Creating and Sustaining Memory Cafés

March 16, 2016 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
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Webinar overview

• What are memory cafés and why are they needed?
• Who attends memory cafés?
• Starting a memory café: The people
  – Community advocates
  – Leadership
  – Trained volunteers
• Starting a memory café: The place
• Starting a memory café: The funding

Overview cont’d

• Marketing the café
• Café identity, rituals and programs
• Assessment
• Beyond memory cafés
• Listening to the voices of people living with dementia
Memory cafés offer people with dementia and their care partners the opportunity to enjoy regular, enjoyable social interaction with others in similar circumstances in a safe, welcoming, stigma-free environment.

Friendships are formed and some people acquire a new social role: dementia advocate.
The most well-documented risk factor for Alzheimer’s and other dementias is **AGE!**

Another risk factor is **Social isolation**
Who attends memory cafés?

• People living with memory loss and other symptoms of dementia
  – Having an official diagnosis of some form of dementia is not necessary
  – However, it is important to be explicit about the memory café serving people living with dementia
• Care partners (spousal, adult children, friends)
• Sometimes paid caregivers accompany clients
• Visitors interested in learning about memory cafés
How we got started

Planning began in January, 2011
Grants awarded in late spring, 2012
Part-time program coordinator hired in September, 2012
First café opened in November, 2012

Starting a memory café:
The people

- Memory café community advocates
- Memory café leadership: if possible, a paid coordinator with experience in
  - Working with people with dementia
  - Recruiting, training, and supervising volunteers
  - Marketing through a variety of outlets
  - Managing budgets
- Trained volunteers

The place

Locations of Fox Valley Memory Project memory cafés
The funding: Income

- Grants
  - Community foundations
  - Other foundations
  - Service clubs
- Individual donors
- Corporate sponsorship
- Faith community donations

The funding: Expenses

- Salary for program coordinator?
- Printing brochures, flyers, posters
- Purchase of nametags, games, puzzles, other supplies
- Purchase of coffee, tea, snacks, etc.
- Rental of café room?
- Payment for program leaders?

Marketing the café

- If you build it, will they come?
- Connecting with the medical community
- Laying the groundwork: connecting with community organizations
- Media (including social media)
- Need for continuous marketing: dementia is a progressive condition!
Operating the memory café

• Every café will develop its own identity
• Rituals for the beginning and ending of the café – why they are important
• Programs:
  – Creative engagement activities (poetry, storytelling, music making, visual art making, puppetry, etc.)
  – Favorite books, restaurants, vacations, etc.
  – Games ("Price is Right," "Name that Tune")
  – Holiday celebrations
  – Connection with the natural world
  – Service projects
  – Programs by regular café volunteers and by one-time-only guests
Assessment

- Why we do it
- How we do it
- What we’ve learned
  - 87% say attending memory cafés makes them feel like they’re still involved in the community
  - 89% say attendance improves quality of life
  - 85% say they learn more about dementia at cafés
  - Meeting new friends is the #1 source of enjoyment
  - They do not like childlike activities
  - They want more music, dancing, and outings

Beyond memory cafés

The “On a Positive Note” chorus

Outings
Listening to their voices

• “It’s very non-judgmental. No one cares who you were if you can’t remember words now.”
• “Because we’re here, it says we need this and we want this.”
• “It’s good for caregivers, too.”
• “You feel uplifted, validated. This isn’t the end of the line. There’s so much more that can be done.”
• “We’ve become friends.”