Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley

Changing The Way We Think About Memory Loss

June 2022

June/July Meeting Schedule
All meetings held from 1 – 2:30 pm

June 1st - Speech and Language Impacts of Dementia. Onword Therapy. At Bethel.

June 7th - Annual Redefining Memory Loss (RML) Caregiver Conference and Silent Auction! 8:30 am - 4pm. Holiday Inn, Fargo.

June 8th - Sandy's Donut Day and Live Music! At Hjemkomst

June 15th - Community Service - Paying it Forward for Bethel Church/TNT Fitness. At Bethel

June 22nd - Caregiver Cafe. Contact Karen at 701-404-6712.

June 29th - Adv. Directives Working Group. Chelle Lyons-Hanson, Essentia and Marsha Nygard, Sanford. SPACE IS LIMITED. RESERVATIONS REQUIRED. Call 701-404-6712.

July 6th - Independence Day Celebration! Bring your family and friends! Yard games, Root beer Floats and Comet, the miniature horse! Urban Plains Park Shelter A.
3020 51st St. S. Fargo.

July 13th - Caregiver Burnout. Dr. Bess Martin, Essentia Health. At Hjemkomst

July 20th - Beginning Watercoloring Painting with Nicole Gagner. At Bethel.

July 27th - Caregiver Cafe. Call 701-404-6712

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Hi Memory Cafe friends,

"A gift you can give yourself right now:
Stop what you are doing. Close your eyes.
For the next 60 seconds, just breathe."
~James Clear, author of *Atomic Habits*

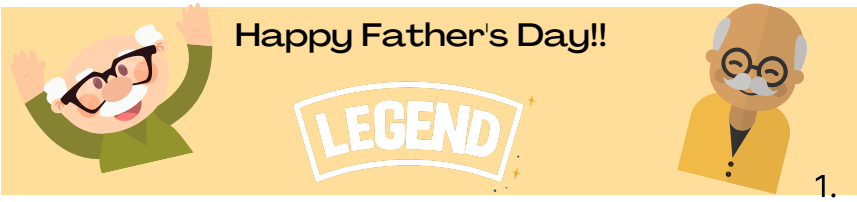
Although Mr. Clear did not specifically write that advice for caregivers, it aligns perfectly with the oft repeated counsel offered to caregivers - breathe, just take a few minutes to breathe. Unfortunately, when the daily pressures of caregiving begin to mount and moments of crisis arrive caregivers forget to pause and breathe. They are in crisis mode. And, too often they feel alone.

Memory Cafe is concerned about the health and well being of the caregivers in our community. The emotional and physical toll on caregivers is steep. Caregivers have a higher mortality rate and six times greater risk of developing dementia themselves (see p. 3). As we've personally encouraged our caregivers to attend the upcoming Redefining Memory Loss Caregiver Conference on June 7th it's been disappointing, and alarming at times to hear some of them say, "Well, I would love to come but I don't have anyone to stay with my spouse." "I hate to burden our kids, they are so busy." Or, "My kids work. I don't expect them to take a day off to with their father." "None of our neighbors or friends feel comfortable staying alone with my spouse."

As a community, we must do a better job of equipping families, friends, and community members to support caregivers of those living with dementia. Memory Cafe is committed to doing that. It is our hope that each caregiver will develop a "Circle of Six" well trained, committed individuals who are willing to partner with them throughout the course of their journey. These can be friends, extended family members, faith community companions who are knowledgeable about how to comfortably and respectfully communicate with individuals living with dementia and can offer support, accountability and respite to these couples.

As part of this commitment to support all caregivers in our community, not just those who participate in Memory Cafe, we are sponsoring our annual Redefining Memory Loss Caregiver Conference on June 7th (see page 5). We are delighted with the fantastic support we have received from our sponsors, vendors and Silent Auction organizers and we look forward to seeing many of you there!

Warmly,
Deb



Northern Rendezvous

by
Mark Bratlie

Red cabin perched on ancient rocks
I love it when we rendezvous
Leaving city's frantic bustle
I gladly journey north to you

Nature's arms reach out to greet me
dressed in green, blue, white and brown
All the pieces dance together
as sun provides the golden crown

Your vistas are forever etched
within my memory
Yet I will surely never tire
of the views you give to me

OTTO BREMER TRUST™

Memory Cafe Awarded $10,000 from Otto Bremer Trust Fund!

We are **very** grateful for the recent news that Memory Cafe was awarded $10,000 from the Otto Bremer Trust Fund for operational expenses! What an amazing blessing! Thank you Otto Bremer for this encouragement and tremendous support! We are so grateful!

Recognizing Jayne Clairmont!!

"Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley is one of the most competent and rich memory cafes in the country." Thank you Jayne for the many ways you inspire, encourage and support our Memory Cafe! The $5000 donation we recently received from you is another source of rich encouragement from you!

Mission Statement

The mission of Memory Cafe of the Red River Valley is to enhance the quality of life for individuals living with memory loss and their loved ones through socialization,
education, the creative arts, community service and community engagement.

"Still Here, Still Me"
Voices of Persons Living With Dementia

For This I am Grateful
By Christine Thelker

I remember going home to an empty house to try to digest my doctor's news, "You have vascular dementia." I thought to myself, I'm only 55 and I'm already a widow, the worst thing that could ever happen to me. But during my career working in Dementia Care, my co-workers and I had always felt that getting any type of dementia diagnosis would be the worst news a person could receive. Having witnessed the progression in so many people, I knew being a widow was nothing compared to what I was going to have to face. I soon discovered those past experiences would, in fact, help me forge through the coming losses.The diagnosis itself was not the worst of it, finding no help or resources was. I had to try to figure out 'what's next' on my own. I got my affairs in order, and came to terms with the fact that my career and the life I had known both were gone. I gave up my home, my car, my ability to drive, my hopes, and my dreams.

Yet a stubborn streak remained in me. I decided, 'I'm not done yet, ' and made it my new motto. Then I set out to find help, to find my new self. My search led me to Dementia Alliance International. At DAI, I found hope and purpose; this was life-changing and life-saving. I stepped onto a path of a whole new understanding of dementia, advocating, speaking engagements, and learning that life can be beautiful, even with dementia.

My journey will show others how being their own advocate, doing all they can to stave off the downward spiral, and staying positive can fight depression, provide longevity and increase the chance to enjoy many aspects of life. During this journey, advocating for others has been, in many ways, more fulfilling than my life before diagnosis.

About the author: Christine Thelker is 60 years old and has been living with Dementia since the age of 55. She lives in Vernon BC, Canada and spends her time advocating, writing and visiting with her family and friends. She especially enjoys her time with her little dog Phoebe. Christine loves to walk, be close to the water and enjoys gardening. She is well-known for her positive attitude and her sense of humor. She loves to smile. While dementia may be a terminal illness, the key message to Thelker's writing is that it is possible to continue to live life with purpose, hope, and joy. She is proving that as she lives each day. .

"The gratitude our family feels for Memory Cafe is hard to express in words. You provided an outlet for both Clark and I that was fun, loving, and supportive. We admire your commitment to the community and people like us living with memory loss. What you do is so needed. Thank you!" The Weisser family

For Our Health:
The Invisible Second Patient
By Dr. Sanjay Gupta
Stay Sharp

Here is a statistic I initially found hard to believe: Caregivers of spouses with dementia are up to six times more likely to develop dementia than people in the general population.*

In fact, anyone who helps care for a loved one with dementia has a higher risk of developing the ailment. These people are called "the invisible second patients". It seems ironic and cruel, but it makes sense if you consider the dynamic. The spouse caregiver has been, on average, married for thirty years, and there is now a significant upheaval in the couple's shared life. On top of that are increased stress, loneliness, depression, and inactivity. their devotion to such care often means a trade for a lower quality of life. And as I've heard many times, the emotional effects of witnessing the disease progress despite your care and support creates a sense of profound helplessness.

We hear about toxic stress in the media daily and its biological effects in the body--from the destructive slow boil of chronic inflammation to increased stress hormones like cortisol that inflict harm on the body over time. I have reported on the ills of toxic stress in America, mostly among communities where economic divides run deep due to income inequalities and a lack of general optimism about the future. This high-anxiety state can result in drug dependence, suicide, and a heightened risk of dying from illnesses like cardiovascular disease or stroke. But we don't think about the same toxic stress experienced by caregivers who often suffer similar emotional and physical consequences. The toxic stress experienced by caregivers who often suffer similar emotional and physical consequences. the biological reason for their elevated risk for developing dementia are partly the same: Chronic inflammation ravages the body and reaches the brain. In fact, caregivers are at increased risk not only for dementia but also for any ailment tied to chronic inflammation, which is every degenerative disease we know of today, from heart disease to cancer.

Some of the common symptoms of dementia, such as anger, agitation, mood changes, hallucinations, apathy, sleep disturbances, incontinence, and wandering can be very hard to manage.

It is crucially important that the caregiver prioritize self-care in addition to the care of the patient. This means staying on top of your own diet and exercise routines, engaging in activities that boost your well-being, spending time with friends and family, and taking breaks from your caregiving duties---breaks throughout the day (even just five minutes) and longer breaks throughout the weeks and months with certain days and weekends off.

Caregivers - put yourself on your to-do list!

***The Cache County Study, Journal of the American Geriatric Society 58, no.5 (2010)**

Just for Laughs!
Content Provided by Steve Froslie and Friends!

My son was chewing on electric cords, so I had to ground him.
It's OK, though. He's doing better and conducting himself properly.

Once upon a time there was a king who was only 12 inches tall.
He was a terrible king but he made a great ruler.

98% of people are pretty stupid. Glad I'm in the other 5%.

A Mexican magician said he will disappear on the count of 3.
He says: "Uno, dos..." Poof.
He disappeared without a tres.

A rookie pitcher was struggling at the mound, so the catcher walked up to have a talk with him. "I've figured out your problem," he told the young southpaw. "You always lose control at the same point in every game." "When is that?" "Right after the national anthem."

Why did the Mexican take anti-anxiety medication?
For hispanic attacks.

I have 2 unwritten rules:
1.
2.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"There is nothing more beautiful than someone who goes out of their way to make life beautiful for others."
~Mandy Hale

Building Skills and Community

The 'Adopt a Stuffed Animal' was a smash hit! We found homes for over 100 clean and cozy animals, including this adorable sloth! Comments from a few recipients: "I am giving this one to my spouse so she sleeps better." "I'm giving this one to the little boy who lives next to me. He is the nicest little boy!" "I don't know why I care so much about these guys so much but they are so soft and cute!" Thank you Brad, Sharon and Joan for rescuing, bathing, combing, and housing all of these adorable creatures over the past several months!

Scenes From our SMASH HIT 5th Birthday Party!

Our INCREDIBLE TEAM OF AMAZING Volunteers!
WHERE WOULD WE BE WITHOUT EACH OF THEM?!

Our talented musician friends, Sarah Morrau and Rebecca DeVries provided incredibly lovely background music throughout the afternoon!

Comments from our guests:

"Nothing but positive vibes!"
"Memory Cafe fills a void in our lives."
"It's about the possibilities."
"Memory Cafe is so committed to the community."
"Memory Cafe provides an outlet that is fun, loving, supportive."

Who could resist hugging adorable canines like Hazel Grace and Murphy? Thank you Brenda and Dave for sharing your precious companions with us! And thank you Brittany Johnson, owner of subtle b photography for shooting so many beautiful photos for us!

KILBOURNE GROUP

Stay tuned for photos of 200 beautiful pottery coasters our guests painted during the party! This event was sponsored by The Kilbourne Group and supported by the Katherine Kilbourne Center For Creativity.

ANNUAL REDEFING MEMORY LOSS CAREGIVER CONFERENCE: "I ALREADY TOLD YOU...DON'T YOU REMEMBER?"

Keynote Speaker: Erin Bonitto, Gemini Consulting
Tuesday, June 7th 8:30am - 4pm
Holiday Inn, Fargo

LAST CHANCE

LAST CHANCE

Registration
Walk in Registrations:
Cost: $45 Community Members
$75 Professionals
Lunch, Snacks & Refreshments Included

To Register:
-www.eventbrite.com - search Redefining Memory Loss
-Send registration form with check to:
Memory Cafe, PO Box 883, Fargo, ND 58107
-Scan QR code on back cover of newsletter

THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE CONFERENCE SPONSORS:

Essentia Health - Advocate level ($2500)
Eventide Senior Living - Partner level ($1000)
Sanford Health - Parnter level ($1000)
Cole Paper - Partner level ($1000)
The Marv Bossart Parkinson's Foundation -Partner level ($1000)

We are SO very grateful for the wonderful support of these wonderful community partners!

Building Skills and Community

Spoon Theory (Excerpted)
By Danielle Yevsa
www.patientsrising.org

We use jargon because it communicates the most common obstacles and triumphs of living with an invisible illness. "Because we look healthy on the outside, one of the greatest challenges we have is explaining to others how a person who looks so good can actually feel sick or be in pain," writes The Daily Migraine's Lisa Jacobson. "They do not understand the freedoms many of us have lost." One term that helps explain the inexplicable: spoonie.

A spoonie can refer to any individual who suffers from a chronic illness. These illnesses are often invisible; to most people, spoonies may appear healthy and able-bodied, especially when they are young. The daily feeling of being invisible can be one of the most challenging parts of being a spoonie.

The term was coined by Christine Miserandino, an award-winning blogger and patient advocate, when she was trying to explain to a friend what it's like to live with lupus. "How do I answer a question I never was able to answer for myself?"

So, she laid out a handful of spoons on the table and explained that the spoons symbolize all of a patient's daily energy reserves. Every activity, no matter how thoughtless and automatic, depletes from the energy supply. Getting out of bed, showering, getting dressed, eating, and any number of mundane tasks threaten to deplete energy at any given time. "When my spoon supply is depleted, my body takes over, and I no longer have a choice of what I want to do. I am forced to rest.

Spoon Theory speaks uniformly across the spectrum of illnesses that anyone with a long-term disease can relate. The explanation has become the medium of communication between "spoonies" – as many chronic illness sufferers choose to call ourselves.

The language of pain and chronic illness has bridged the miles and given each spoonie power — to be kind to ourselves, to acknowledge our illness and to affirm that we deserve access to medical treatments that ease our suffering.

The term, spoonie, reminds us that we are not alone in our struggle. Our limitations are universal. Validation of our normalcy through the confirmation that we have a shared story finally quiets the nag in my mind.

Painting Pickles!

Coming to the LLL Center in June!
All events held from 1-2:30 pm

Regularly Scheduled Events at the LLL Center:

T'ai Chi Chih - Tues. June 21st
Wood burning - Tues. June 21st
Volunteer Meeting and Education - Mon. June 13th (1:30
Caregiver Cafe - Wed. June 22nd
Music/Sing-a-long with the Vastag family - June 9th and June 16th

Other events at the LLL Center this month include

Games and Conference Prep with the Vastag family!
Please join us! Tues, June 2nd

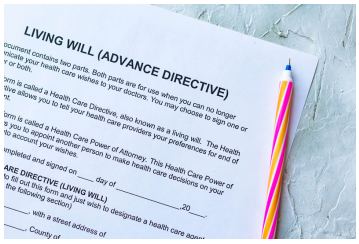
'Car Talk With Bob'
June 9th

Bob's1967 Camero made an appearance last month.

History of Photography and Cameras
Tues, June 14th

Art with Amanda June 28th
Watercolor Painting with Artist Nicole Gagner June 23rd.
We'll paint flowers instead of pickles this month!

Advance Directives Working Group - bring your designated agents. (this is a follow up session from the meeting held on May 11th at the Hjemkomst Center)
June 29th



Dementia Conversations- Alzheimer's Association, June 30th, 1-2:30 pm

Great News!
Introducing Lonna Whiting - Our Newest Board Member!

We are absolutely thrilled that Lonna Whiting has volunteered to be part of our Executive Board of Directors. She hasn't even attended her first board meeting and is already helping in so many impactful ways! Thank you so much for joining us Lonna!

Lonna Whiting is a writer and owner of lonna.co, an independent marketing and communications agency located in Fargo, ND. Since her mother's diagnosis of early-onset dementia in 2013, Lonna has used her writing and communications skills to raise awareness and advocate for improving the quality of lives for families affected by the disease. She received her BA in English Literature from Minnesota State University Moorhead in 2003 and her MFA in Writing from MSUM in 2007. Outside of her career and advocacy work, Lonna enjoys reading and claims the title of "world's okayest runner." She also loves spending time with her mother, who is now in the end stages of the disease but continues to enjoy life, especially holding hands, spending time in the sunshine, and eating peanut butter cups.

As a board member, Lonna hopes to help Memory Cafe become an even more powerful presence in the community, where people enjoying life with dementia and their care partners are free to be who they are without fear, stigma or shame. She can be reached at lonna@lonna.co.

The Emotional and Physical Toll (Excerpted)
The Caregiver's Guide to Dementia
by Gail Weatherill, RN, CAEd

We caregivers are notorious for ignoring our own needs until we're forced to take care of them. We go without sleep. we eat too much junk food or forget to eat at all. We don't have time to exercise. We isolate ourselves because no one understands us anyway. We foster these habits at our own peril - and that of our loved one.

The reality is that none of us is superhuman. We can get away with burning the candle at both ends for awhile. But sooner or later, the wick runs out and we get burned. Remember that dementia caregiving normally lasts for years, not weeks or months. It we want to keep going, we have to accept help whether we want to or not.

I like to remind people that caregiving is a voluntary job. As harsh as it sounds, we always have the right to walk away. Nobody *has* to do anything. We may feel like we have no choice but feelings aren't facts. The fact is we all have the right to say no.

I want you to remember that there are other options. If it ever becomes too much, you don't have to sacrifice yourself in the process. What is the value of the rescuer going down with the one in danger? Not to mention that you deserve to survive with a shred of sanity still intact.

Be kind to yourself. Seek professional help and join a dementia support group.

Caregiving Tips from Teepa Snow agingcare.com

Teepa Snow is one of the nation's leading dementia educators and coaches. Her pieces of advise for caregivers: Stop reacting. Stop your behavior of trying to correct them. Stop pointing out errors or mistakes. Stop trying to fix things. Stop raising your voice, and stop pushing your agenda. Stay tuned for the July newsletter when we'll expand on those pieces of advice!

Teepa's final piece of advice to caregivers is to TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF! "When it's not working, when something you tried to do didn't work, or when you're getting frustrated or angry, you absolutely need to learn to take a time out. It's critical to step away from the situation. Take at least three deep breaths—breathe in and out deeply!

When you are frustrated, angry or in despair, the person you are caring for picks up on and reacts to your stress level and intensity. They may not fully understand what you are feeling or why, but they will be impacted by your tone of voice, body language and emotional state. When you're angry, you're no good to them or to yourself.

Breathing deeply will help you get back to neutral, lower your stress level, and help you regain perspective about the situation you are trying to problem solve. Also, don't hesitate to ask for help. Putting support systems in place for surprising times when living with dementia is critical. Dementia care is hard work!"

Scenes from the vinyl record listening party!

Our volunteer janitorial service providers.

The Brain Healthy MIND Diet: 11 Foods to eat to keep your brain healthy

Samantha Cassetty, RD
nbcnews.com
Nov 22, 2019

It's not necessary - or even a good idea to wait for signs that your memory is slipping before you address your brain health. You can optimize your brain functioning by eating like your memory and thinking skills depend on it - because they do.

The MIND diet is a mashup between the Mediterranean diet and the DASH Diet, which was originally intended to help lower blood pressure. It also incorporates some specific advice for keeping your mind sharp. What's interesting is that even those individuals who even loosely followed the plan experienced a 35% lower risk of Alzheimer's disease (compared to a 53% reduction in risk among those who followed the diet more closely). Another study suggested that compared with people who weren't following its recommendations, those who followed the eating advice most closely had the cognitive skills of folks 7 1/2 years younger, which is a pretty dramatic benefit.

Separate research has also linked healthy eating combined with physical activity, participation in intellectually stimulating brain exercises, and looking after their vascular health through blood work and other measures scored 25% higher on tests that measure mental functioning. Executive functioning skills and processing speeds improved even more dramatically in this group.

To help you keep your brain sharp, load up on these foods, which are the pillars of the MIND diet:

- Dark leafy greens (six servings/week)
- Other veggies - 1 serving/day
- Nuts - 5 servings/week
- Pulses (beans and legumes) - 3 or more servings/week
- Berries - 2 or more servings/week
- Seafood - 1 or more servings/week
- Poultry - 2 or more servings/week
- Whole grains - 3 or more servings/day
- Extra virgin olive oil (or avocado oil as your backup)
- Wine - 1 serving/day
- BONUS - Dark chocolate (70% or higher) While not included on the MIND diet, dark chocolate has been linked to improvements in working memory and better blood flow to the brain. It's also thought it might enhance your brain's capacity to learn as you age.

Foods to limit: fewer than 5 servings of sweets/week, fewer than 4 servings of red meat/week, fewer than 1 serving of cheese/week, fewer than 1 serving of fried or fast food/week, fewer than 1 tablespoon of butter/day.

Expanded Respite Services from LSS Now Includes ND Residents!

The Senior Companion Program from LSS ND has been permanently assigned to LSS MN. They are now confident that their grant funding is stable and don't anticipate any disruption in their services.
They have several volunteers who are now available to take new clients and anticipate accommodating 5-7 new clients. Phone and video calls are options for those who want them, and they even have approval for the volunteers to do driving, if the volunteer wishes. This is intended to be an add-on to companionship not mainly as a transport service. All volunteers undergo fingerprinting, federal and ND background checks, NSPOW checks as well as driving checks for volunteers who do driving for clients.
This wonderful service is **FREE!** Contact **Amy Franz at 701-205-2690 or email her at Amy.franz@lssmn.org**

Sample Discreet Letter to Your Parent's Doctor

When Your Aging Parent Needs Help
Leslie Kernisan, MD, MpH and Paula Spencer Scott

Dear Dr. Adams:

I am the son of your patient, Zeke Adams. He has an appointment with you on June 23rd at 9am.

I am writing to let you know of some memory and thinking problems we have noticed over the past several months. Dad denies any problems when we try to talk to him about it and we don't believe he will bring them up to you during his visit with you.

Since this seems to be an important health issue we want to make sure you are aware so you can take appropriate action to evaluate him medically.

Here are the specific things we have noticed: (list your concerns)

Because of these changes, we're worried that he's developing memory problems and are wondering if it might be something like Alzheimer's?
"

We are also worried about his safety when it comes to driving and managing his finances. We're hoping you will be able to advise him, and us, as to how to address these issues and keep him safe.

Because he became upset with us when we mentioned his doctor should know about these changes, we would appreciate your discretion in not revealing that we have tipped you off. We are having difficulty getting him to let us help him, and we're worried about him finding out about this letter.

Thank you,

Jeremy Adams
709-448-4549

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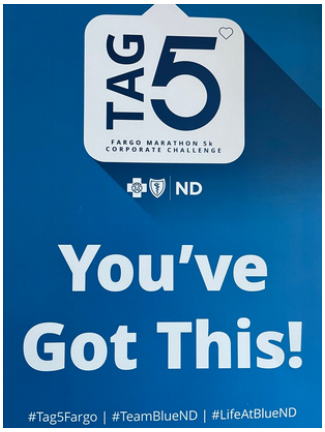
hello@memorycaferrv.org



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Heartland Trust Company