

BRAIN HEALTH BULLETIN

*From Dementia Care Specialists, ADRC Southwest Wisconsin
3rd Quarter 2024*

Memory Café Coming to Lancaster

Most communities have plenty of gathering spaces available for people to meet up, chat, share a meal and take a break in a relaxing, supportive environment. But for people with dementia and their caregivers, finding a truly safe space out in the community can be a lot more challenging. Due to stigma and lack of knowledge, many people in the general public aren't sure how to interact with someone with dementia, and even business owners may be at a loss to handle a situation where someone with dementia is distressed, or struggles to make a purchase. Aware of these challenges, caregivers may hesitate to bring a loved one into the community, unintentionally putting them at risk of social isolation.

What Are Memory Cafés?

Memory Cafés are welcoming and inclusive community spaces specifically designed for individuals living with dementia, or any type of cognitive impairment, as well as their caregivers. Recognizing that both caregivers and older adults with dementia are at high risk for social isolation, these gathering spaces provide a supportive and stigma-free environment where participants can socialize, share experiences, participate in various activities and share a drink or meal.

How Do Memory Cafés Help People with Dementia and their Caregivers?

- **Social Engagement:** Unfortunately, social isolation is common for both people with dementia and their caregivers. Memory Cafés provide a supportive space for both you and your loved one to connect with others who understand your experiences, which can help reduce feelings of loneliness and depression.
- **Reduced Stigma:** Individuals with dementia often experience stigma and discrimination from those who fear or don't understand their condition. Memory Cafés serve as a non-judgmental space where participants are treated with respect and dignity, which can improve self-esteem and provide a greater sense of belonging.
- **Engaging Activities:** Memory Cafés generally organize various activities such as music therapy, art classes, reminiscence and games. Participating in these types of activities can stimulate the brain, support recall and improve overall well-being. If your loved one had a particular hobby or talent before dementia, continuing to engage in it can help them retain their skills longer, and may reignite positive feelings.
- **Emotional Support:** Sharing experiences and challenges with others in similar situations can provide emotional support for both you and your loved one. Memory Café participants often form friendships and can help you build your own network of support.

Beginning on August 2nd, Schreiner Memorial Library will be offering a Memory Café in partnership with the ADRC. For more information, please contact Hailey.

**Article adapted from Benjamin Rose*

Upcoming Events

August through October Subject to Change

August 2

10:00 AM [Schreiner Memorial Library Memory Cafe](#)

Lancaster, WI

August 7

9:30 AM [Boost Your Brain & Memory](#) Platteville, WI

August 12

5:00 PM [Dementia 101 & Memory Screens](#)

Brodhead, WI

September 6

[Dementia 101 & Memory Screens](#), New Glarus, WI

September 10

[Dementia Live](#), New Glarus, WI

September 17

4:00 PM [Dementia 101](#)

Barneveld, WI

September 28

10:00 AM [Wisdom and Wellness Seminar](#),

Monroe, WI

October 2

4:00 PM [Home Adaptations with Habitat for Humanity](#)

Muscoda, WI



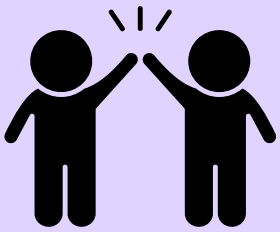
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Brain Health Breakdown

Social Connection

While just one aspect in our overall health and wellbeing, social connection is crucial to both our physical and mental health. People are social creatures by nature, meaning our relationships with our friends, family, community, etc., are just as important for our day to day lives. The Centers for Disease Control define social connection as the size and diversity of one's social network and roles, the functions these relationships serve, and their positive qualities. It involves feelings of belonging and having the support and care that you need. Research has shown that social connection can protect against chronic disease and serious illness as well as have several positive health benefits.



Social connections can give us both emotional and physical support. During hardships and stressful times in our lives, we can rely on our social connections for support. Similarly, we can turn to our social connections if needing help getting to a doctor's appointment or even to the grocery store. Research has shown that high quality relationships can help people live longer, healthier lives.¹

However, certain conditions, diseases, or experiences could hinder social connection and increase a person's risk for social isolation, which is a lack of social connections. According to the U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community from 2023, social isolation, may be as dangerous as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Additional studies have found that social isolation was associated with roughly a 50 percent increased risk of developing a dementia, 29 percent increased risk of heart disease, 32 percent increased risk of stroke, and higher rates of mental health conditions like depression and anxiety.²

To protect against some of these chronic diseases and serious illnesses, try and make more social connections. While this may be easier said than done due to barriers and challenges that could be faced, there are some ways to improve your own social connections. It can be as small as getting to know your neighbors, spending more quality time with family and/or friends, or even spending time with others in nature. On a larger scale, getting involved in your local community garden, joining a book club at your local library, attending a support group for caregivers or a memory café, or even volunteering with a group or organization can be ways to increase social connection in your life.

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/social-connectedness/improving/index.html>

2. <https://www.cdc.gov/aging/publications/features/lonely-older-adults.html>



If you have general questions and concerns please contact any of
our local offices at
800-514-0066 or [click here](#)

Dementia Digest

Facts and Updates

Study on caregivers finds brief bouts of lucidity are common among people with dementia



NIA-funded researchers conducted in-depth interviews with caregivers to document how many witnessed an unexpected, temporary return of mental clarity to individuals with advanced dementia. Most caregivers in the study reported at least 1 episode of lucidity. Episodes were typically brief. Most involved utterances, but nonverbal behaviors were also common. The mental capacities associated with these behaviors included recognition, awareness of surroundings, recognizing others' emotions, and goal-directed behavior.

New Research Suggests Skin Test Can Detect Dementia with Lewy Bodies

Many people who have dementia with Lewy bodies (DLB) experience delay and difficulty with receiving an accurate diagnosis, often seeing multiple specialists before being correctly diagnosed. Definitive diagnoses have only been possible after death, when deposits of misfolded alpha-synuclein can be confirmed under a microscope. In specialized research centers, scientists are studying whether such measures may help make more accurate diagnoses possible during life. One way researchers are doing this is by examining nerve fibers in small skin samples. Research into this technique continues.



New Biomarker May Help Detect Presymptomatic ALS and FTD

A newly discovered fluid biomarker may help identify amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) and frontotemporal dementia (FTD) before symptoms begin. In a study published in Nature Medicine, NIA researchers demonstrated the ability of their test to detect molecular signs of ALS and FTD. The findings suggest that the method could potentially be used in the future as a test to diagnose ALS, FTD, and other types of dementia before symptoms appear.



FDA Approves Eli Lilly's Alzheimer's Drug Kisunla (Donanemab)

The Food and Drug Administration approved a new Alzheimer's drug from Eli Lilly that has been shown in clinical trials to modestly slow a decline in memory and thinking abilities in people with the disease, the drugmaker said Tuesday. The drug, donanemab, which will be sold under the brand name Kisunla, is a monoclonal antibody infusion given every four weeks. The FDA cleared the drug for use in adults with mild cognitive impairment or early Alzheimer's disease, Lilly said. Kisunla works by targeting amyloid in the brain, which is considered a hallmark of Alzheimer's disease.



Caregiver Corner

“There are only four kinds of people in the world. Those who have been caregivers. Those who are currently caregivers. Those who will be caregivers, and those who will need a caregiver.” — Rosalyn Carter

Bringing Hope and Light to the Dementia Journey

A full day conference hosted by the Dementia Care Specialists (DCS) and partners across Wisconsin. Designed to empower the community, those living with dementia and their family/caregivers with the tools and supports to provide meaning and purpose. Multiple sessions are designed, led by and for people living with mild cognitive impairment (MCI) or dementia. Dr. Natali Edmonds and Sheri Fairmen are Keynote Speakers.

Roon

Question and answer videos related to all things dementia. Sub-topics include Getting to Know Dementia, Life with Dementia, The Hard Questions, Finding Help and Support, Safety Basics, and so much more.

“Millions of people turn to online sources like search engines and social media for medical information, but these platforms are often overwhelming and rife with misinformation. Roon was built by an interdisciplinary team of doctors, patients, caregivers, public health experts, designers, engineers, and content producers, all dedicated to our mission of reimagining the internet for health with trust and expert curation at its core.”



HELP US GATHER INFORMATION!!

Please fill out our support group survey to help us make decisions on adjustments to better serve our family caregivers! [Click here!](#)

Caregiver Support Groups

Caregiver support groups designed for family, friends, and other caregivers who are caring for a person with dementia, a chronic illness, or a disability.

Groups are designed for caregivers to gain validation, emotional support, and strategies to cope and care for your loved on. Below is a listing of the current caregiver support groups. If you would like to attend or would like to learn more, please contact your local ADRC.

<u>Grant</u>	<u>Green</u>	<u>Iowa</u>	<u>Lafayette</u>
Caregiver Connect Every Second Wednesday; 1:00-2:00 PM; Memorial Building, 860 Lincoln Ave, Fennimore, WI 53809	Day Time Caregiver Support Group Every Fourth Thursday; 10:30am – 12:00pm; Green County Human Services Building (N3152 State Road 81, Monroe, WI) Lower Level, Multipurpose Room 1	Mug Club for Caregivers Every Third Tuesday; 10:30 – 11:30 AM; Iowa County Human Services Building, 303 W Chapel St., Dodgeville, WI, 53533	Lafayette County Caregiver Support Group Every Fourth Thursday; 10:00 AM- 11:00 AM; Townsend Center 190 N Judgement St, Shullsburg WI, 53586
Platteville Support Group Every Third Thursday; 5:30- 6:30 PM; Platteville Public Library, 225 Main St., Platteville, WI 53818; Conference Room (2 nd Floor)	Night Time Caregiver Support Group Every Second Thursday; 6:00pm – 7:30pm; Green County Human Services Building (N3152 State Road 81, Monroe, WI) Lower Level, Multipurpose Rooms 2 & 3		
	Grief Support Group Every Third Tuesday; 5:30pm – 7:00pm; Green County Human Services Building (N3152 State Road 81, Monroe, WI) Lower Level, Multipurpose Rooms 2 & 3		

Technology Toolbox

Tools for Socialization

Companion “Robotic” Animals



Companion animals might even provide mental stimulation. In a 2021 study from Florida Atlantic University, dementia patients with robotic cats showed improved moods – several caregivers noted that their loved ones often slept with the cats – and more than 50 percent showed slight to moderate improvement in areas such as attention and language (researchers found that participants frequently talked to their pets). Mechanical animals can also help residents engage in reminiscence therapy – which involves using prompts such as photos and music to stir memories and conversation – by evoking recollections of their childhood pets.

Big Button/Picture Button Telephones

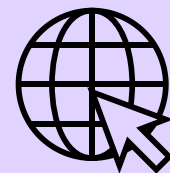


People with cognitive impairment may have difficulty operating everyday devices, such as telephones. To help your loved one, consider a simple-to-use, large-button phone, many of which feature picture buttons. This can help improve socialization by being able to easily communicate with other family members or friends without the complications.

Virtual Memory Cafés

While in-person memory cafes seem to be on the rise again after the pandemic, there are some virtual options for those interested in attending a memory café virtually. You can click on the link above and/or [click here](#) to learn about virtual memory cafes.

Make sure to Like and Follow the Dementia Care Specialist and ADRC Of Southwest WI pages on Facebook and also bookmark adrcswwi.org! If you have any friends or clients who would benefit from getting information, please recommend this page to them!



About the DCS

The ADRC of Southwest Wisconsin maintains a Dementia Care Specialist Program as part of the Dementia-Capable Wisconsin Initiative that was prompted by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. The DCS works one-on-one with people with dementia or cognition concerns, their caregivers, or their family members to provide support, education, and resources to ensure the highest quality of life possible while living in the community. Additionally, the DCS serves as a community resource to provide education and training to local businesses, facilitate caregiver support groups, and lead educational classes for caregivers and community members. The DCS is a catalyst in the dementia-friendly initiative and works to raise awareness of the unique needs of people with cognitive concerns and dementia.




Ask the DCS

Question: Why are activities important for people with dementia?

Answer: We all have the same core needs, regardless of whether or not we have dementia. Some of those needs include maintaining purpose, having our self-esteem boosted, giving and receiving love, and caring for ourselves and others. Keep these core needs in mind when you are interacting with an individual with dementia. How can you help them have purpose? How can you boost their self-esteem? How can they care for you?

The quality of life of an individual with dementia can improve when they are engaged in activities they enjoy and feel useful and purposeful completing. Many times as caregivers it can be easier and faster to take over tasks such as household chores, but individuals with dementia may feel a sense of purpose if they are able to contribute. If they are not able to complete the entire task safely and free of frustration it may be helpful to adapt the task. For example, if they like to cook, but can no longer safely do so on their own, they could be responsible for rinsing the vegetables. This can make them feel useful.

Keep some of the other core needs in mind. How can we boost their self-esteem and show them how they care for themselves and others? In the example of helping with dinner by rinsing the vegetables, we can thank them for their help and talk about how much we appreciate and admire all of the delicious meals they have prepared for us over the years. This is an example of how to apply core needs of individuals to improve their quality of life, but each individual with dementia is unique. Be creative and remember their life story.



**CAREGIVER
STRESS-BUSTING
DEMENTIA PROGRAM**

Program for Family Caregivers of People with Alzheimer's Disease or Dementia

Do you provide care for a loved one with Alzheimer's disease or dementia?

You Are Not Alone


We know caregiving can be stressful

This program teaches:

- Stress Management Techniques
- Relaxation and Coping Strategies

Mondays, July 29- Sept 30
10:00-11:30 AM
Virtual or in Darlington

For more info or to register:
Call: 608-426-4295
Email: bbeam@gchsd.org



Contact the DCSs

Bonnie Beam-Stratz, MA, MS
Green County Office
N3152 State Road 81
Monroe, WI 53566
Office: (608) 324-3600
Email: bbeam@gchsd.org



Hailey Loeffelholz, MSW
Grant County Office
8820 Hwy 35/61 South
Lancaster, WI 53813
Office: (608) 723-6113
Email: hloeffelholz@gchsd.org