

BRIDGES

GERIATRIC / ADULT SPECIALTY TEAM
Bimonthly Newsletter

Connecting caregivers with training and consultation for the mental health needs of older adults

May/June

2017

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FIND COMMUNITY RESOURCES QUICKLY

NC211.org

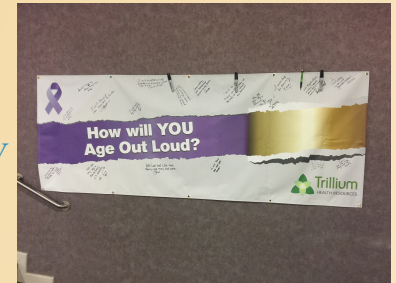
There are hundreds of health, human service and other helpful organizations listed for nearly any kind of need. Simply dial 2-1-1 any time of day or visit www.NC211.org to find the help you need.

JOIN OUR MAILING LIST

Stay up to date on events, news and information about Trillium Health Resources and how we work to Transform Lives!

HOW WILL YOU AGE OUT LOUD?

By Kimberly Williams, MSW, LCSW



May is Older Americans month and this year the theme is “Age Out Loud”. Aging has been and continues changing over the generations. We are living longer, healthier, more active, and more engaged in our communities. With the advancement of technology individuals are able to stay independent in their communities. Communities are also coming together for older adults. In fact according to a recent Forbes article (Dec 2016), “In central North Carolina, Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center, four other hospitals, and 230 churches formed FaithHealthNC, which trains and coordinates volunteers who provide individual assistance to high-risk populations, including older adults.” We are shifting our view of aging from a negative perspective to a positive experience in the journey of life. If you Google *positive aging* and you will find tons of information on how you can make aging a positive experience. With that said, how do YOU plan to **AGE OUT LOUD?**

HOW OLDER ADULTS ARE AGING OUT LOUD:

- Arthur Winston, who at age 100, retired from his job working for the Los Angeles Metro after 72 years missing only one day to attend his wife’s funeral in 1988.
- Mae Laborde, actress who began acting in her 90s.
- At 69, Canadian Ed Whitlock from Milton in Ontario, Canada, became the oldest person to run a standard marathon in under three hours (2:52:47).
- At 75, cancer survivor Barbara Hillary became one of the oldest people, and the first black woman, to reach the North Pole.
- At 82, William Ivy Baldwin became the oldest tightrope walker, crossing the South Boulder Canyon in Colorado on a 320-foot wire.
- At 83, famed baby doctor Benjamin Spock championed for world peace.



GROWING MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONCERNS FACING OLDER AMERICANS

by Frankie Glance, Administrative Assistant

As America's population ages, the need for mental and behavioral health services continues to increase. Psychologists are playing a critical role in addressing these needs. Psychologists are studying

and treating the mental and behavioral health problems associated with growing old, such as loss of spouse, loss of mobility and independence, admittance to a long-term care facility and declining physical and sometimes mental health. According to the *"American Psychological Association"*, some of the most critical concerns facing older Americans today are listed below.

Mental Health Concerns

- Twenty percent (20%) of people over 55 suffer from a mental disorder, and 2/3 of nursing home residents exhibit mental and behavioral health problems. Yet, less than 3% of older adults report seeing a mental health professional for their symptoms.
- Older Americans underutilize mental health services because of inadequate funding for mental health services; lack of collaboration and coordination among primary care; mental health and aging service providers; access barriers; stigma surrounding mental illness and treatment; denial that a problem exists; and lack of trained professionals in the provision of geriatric mental health services.
- Fear, distress, anger, stress, social support, and relaxation have been shown to influence immune and cardiac functions, susceptibility to infection, pain, asthma and recovery from surgery.

Depression and Suicide

- As many as 20% of older adults in the community and up to 37% of nursing home residents suffer from depression, a condition that may lead to suicide.
- Symptoms of depression and anxiety in older Americans are overlooked and untreated because they often coincide with other medical illnesses or life events that commonly occur as people age (e.g., loss of loved ones).
- Even though older Americans only make up 13% of the population, they account for 20% of the people who commit suicide. In fact, older Americans have the highest suicide rate of any age group.
- Three-fourths of older adults who commit suicide have seen their physician in the past month.

Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia

- Dementia, the irreversible deterioration of intellectual ability-often accompanied by emotional disturbances- afflicts as many as 7% of Americans over the age of 65 and 30% over age 85. People with dementia often suffer from depression, paranoia, and anxiety.
- Alzheimer's disease, the most common cause of dementia, today affects between 2.6 to 4.5 million Americans age 65 and over. It affects 12 million people worldwide, and it is expected to increase to more than 22 million people by 2025. In fact, the number of Alzheimer's disease cases doubles every five years in older Americans age 65 to 85.
- Early diagnosis of Alzheimer's is becoming increasingly possible due to the sensitive diagnostic tools developed by psychological and medical scientists.

Substance Abuse

- Alcohol abuse is a major problem for older Americans and is one of the eight leading causes of death for older persons. Five percent (5%) of older men and 1% of older women have alcohol abuse and dependency problems which lead to malnutrition, cirrhosis of the liver, osteomalacia, and a decline in cognitive functioning.
- It is estimated that 17% of older adults misuse and abuse alcohol and medications. Although the majority (87%) of older adults visit a physician regularly, about 40% of those who are at risk for substance abuse problems do not self-identify or seek services and are unlikely to be identified by their physicians.

Chronic Illnesses

- 85% of older adults have at least one chronic illness: Almost 50% have arthritis, 40% have hypertension, 30% have heart disease, 12% have diabetes, 30% have hearing loss, 15% have cataracts and 10% have a stroke.
- Data shows that approximately 70% of all primary care visits were driven by psychological factors (e.g. panic, generalized anxiety, major depression, somatization, stress, adjustment disorders). It has also been found that distressed patients utilize health care at a rate of two to three times higher than non-distressed patients (APA Public Policy Office, 2002).
- Behaviors including poor eating habits, inactivity, alcohol consumption and tobacco use contribute to the onset of chronic illnesses while other behaviors such as medication compliance and maintaining a healthy diet and exercise program often assist in the treatment and recovery (or remission) of chronic illnesses.

Need for More Geropsychologists







- Out of 32,183 full-time doctoral students, 140 or 0.4% are in programs that specialize in aging. Out of 32,789 APA members who are practicing psychologists, 589 or about 2% say their major field is geropsychology. (APA Research Office, 2004)
- Geropsychologists use behaviorally-based treatments to address primary mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety. They also offer assistance to older adults in coping with the psychological and emotional consequences of illnesses, loss of loved ones, relocation to new living situations, and care giving demands.

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO START LIVING THE LIFE YOU WANT!

by Ruthie Fredrick, BSW, QP

We tend to see life in sections rather than a continuous journey. According to *"Pocket Mindfulness"*, we box it up and stack its sections in an order that's almost taboo to break.

We set targets by age, and once past a specific age, we convince ourselves that the target has been missed and the opportunity squandered.

-  "Oh, I'm too old for all that".
-  "I can't go back to studying now".
-  "Concerts are for young people".
-  "I'd love to have travelled when I was younger".
-  "I love it, but I'd feel silly wearing it".
-  "People will think I'm crazy".



We are pre-programmed with societal restrictions that dictate when we can and can't do things. We then end up judging others by what they are doing at a particular age, using their decisions, hobbies, musical tastes, dress sense, possessions and other defining factors as ways to sum up their achievements, and ultimately their level of happiness.

The reality is that those having the most fun are those who break free of such limitations, those who empty the boxes, throw all the stuff on the floor and follow their intuition down roads that feel inspiring.

When you stop putting your life in boxes, when you stop considering time to be the determining factor in what you can and can't do, looking at old photos saying stuff like, *"I wish I was twenty, thirty or forty again"*, when you see life as a pathway upon which you only need to keep walking, you will stop being afraid to put one foot in front of the other, and stop giving a hoot what *the neighbors say*.

The only rules stopping you from living the life you desire are those you have adopted from the opinions and judgments of others. Own your life. Take your life back today. Whether you are 25 or 65, stand up right now and say; *"I'm taking my life back"*. Put the wheels in motion and take action on that thing you've wanted to do for the past month, year or perhaps even your whole life.

It's never too late: never too late to do, to say, to achieve - to start being you.

Never let self-fabricated, invisible boundaries stop you from doing anything you feel capable of doing. And even when you think you might not be capable, give it a shot. You will surprise yourself, I guarantee it!

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Dear Geri,



By Linda Windley, MS, QP, LRT/CTRS

I've heard that May is Older American's Month and the theme is "Age Out Loud." What in the world does that mean and how can I "Age Out Loud"??

Flossie Mae

Dear Flossie Mae,

Older Americans are more vocal than ever before and that means Flossie you can be a voice in the community. "Aging Out Loud" is a new concept among our older Americans. Administration for Community Living, (ACL) designed the 2017 Older American's Month (OAM) theme, [Age Out Loud](#), to give aging a new voice—one that reflects what today's older adults have to say.

This theme shines a light on many important trends. These trends include fall prevention, oral health and the senior, physical exercise, brain exercise, and the importance of sleep, to name a few. More than ever before, older Americans are working longer, trying new things, and engaging in their communities. They're taking charge, striving for wellness, focusing on independence, and advocating for themselves and others. What it means to age has changed, and OAM 2017 is a perfect opportunity to recognize and celebrate what getting older looks like today.

Let's amplify the many voices of older Americans and raise awareness of vital aging issues across the country. Join us as we speak up and out loud for Older American's Month!

Sincerely,

GERI



MEDICATION CORNER

By Linda Klund, RN, BSN

Spring is here and that brings on the spring cleaning of homes and yards. I want to remind you to also clean out your medicine cabinet/drawer. This is a good time to look at everything that has been stored there for who knows how long.

Here are some suggestions to help with this very important task:

- Take everything out of the drawer or out of the cabinet. That way you will have to handle each item and give it individual attention.
- Check each item for an expiration date. This includes any over the counter medications, gels, sun-blocks, first aid items, toothpaste, etc.
- If the item is expired dispose of it the right way. Medications can be taken to police drop boxes and some pharmacies will dispose of old medications as well. Things like toothpaste, bandages can be put in the trash.
- Don't forget to change your toothbrush. This is especially important after having a cold or flu.
- If you have a pill box, make sure it gets washed out periodically. It too can harbor germs.



Ok, now that everything is clean. make sure you have supplies for those summer emergencies (e.g. bandages, wraps, ice packs, sun block, bug replant, aloe gel, petroleum jelly, first aid cream, etc.). If you have allergy issues to bug bites Benadryl and First Bite work well to halt itching and swelling. A good pair of tweezers is needed for removing ticks and lets not forget the old but true remedies for bee stings such as chewing tobacco and shaving cream and an old credit card to get the stinger out.

Get prepared now so those summer first aid issues will not become major issues. And always make sure everyone (children too) knows how to contact emergency rescue personnel not only on the home phone but also on their cell phone.

Got any first aid suggestions that you'd like to share? Send them to me at Linda.Klund@trilliumnc.org and I will be glad to share them in our next newsletter.

Thought of the Day

"A happy person is not a person in a certain set of circumstances, but rather a person with a certain set of attitudes." - Hugh Downs



GARDEN PASTA SALAD

This lightly dressed pasta salad gets lots of flavor from kalamata olives and basil. A colorful mix of diced bell pepper, shredded carrot and tomatoes adds vitamins and minerals. Serve on a crisp bed of greens. Toss in canned chunk light tuna, cooked chicken or flavored baked tofu to add protein and make it more substantial.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups whole-wheat rotini, (6 ounces)
- 1/3 cup reduced-fat mayonnaise
- 1/3 cup low-fat plain yogurt
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon red-wine vinegar, or lemon juice
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup cherry or grape tomatoes, halved
- Freshly ground pepper, to taste
- 1 cup diced yellow or red bell pepper, (1 small)
- 1 cup grated carrots, (2-4 carrots)
- 1/2 cup chopped pitted kalamata olives
- 1/2 cup chopped scallions, (4 scallions)
- 1/3 cup slivered fresh basil

Preparation:

1. Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Cook pasta, stirring occasionally, until just tender, 8 to 10 minutes, or according to package directions. Drain and refresh under cold running water.
2. Whisk mayonnaise, yogurt, oil, vinegar (or lemon juice), garlic, salt and pepper in a large bowl until smooth. Add the pasta and toss to coat. Add tomatoes, bell pepper, carrots, scallions, olives and basil; toss to coat well.



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COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS

MAY

National Holidays

- ✦ May 7 - World Laughter Day
- ✦ May 14 - Mother's Day
- ✦ May 31 - National Senior Health & Fitness Day

Observances

- ✦ Mental Health Month
- ✦ Older Americans Month
- ✦ Family Wellness Month
- ✦ May 7 - 13 National Anxiety & Depression Week
- ✦ May 14 - 21 National Nursing Home Week

Opportunities

- ✦ May 5 - 9:30am-1:00pm
"Older American's Day"
Location: Craven County Senior Services,
811 George St., New Bern
For more information call: 252-638-1790
- ✦ May 11 - 9:00am - 12:00pm
Spring Health Fair
Location: Perquimans County Recreation
Center, 310 Granby Street, Hertford NC
For more information call: 252-482-6242
- ✦ May 25 - 10:00am - 1:00pm
"Aging Well Expo, Age Out Loud"
Location: Pamlico Community College
5049 NC-306, Grantsboro, NC 28529

THE GRANDS GROUP

(Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Meetings)

12-1 p.m.

At: Pitt County Council on Aging
4551 County Home Road, Greenville

UPCOMING MEETINGS

May 4, June 1, July 6, August 3, September 7,
October 5, November 2, December 7

JUNE

National Holidays

- ✦ June 18 - Father's Day

Observances

- ✦ June 15 - World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
- ✦ Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month
- ✦ Dementia Care Professionals Month
- ✦ Men's Health Education & Awareness Month

Opportunities

- ✦ June 1 - 10:00am - 1:00pm
Beaufort County Senior Expo
"Spring Into Health"
Location: Beaufort Community College
5337 US Hwy 264 East, Washington NC
For more information call: 252-940-6042



"SENIOR CENTER WITHOUT WALLS"

Is an award-winning program of [Episcopal Senior Communities](#) offering activities, education, friendly conversation, and an assortment of classes, support groups, and presentations to seniors. Each week, seniors can access over 70 groups by phone or online, all from the comfort of home.