

# BRINGING HOPE AND LIGHT TO THE DEMENTIA JOURNEY



A conference for professionals,  
caregivers and individuals living with  
Dementia



# KEYNOTE

## Lighting the Way: Innovative Practices for Compassionate Dementia Care

- Increase participants' understanding of the sources and impact of caregiver stress and practical strategies for reducing caregiver stress while caregiving.
- Equip participants with practical behavioral approaches and communication strategies to reduce stress and enhance the caregiving experience for both the caregiver and the person with dementia.
- Provide participants with strategies for promoting acceptance of help and care by individuals with dementia, thereby improving the quality of care provided and the overall well-being of both the caregiver and the person with dementia

### Dr. Natali Edmonds

Natali Edmonds is the host of the #1 Dementia Training channel on YouTube- Careblazers TV. Her free training videos have been viewed over 15 million times worldwide with new videos being released to the public every week. Her Dementia Careblazer Survival Guide has been downloaded over 70,000 times and is currently in use at the Department of Veteran's Affairs Caregiver Support

Program. With her background as a geropsychologist working for a large hospital system, she started recording videos and sharing information online as a way to help patients and families beyond the short hospital/clinic visits. It's her mission for any dementia caregiver in the world to have instant access to trustworthy information and support through her online teachings.

Her company, Dementia Careblazers was named the 2022 caregiving organization of the year by Care.com. She currently serves as a medical reviewer for national publications and has been a featured expert on local and national news.



# WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

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## **A1 Using Meditation to live better with Cognitive Decline**

Learn about meditation as we discuss its benefits for people with cognitive decline. Experience a few guided meditation practices, which are accessible to everyone. Questions will be addressed as to how to begin a meditation practice and integrate this supportive practice into your daily life. Handouts available to support a continued meditation practice at home.

Presenters, Sheri Lowe and Sharon Lukert are both meditators and have led meditation groups for many years and are now living with cognitive decline.

## **A2 It's a Party and Everyone's Invited: Exploring Creativity Through Poetry**

Chicago based poet Gary Glazner will lead a Poetry Party. We will perform well-loved classic poems and create our own original poem on a theme the group chooses. NBC's "Today" show, PBS NewsHour and NPR's "All Things Considered" have featured segments on Glazner's work.

# WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

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## **A3 Taking A Different Route- A Panel of Caregivers**

We are all on a journey from point A to point B. How we get there from those two points is unique to each of us. When dementia enters the situation, traditional routes may not be our best route. Learn from expert family caregivers what success means to them and how they were able to find success. As caregivers we must make sure we are taking care of ourselves as much as the person we are helping. Find out how they are making life meaningful and purposeful for their loved one and themselves. When we can be open to change, the possibilities become endless.

## **A4 Awake All the Senses: Sensory Engagement through Art, Music, Movement, Poetry and More - Tricia Blasko@ (3rd floor- 378/28ppl max)**

Tricia Blasko, Racine Art Museum and co-founder of SPARK! A Creative Engagement Program for People with Memory Loss and their Care Families.

Learn the art of engagement by using all the senses. This loaded session will walk you through an accelerated SPARK! program. Using visual art as the catalyst, explore exciting key elements to activate the senses and evoke a creative response. Imagination is crucial to the aging process, and an important part of our journey. By the end of the session, you will have a bag of tricks that can be taken and adapted in multiple ways – for groups or individuals—and can be tailored to any cultural organization.

What do you need to bring? Only your imagination!

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## **B1 Tips, Tricks, and Work-Arounds round table (2nd floor rm 223)**

This session is a round table discussion for people living with MCI and Dementia to share what is working for them and get ideas from other participants who have had similar challenges. When something does not work like it used to, we need to establish a different plan for success to be possible. There is always more than one way to solve a problem. When we can put tools in place that creates success, we beat dementia.

## **B2 SPARK: Skies of Wonder**

August skies are both beautiful and musical. Daylight slowly decreases after the high of the June Solstice, and twilight occurrences in nature reap a bountiful reward. Frogs at the pond continue their summer trilling calls; birds young and old begin to test out their wings in anticipation of the coming fall migration, while bats dart through the air in search of night flying insects. During our session, we'll learn about these late-summer natural phenomena plus how to simply enjoy and interpret them. And did you know that the Dog Days of Summer have an astronomical reason for their name? We'll find out why – and share some handy tips for night sky viewing. This program will take you from the Earth to the sky and considerably beyond.

# WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

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## **B3 Understanding Mild Cognitive Impairment: From Diagnosis to Daily Life**

More than 80% of Americans know little or are not familiar with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI), which can be an early stage of Alzheimer's disease. About one-third of people living with MCI due to Alzheimer's disease go on to develop dementia within five years. This session will provide information to attendees on MCI, the importance of early diagnosis and treatment, tools to assist in developing a chronic disease management plan and how to connect individuals to resources and support so they can continue to live their best lives.

## **B4 Filling Your Toolbox:**

Assessing and Addressing Behavioral Expressions in Dementia Care  
In the US, 11 million unpaid caregivers provide an estimated \$256 billion dollars worth of care to people living with dementia and many of these caregivers report substantial emotional, financial and physical difficulties. Possessing a sense of caregiver mastery, however, has been found to lessen not only the caregiver's depression and feelings of being overwhelmed but also the anxiety experienced by the people for whom they are caring. This presentation will focus on increasing the sense of caregiver mastery felt by those caring for people living with dementia via strategies they can use to assess and address the behavioral expressions/communications of their care recipient.

Dr. Schroepfer is a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Social Work.

# KEYNOTE

## Fitting the Pieces Together:

It's easy to get caught up and overwhelmed in the day-to-day challenges of life. Like the pieces of a puzzle, we work one piece at a time. It's important not to lose sight of the bigger picture though. By keeping our eyes on the overall purpose, gathering the right tools and collecting enough support, we can find motivation and inspiration to feel fulfilled and most importantly, THRIVE. These puzzle pieces we've gathered today, let's start putting them together.

## Sheri Fairman

Sheri Fairman has a Master's degree in Social work with over 14 years of experience working with the elderly and their care partners. She is a Certified Independent Champion Teacher, Trainer, Consultant and Coach with Teepa Snow's Positive Approach to Care and works as a Mentor on her team. Fairman is the owner of Dementia Care Solutions and provides consulting, coaching, training, and presentation services specific to quality dementia care. Sheri has developed an approach to dementia care called the Fish Approach. This is a communication focused approach to dementia care allowing care partners to identify their own verbal interactions and how to make a shift to better support people living with dementia.

