activities, and reducing the number of sessions from four to three.

In addition, the feedback shaped changes to the original *At the Crossroads* booklet. The revised edition, now called *At the Crossroads: Family Conversations about Alzheimer's Disease, Dementia & Driving*, incorporates new materials adapted from these educational sessions to provide caregivers with additional support and tools.

As an instructor, you can use these materials with confidence. They are designed for practical application and based on solid evaluation research.

Course Format and Procedures

You'll find this course is organized into three two-hour sessions, with a total of nine lessons. If you cover the course during three consecutive weeks, participants will have time to apply the information between sessions and will benefit from having all the lessons covered within a relatively short period. This approach provides optimum learning within a realistic time-frame. The course is intentionally designed in a simple, step-by-step format. Having two or three organizations co-sponsor a course can ease the load for any one organization and increase the number of participants.

You can cover the material adequately by adhering to the recommended schedule, but you may want to change the timing or approach to suit your audience's needs. For example, an ongoing Alzheimer's caregiver group might cover the modules over a longer period of time and with emphasis on group support. A lunchtime course might require abbreviated modules with emphasis on providing information. The number of participants also will determine the time allotted for each lesson.



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To set expectations and keep the group on task, participants should know the agenda, objectives and timeframe up front. The Course Overview handout (in Session 1, *Assessing Driving Ability and Activity*) provides this information.

In preparation for the course, you should do the following:

- Check with your state motor vehicle department for current regulations on driving tests and to find out how the state handles notifications of potentially unsafe drivers.
- Order copies of *At the Crossroads: Family Conversations about Alzheimer's Disease, Dementia and Driving* booklets. Multiple copies may be ordered free of charge from www.safedrivingforalifetime.com/publications. Please allow 2 to 4 weeks for delivery.
- Make copies of the handouts to distribute to each course participant. Single copies are located in the back pocket of each session's support group leader guide and can be photocopied.
- Create a list of local and regional transportation resources for your area.
- Create a list of local driving evaluation and rehabilitation resources in your area. Use the sample in Appendix G as a guide.
- Locate, and bring for all participants copies of healthcare proxy forms acceptable for your state (local doctors' offices or hospitals may be helpful in securing copies of these).
- Bring copies of HIPAA release forms for all participants (local doctors' offices or hospitals may be helpful in securing copies of these).

The suggestions in *At the Crossroads* offer sensible guidance for even the most complicated situations. Unfortunately, difficult circumstances prevent "quick fixes." Participants should be commended for their efforts to work with their situation as best they can, given the complexities and the many options involved.

The Hartford appreciates the efforts of all those who use these materials in our shared goal to help families at the crossroads of dementia and driving.

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