DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY WALKING GROUPS:
A START-UP GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS
OUTLINE

- Introduction
  Marigrace Becker, UW Memory & Brain Wellness Center

- Getting Started with Dementia-Friendly Walking Groups
  Cayce Cheairs, Seattle Parks and Recreation
  Kenna Little, Alzheimer’s Association, Washington State Chapter

- Question & Answer Session

- Wrap Up: Additional Resources & Next Steps
OBJECTIVES

Participants will be able to:

- Describe the benefits of a dementia-friendly walking group
- Plan, launch and sustain a dementia-friendly walking group
- Connect with others in their region who would like to explore launching a dementia-friendly walking group
ORGANIZERS & HOSTS

Webinar and accompanying written guide produced by the Dementia-Friendly Communities and Early Stage/Dementia-Friendly Programs teams of the Dementia Action Collaborative:

- Dana Allard-Webb, Aging & Long Term Support Administration
- Marigrace Becker, UW Memory & Brain Wellness Center
- Cayce Cheairs, Seattle Parks & Recreation
- Hilarie Hauptman, Aging & Long Term Support Administration
- Jan Higman, Alzheimer’s Society of WA
- Cathy Knight, Aging & Disability Services
- Lynne Korte, Aging & Long Term Support Administration
- Bob Leroy, Alzheimer’s Association
- Kenna Little, Alzheimer’s Association
- Cathy Maccaul, AARP Washington
- Myriam Marquez, Community Advocate
- Christina Marneris, Area Agency on Aging and Disabilities of Southwest Washington
- Marty Richards, Social Worker
- Cheryl Townsend-Winter, Washington State Council on Aging
- Bob Wellington, Community Advocate

Hosted by AARP Washington
DEMENTIA IN WASHINGTON STATE

- Around 107,000 people living with Alzheimer’s disease or other dementias
- Over 320,000 people caring for a loved one with Alzheimer’s disease or other dementias

Number of people with dementia will increase 180% by 2040
DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

Where people with memory loss are empowered to remain actively involved in community life.
GETTING STARTED WITH DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY WALKING GROUPS

Cayce Cheairs, Seattle Parks & Recreation
Kenna Little, Alzheimer’s Association, Washington State Chapter
DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY WALKING GROUPS IN WASHINGTON: A BRIEF HISTORY

- Summer 2011 (Seattle): Summer walking program at Jefferson Park
- Spring 2012 (Seattle): Woodland Park Zoo Walk
- Fall 2013 (Seattle): Out & About neighborhood walking group
- Fall 2014 (Tacoma): Point Defiance Zoo Walk
- Summer 2015 (Edmonds): Edmonds Waterfront Walk
- Spring 2016 (Bellevue): Bellevue Botanical Gardens Walk
- Spring 2017 (Seattle): Garden Discovery Walks
- Summer 2017 (Lacey): Lacey Senior Center lakeside walks
- Summer 2017 (Edmonds): Cascadia Art Walk
- Fall 2017 (Seattle): Singalong & walking group
BENEFITS OF WALKING GROUPS

Promote health, reduce isolation, and improve quality of life.

Benefits to participants

- Social connection
- Exercise
- Fresh air
- Exploration
INCLUSION AND EQUITY

● Community Input
  ■ Assess interest, buy-in
  ■ Community leadership
  ■ “By us, for us” “Nothing about us without us”

● Racial equity and inclusion
  ■ Health and care disparities
  ■ Cultural Awareness
  ■ Outreach
  ■ Partnership
WHO ATTENDS?

- People with memory loss
  - Stage-specific or not
- Care partners - family and friends
- Integrated groups
  - Memory loss not required
- Pros and cons to different models
  - Level of screening required
  - Level of safety concerns
“The social aspect and camaraderie of the zoo walks is our favorite part. It is a place where my husband can feel comfortable just being himself. For me, the bond that has been created with the other care partners has been a wonderful support system...” - Paula S, care partner, Seattle Zoo walk
“I have seen things today that I have never seen before. I was just seeing them as they are now, in the moment.” – Roger S, living with dementia
WEST SEATTLE SINGING AND WALKING GROUP

Other residents notice that when the group returns from the walks, they are “all smiles, full of life, bounding through the door!”
WHERE / WHEN

- Many possible locations:
  - Parks, zoos, museums, gardens, malls, neighborhoods...
- Same location vs Rotating locations
- Frequency
  - Weekly, Semi-monthly, Monthly
“It is very peaceful and the volunteers are so knowledgeable about the artwork. They come up with the most interesting facts!” - Betty E., Care Partner
OUT & ABOUT WALKS

“It's nice to get together to walk a new neighborhood every time we're out. We like seeing new places and learning about art, history, and architecture. This is where we find our support for this journey, with our new tribe.”

- Carla G, care partner

Founders Nancy and Steve Olsen
LOCATION CONSIDERATIONS

- Safety and accessibility
- Restrooms
- Cost
- Distance and pacing
- Transportation and parking
MARKETING

● Flyer Distribution (in person or via mail)
  □ Physicians and medical providers
  □ Places of worship
  □ Community spaces (i.e., senior centers, libraries, local organizations)
  □ Community bulletins at gyms or cafes
  □ Support groups

● Press Releases and Newsletters

● Online events calendars
  □ Local Alzheimer’s Association chapter community calendar
  □ Dementia-friendly recreation website, such as www.momentiaseattle.org
  □ Neighborhood associations and city resources

● Interviews or segments with local news stations, radio stations, or podcasts
REGISTRATION

- Registration process
  - screening
- Communications

**ESMIL TELEPHONE SCREENING FORM**

Name: ____________________________ Age: ______

Mental (YES) (NO)

Assessment date: __________ By: __________

Speak with: _______________________

Program(s): _______________________

Participant Information

Address: _________________________

Phone: ___________________________

Health concerns:

Psychiatric or mental health concerns: _______________________

Medications: _______________________

Highest level of Education completed: _______________________

Employment status: _______________________

Participant Lives Alone (YES) (NO)

Yes, who lives in household: _______________________

Primary Contact Information

Name: ____________________________

Address: _________________________

Phone: ___________________________

Email: __________________________

Participant Background Information

Diagnosis: _________________________

When? ___________________________

By Whom? _________________________

How long have you been treating patient?

What are some of the symptoms you have been noticing recently? (e.g., changes in mood or behavior such as agitation, problems following a conversation, problems with speech of comprehension, lack of interest in social situations, inability to eat, stay focused, and stay interested in a group for 30 minutes, etc.)

What has the person reacted to the diagnosis and what stimuli?

Would you feel comfortable talking about these changes with other people facing similar issues?

Have you ever been in a support group or program before? If so, what was that experience like for you?

Do you think a group like this might be helpful to you? In what ways?

Are there circumstances or stresses in your life (family or participants) you would like us to be aware of?
VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP

How many?
- 1:5 volunteers to walkers

Roles
- Organizer, walk leader, sweep, float

Volunteer training and commitment
BUILDING SENSE OF COMMUNITY

- Name tags
- Birthdays, holidays, anniversaries
- Nurturing connections
- Personable reminders
- Follow-up after absences

Zoo Walkers: Annual photo on the carousel
POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- Liability
- Transitions out of the program
  - Care partners and bereavement
- Weather Policy
WALKING AND MORE...

Creative Expression
- Art or music included to bring people together

Learning Opportunities
- Local history, culture, plants, and animals...

Social connection
- Most walks end with a social gathering at a cafe

Garden Discovery Walks
QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION
MORE INFORMATION & NEXT STEPS

Resource Links

- Dementia Action Collaborative: www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/dementia-action-collaborative (Includes links to written Dementia-Friendly Walking Group guidelines, Webinar powerpoint and recording.)
- Dementia Friendly America: www.dfamerica.org
- Dementia Friends USA: http://dementiafriendsusa.org/
- Momentia Seattle: www.momentiaseattle.org (Highlights variety of dementia-friendly programs)

Stay in Touch!

Let us know if you start up a dementia-friendly walking group. We’d love to hear how it goes!
Contact Marigrace Becker with the DAC, 206-744-2017, mbecker1@uw.edu
QUESTIONS?

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