

2026 PCA Regional Conference on Aging



***The Future Belongs to Wellness:
Behavioral, physical, mental and financial.***

"Health is a state of body. Wellness is a state of being." ~ Jay Stanford.

OCTOBER
27-29
2026

PCA
642 North Broad Street
Philadelphia, Pa 19130

An in-person conference



PHILADELPHIA CORPORATION FOR AGING



INTRODUCTION

The 2026 Regional Conference on Aging, presented by Philadelphia Corporation for Aging, will be an in-person event again this year. All sessions will be presented at PCA's offices – 642 North Broad Street, October 27th – 29th, 2026.

Philadelphia Corporation for Aging is again offering a cutting-edge program and continuing education credits for professionals who work with older adults. Nationally and regionally recognized content experts will present relevant, practical and current information that will be immediately beneficial to anyone working in the aging arena. The conference is a cost-effective and convenient way to increase your knowledge and skills and get the CE credits you need.

Cost of each one-hour plenary session will be **\$20.00 each**. Cost for all 2-hour sessions will be **\$40.00 each**.

CEU Credits for those who require them will be provided at **NO CHARGE** this year.

A **session evaluation is required** in order to issue any CEUs.

Program Planning Committee

Javella Caines-Phillip, PHR, MPA, MHRM – Conference Chair

Philadelphia Corporation for Aging

Brian Duke, MHA, MBE

Brian Duke Associates

Nora Dowd Eisenhower

Volunteer State President – AARP Pennsylvania

Kristin Long

Philadelphia Corporation for Aging

Carol-Ann Merritt

Philadelphia Corporation for Aging

Wanda Mitchell, MSW

Philadelphia Corporation for Aging

Nancy Morrow, MSW

Consultant

Thomas Shea, M.Ed.

Philadelphia Corporation for Aging

Erika Solomon

Philadelphia Corporation for Aging

Margaret Stevens, MPH, MSW

Main Line Health

Sharon D. White, MSS, LCSW

Philadelphia Corporation for Aging

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

All professionals who work with older adults and their families and those in related professions will benefit from attending the Regional Conference on Aging. They include:

- Administrators and directors
- Adult daycare personnel
- Activity and recreation therapists
- Assessment workers
- Care/case managers
- Legal and financial professionals
- Home healthcare personnel
- Marriage and family therapists
- Nurses
- Psychologists
- Rehabilitation therapists
- Service coordinators
- Social workers
- Staff developers
- Students

Sessions covering the following subject areas will be featured:

- Behavioral Health and Aging
- Caregiving
- Diversity Issues
- Population Health Management Strategies
- Health and Wellness
- Long-Term Care Issues
- Aging-in-Place
- Public Policy and Public Entitlements
- Social Determinants of Health, and More!

Continuing Education Credits

Continuing education credits (CEUs) are available for specific sessions for Social Workers and Nurses. If you are not sure whether your licensing organization will accept conference CEUs, please contact them for clarification.

Social Workers

Pennsylvania:

As a CSWE accredited program, the Bryn Mawr College Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research (GSSWSR) is a pre-approved provider of continuing education for social workers, professional counselors, and marriage and family therapists in Pennsylvania and many other states.

The following sessions may be submitted for **1.0** or **2.0 Social Work CEUs**:

- TU02** – SMI Reimagined: The Philadelphia Model (2 CEUs)
- WE01** – Fostering Wellness Through Restorative Grieving ... (2 CEUs)
- WE03** – Contexts for Capacity: The Intersection of Psychology, Social Work and the Law (1 CEU)
- WE04** – Behavioral Health Wellness for Older Adults (1 CEU)
- WE05** – The Future of Wellness in Aging Services ... (1 CEU)
- WE06** – Thriving, Not Just Surviving: Self-Care Strategies for Personal and Professional Success (1 CEU)
- WE07** – Calm in the Chaos: Cognitive Behavioral Strategies ... (1 CEU)
- WE08** – The Involuntary Commitment Process (1 CEU)
- WE13** – The Wellness Continuum: Wellness Through Serious Illness and End-of-Life (1 CEU)
- WE15** – How to Overcome Exhaustion and Discouragement ... (2 CEUs)
- TH03** – 5 Ways to Increase Client Engagement in Family Caregiver Support Services (2 CEUs)
- TH05** – Healing Forward: Building Wellness Through Resilience ... (1 CEU)
- TH06** – Wellness from Within: How Positive Intelligence Transforms ... (1 CEU)
- TH07** – Finding Stillness in the Service: Mindfulness Tools ... (2 CEUs)

Nurses

The following sessions may be submitted for **1.0** or **2.0 Social Work CEUs**:

- TU02** – SMI Reimagined: The Philadelphia Model (2 CEUs)
- WE01** – Fostering Wellness Through Restorative Grieving ... (2 CEUs)
- WE04** – Behavioral Health Wellness for Older Adults (1 CEU)
- WE07** – Calm in the Chaos: Cognitive Behavioral Strategies ... (1 CEU)
- WE13** – The Wellness Continuum: Wellness Through Serious Illness and End-of-Life (1 CEU)
- WE15** – How to Overcome Exhaustion and Discouragement ... (2 CEUs)
- TH07** – Finding Stillness in the Service: Mindfulness Tools ... (2 CEUs)

State licensure boards, however, have final authority on the acceptance of individual courses. If you require continuing education credit from a board or association not listed, please contact your state board or association for individual approval.

To receive CEUs:

You must complete an evaluation for each session that is offering CEUs in order to receive them. The last question on the evaluation form, labeled: Identification for CEU Certificate, must be completed so that your CEU Certificate can be e-mailed to you after the conference has concluded. Please consult the lists above to be certain that the session(s) you are attending offer CEUs – either for Social Work or Nursing.

CEU Costs: CEUs are being provided at no cost to participants again this year.

Registration Payment for 2026 Regional Conference on Aging

You may use a credit card to pay for all sessions directly on the registration site. If your agency historically pays by check, please contact Thomas.shea@pcacares.org to make arrangements to do so. The cost per session this year is only \$40.00 for each 2 hour session and \$20.00 for 1 hour sessions.

Free parking will be available, on a first-come basis, in PCA's lot on 15th Street.

From BROAD St., proceed west on NORTH Street (one way) for one block. At the stop sign at 15th Street, go left, then right into the black chain-link, fenced-in parking lot on 15th Street.

There is **no parking** in the wrought iron fenced in lot on North St.

Instructions for On-Line Registrations

The Conference Registration Site URL is: <https://cvent.me/3ZnkR9>

INDIVIDUAL REGISTRATIONS

Step 1. Choose your Registration Type from the drop-down menu – depending on your selection, you may be required to enter a Discount Code to complete your registration. If you are a “General Registration”, no code is needed.

Enter your Personal Information **(If you are a PCA or PCACC staff member, you must use your work e-mail address).**

Step 2. Choose the session(s) you wish to attend. Be sure to choose only one session from the morning and afternoon concurrent sessions drop-down list. Once you have made your choice, hit the white “**Select**” button. It will turn blue and indicate “**Selected**”.

The maximum number of sessions for Tuesday is two (2). Wednesday and Thursday the maximum is three (3). Once you have made your selections, click **NEXT**.

Step 3. You will be taken to your registration summary. Since this is an individual registration, scroll down to the ORDER SUMMARY, and enter your discount code (if you have one). If you have a balance, choose your payment method.

Step 4. You may pay by Credit card right on the registration site. If you are paying by check, please select “CHECK” and bring your check with you to the registration desk on the day of your first session. If you wish to mail your check in advance, please address it to:

Philadelphia Corporation for Aging
642 North Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA. 19130
Attn: Tom Shea – 2026 Regional Conference

GROUP REGISTRATIONS

Step 1. if registering multiple staff members, **each person registered must have their own e-mail address.**

This identifier will generate the QR code that will be sent to all registrants just prior to the conference and used to print out their badge at the Conference Registration Desk. The first person in the group that registers will also receive the **Group Invoice**. Please be sure to give that to you Manager or Center Director.

Step 2. Choose your Registration Type from the drop-down menu – depending on your selection, you may be required to enter a Discount Code to complete your registration. If you are a “General Registration”, no code is needed.

Step 3. Choose the session(s) the first person wishes to register to attend each day, **choosing only one session per time slot**. Click “next” at the bottom of each page. The maximum number of sessions for Tuesday is two (2). Wednesday and Thursday the maximum is three (3).

Step 4. You will be asked if you wish to register an additional person. Choose your answer from the drop down, then click “next”.

Step 5. When finished, you will be asked to enter a discount code if you have one. If this is a general registration, you may skip this question and move on to the “payment method”. If you have had a discount code in past years, check with your manager or Agency Director to acquire it.

Step 6. For payment method, choose CHECK (if your agency typically pays with a check) or credit card and fill in all the required fields.

Step 7. You will receive an e-mail confirmation on your sessions, and you should have a “0” balance if you paid by credit card. If you are paying by check, please send a check for the balance and include a copy of the invoice to the address below.

Philadelphia Corporation for Aging
642 North Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA. 19130

Attn: Tom Shea – 2026 Regional Conference

Feel free to contact Tom Shea at thomas.shea@pcacares.org if you have any questions.

2026 PCA Regional Conference on Aging – October 27 - 29

Tuesday: **Breakfast: 8:30 AM – 9:45 AM**
TH01 – Panel of Pundits– 10:00 AM – Noon
Lunch: 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM
TH02: 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Wednesday: **WE01: 9:00 AM– 11:00 AM**
WE02: 9:00 AM– 11:00 AM
Sessions 3-7: 11:15 AM – 12:15 PM
Lunch: 12:15 – 1:15 PM (on OWN)
Sessions 8-11: 1:15 PM – 2:15 PM
Session 12 - 14: 2:30 PM – 3:30 PM
Session 15: 1:15 PM – 3:15 PM

Thursday: **Plenary - Senior Centers: 9:00AM - Noon**

Session 2: 10:15 AM – 12:15 PM
Lunch: 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM (on OWN)
Session 3: 1:15 PM – 3:15 PM
Session 4: 6: 1:15 PM – 2:15 PM
Session 7: 1:15 PM – 3:15 PM

CODE	SESSION TITLE	PRESENTER(S)
TU01	The Panel of Pundits Discuss Aging Issues	Jean Accius II; Robert Blancato; Rich Browdie; Brian Duke; Nora Dowd-Eisenhower; Secretary Jason Kavulich; Sandy Markwood; Teresa Osborne
TU02	SMI Reimagined – The Philadelphia Model	Amanda David; Joseph DiMeo; Katherine Finlay; Sandy Gomberg; Kristin Long; Melissa Rosenberg
WE-01	Fostering Wellness though Restorative Grieving in Older Adults	Dr. Joel Streim; Elizabeth Grecco, MSW; Paula DeFrancis, MSW; Brena Hong, MSW
WE02	Learning Has No Expiration Date	Adam Brunner; Janet Gala; Ann Simanis
WE03	Contexts for Capacity: The Intersection of Psychology, Social Work, and the Law	Jennifer “Jenimae” Almquist; Blaine S. Cloud; Charlene Lane; The Honorable Sheila Woods-Skipper
WE04	Behavioral Health Wellness for Older Adults – Where to Go ...	Joseph DiMeo; Robert Ximines
WE05	The Future of Wellness in Aging Services	Joanna Mansfield
WE06	Thriving, Not Just Surviving: Self-Care Strategies...	Sharon White, MSS, LCSW
WE07	Calm in Chaos: Cognitive Behavioral Strategies for ...	Ashley Poole
WE08	The Involuntary Commitment Process - 302	Lisa Colton, PhD
WE09	From Blood Work to Better Meals: AI as Your Everyday Health Ally	Sherimane Johnson
WE10	The Case for Working in Retirement	Linda K. Shumaker, RN-BC, MA
WE11	What We Leave Behind: Helping Older Adults Plan Their...	Alisha Pradhan; Ram Thangaraj
WE12	Guarding the Golden Years: Strategies to Prevent the Financial Exploitation of Older Adults	Mariannie Castellanos; Todd W. Hacker; David Ramirez
WE13	The Wellness Continuum: Wellness Through Serious Illness...	Jennifer Lipski
WE14	The Psycho-Social Impact of Retirement or Pending ...	Michael Shelten
WE15	How to Overcome Exhaustion and Discouragement as an ...	Barry J. Jacobs, Psy.D.; Julia L. Mayer, Psy.D.
TH-PLEN	Senior Center Track	Louis Colbert; Wanda Mitchell
TH02	Moving Towards Wellness: SenseAble Strategies to ...	Natasha Goldstein Levitas
TH03	5 Ways to Increase Client Engagement in Family Caregiver ...	Barry J. Jacobs, Psy.D.
TH04	Improving Access to Mental Health and SUD Services for ...	Lynn Cooper
TH05	Healing Forward: Building Wellness Through Resilience a ...	Angelic Bradley
TH06	Wellness from Within: How Positive Intelligence Transforms ...	Booker Farrior
TH07	Finding Stillness in the Service: Mindfulness Tools for Those ...	Stacey Mandel

Tuesday, October 27, 2026

10:00 AM – Noon

Conference Kickoff

TU01 – The Panel of Pundits Discuss Aging Issues

2026 is shaping up to be a year like no other that we have seen. Our panel will discuss a variety of issues impacting the lives of older and other-abled adults, including:

- What health disparities have emerged and what strategies have been or should be utilized to combat those disparities?
- What are the “lessons learned” or emerging ideas that show promise for positively impacting our lives going forward?
- Identify policy changes that have been made or proposed and the potential impact on the lives of our constituents?

Jean C. Accius, PhD is an accomplished leader and innovator in health equity, longevity, health systems transformation, and building equitable systems.

As President & CEO of CHC: Creating Healthier Communities, Jean is dedicated to breaking down the barriers to health so communities may thrive. Dr. Accius has a proven record of accomplishment of collaborating across public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

Prior to CHC, Dr. Accius served with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and spent 15+ years at AARP, most recently serving as SVP of International Affairs and Global Thought Leadership. Dr. Accius has been widely recognized: Next Avenue’s Influencer in Aging Award (2020); Black Enterprise magazine’s Modern Man of Distinction (2018); Florida State University’s Distinguished Black Alumni of the Year (2021).

He is a sought-after author and speaker; featured in The New York Times, The Boston Globe, Forbes, TIME Magazine and Politico. He has facilitated sessions at the World Economic Forum in Davos and engaged leaders at the United Nations. Under his leadership, his previous team’s Growing with Age program was recognized by Fast Company World Changing Ideas.

Robert “Bob” Blancato is the President of Matz, Blancato and Associates. In that capacity, he also serves as the National Coordinator of the bipartisan 3000-member Elder Justice Coalition, the Executive Director of the National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs and National Coordinator of the Defeat Malnutrition Today coalition. Bob has long been recognized as a national advocate with policy expertise on behalf of older adults. In 2019, he was invited by both the Senate Finance Committee and House Ways and Means Committee to testify on a range of issues. Bob’s prior work history includes 17 years as a staffer in Congress and an appointment by President Clinton to be the Executive Director of the 1995 White House Conference on Aging, one of four he has participated in.

He is a member of the Senior Executive Service. As a volunteer, he currently serves on the National Board of AARP and the board of the National Hispanic Council on Aging. In 2019, Bob began a four-year term on the National Advisory Committee on Rural Health and Human Services, appointed by HHS Secretary Azar. Bob holds a BA from Georgetown University and an MPA from American University. Bob has won numerous awards for advocacy, most recently the American Society for Aging's ASA Hall of Fame Award in March 2020.

Richard Browdie retired from the role of President and CEO of the Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging, a nationally recognized leader in service, research and advocacy addressing issues of aging. Immediately before joining Benjamin Rose, he served as Pennsylvania's Secretary of Aging and Executive Director of the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging. He also served at the PA Department of Aging as Deputy Secretary and as an executive at two Area Agencies on Aging in Pennsylvania.

He recently served as Chairman of the Board of the National Council on Aging, is a Past-President of the American Society on Aging, recently ended his term as Chair of ASA's Generations Editorial Board. He is a Fellow of the Gerontological Society of America and a Visiting Executive Fellow at GSA and is a member of the US Veterans Administration's Geriatrics and Gerontology Advisory Committee. Browdie currently is consulting with organizations in the field.

Nora Dowd-Eisenhower is Volunteer State President for AARP Pennsylvania. Prior to that, she served as the Executive Director of the Mayor's Commission on Aging in Philadelphia. Prior to that, she directed the pro bono project at Senior LAW Center, and before that she directed the Office of Older Americans at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau in Washington, DC. Nora was also VP for Economic Security at the National Council on Aging.

She served as the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Aging from 2003-2009, where she managed PACE, the senior pharmacy program, and an extensive network of aging services, including a diverse array of home and community-based programs. She also served as the AARP Pennsylvania State Director. She began her career with the Pennsylvania Attorney General in the Consumer Protection Division. She graduated from the Antioch School of Law in Washington, DC. She currently lives in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Brian Duke, MBE, MHA, FCPP is principal of Brian Duke Associates – specializing in collaborating with individuals, organizations, government, and communities to foster effective strategies to improve the care of older adults through population health strategies, the support of family caregivers, and community partnerships. He was previously System Director, Senior Services at Main Line Health, a hospital-based health system in suburban Philadelphia, PA. In that position he joined with colleagues to create and implement age friendly health system strategies to improve the care of older adults across the continuum of care.

Before this, he was Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Aging. During his term of service, the Family Caregiver Support Act was signed into law and the Pennsylvania State Plan for Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders was created. Mr. Duke served on the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine Committee on Family Caregiving for Older Adults which issued the *Families Caring for an Aging America* report.

Secretary Jason Kavulich brings 25+ years of experience within the human services field to the mission of serving and advocating for Pennsylvania's 3.4 million older adults aged 60 and over. In May 2023, he was unanimously confirmed by the Senate of Pennsylvania to serve as Secretary of Aging. Before being nominated by Governor Josh Shapiro, Jason was the Lackawanna County Area Agency on Aging director. Jason's hands-on experience at the local human services level provides a critical perspective to supporting a 52-agency aging network covering 67 counties where services are delivered locally across diverse populations and geographies.

Secretary Kavulich is committed to leading and advocating for an aging network of quality, sustainable programs that support Pennsylvania's growing older adult population to stay healthy and active, age in their home settings of choice, thrive in their older years with safety and dignity, and contribute to the economic, social, and cultural vibrancy of our communities across the commonwealth. The Shapiro Administration's early, bold action on behalf of older adults has already been reflected in the development of a 10-year master plan to improve the infrastructure of aging services, and in the state's budget for 2023-24, which has delivered increases for in-home services, senior centers, and the largest tax break for older adults in nearly 20 years.

Sandy Markwood, CEO, USAging is a national advocate for aging issues and a champion for ensuring that older adults have the best supports to age well at home and in their communities. As the CEO of USAging since 2002, she is committed to ensuring that our society values and supports people across the lifespan. This commitment has taken many forms, including advocacy with multiple administrations and on Capitol Hill for the passage of legislation aimed at supporting older adults, including access to critical information, in-home services and caregiver support.

Sandy has more than 30 years' experience in the development and delivery of aging, health, human services, housing and transportation programs in counties and cities across the nation. Prior to joining USAging, Sandy served as the Deputy Director of County Services at the National Association of Counties where she took a lead role in research, training, conference planning, program development, technical assistance and grants management.

Teresa Osborne serves as the Director of State Advocacy for AARP Pennsylvania. Before joining AARP, Ms. Osborne was Chairperson of the Pennsylvania Civil Service Commission and served as Pennsylvania's 10th Secretary of Aging from 2015-2018. While earning her Bachelor of Social Work degree from Marywood University, she began her human services career as a care manager for Meals on Wheels of Northeastern Pennsylvania.

She then earned her master's in health services administration and went on to serve as Executive Director of the Lackawanna County Area Agency on Aging and the Executive Director of the Lackawanna County Department of Human Services, overseeing the county's departments of aging, children and youth and family services, behavioral health and intellectual disabilities, and drug and alcohol programs. A native of Scranton, Osborne has spent the past three decades advocating for the protection and rights of older Pennsylvanians at the local, state, and federal levels of government.

Tuesday, October 27, 2026

1:00 – 3:00 PM

TU02 – SMI Reimagined: The Philadelphia Model

U.S. deinstitutionalization shifted care for people with serious mental illness (SMI) from institutions to community programs, but uneven funding, availability, and quality left many in hospitals, boarding homes, or homelessness. As this population ages—often faster because of homelessness and criminal justice involvement—many now need long-term physical care alongside intensive behavioral health services. Demand is growing: an estimated 1,400 Philadelphia residents need both nursing-home care and 24/7 specialized behavioral health support today, with the statewide need projected to reach 12,600 Pennsylvanians by 2030.

Traditional nursing homes may offer limited behavioral health support but generally lack the 24/7 specialized services needed to safely serve some residents with SMI. To close this gap, Philadelphia’s DBHIDS and Community Behavioral Health brought public, private, and government partners together to create the Philadelphia Model—an evidence-based, regulation-compliant, sustainably funded program that integrates round-the-clock behavioral health services into a nursing-home setting.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, attendees will be able to:

- Describe system gaps that pose a barrier for older adults with serious mental illness (SMI) in accessing long-term care.
- Outline how principles of disaster preparedness, learning communities and implementation science principles can be utilized to design, implement, and evaluate an innovative model of care for older adults with SMI.
- Leverage private, public, and government partnerships and financing mechanisms to address care delivery system gaps.

Amanda N. David, MSW, LSW is the Deputy Commissioner of the City of Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services. In this role, Amanda oversees the Behavioral Health Division and the Department’s delivery of a comprehensive range of behavioral health services for adults and children, including prevention, intervention, treatment services, emergency and crisis intervention, social and psychiatric rehabilitation, individual and group counseling, family support, residential support, outreach, and recovery support.

Amanda oversees an extensive network of contracted provider agencies located throughout Philadelphia, including multiple community mental health centers, substance use disorder treatment programs, specialized behavioral health agencies, and crisis response centers. Amanda is a native Philadelphian and a graduate of Philadelphia High School for Girls. She is a licensed social worker and

holds a master's degree in social work from Temple University and a bachelor's degree in social work from Evangel University.

Joseph DiMeo, MS is the Behavioral Health Coordinator for the Community Health Choices (CHC) initiative at Community Behavioral Health (CBH). In this role, Joe is responsible for helping to ensure CBH's provider network delivers quality care treatment to CBH members with physical challenges who are living at home, and CBH members residing in nursing facilities.

With more than 40 years of experience in the behavioral health field, Joe has a wealth of knowledge in provider networking, geriatric counseling, and supporting older adults with various challenges, including depression, grief, loss, substance use, gambling problems, anxiety, and complications from Dementia/Alzheimer Disease. As a Behavioral Health Coordinator, Joe created meaningful partnerships with the social service aging community, nursing facilities, home health care agencies, advocates, and Physical Health Managed Care Organizations (MCO).

Joe is a member of the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging Advisory Council and the Older Adult Committee for the PA Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) Mental Health Planning Council. Before joining CBH, Joe was the Director of an Older Adult Intensive Outpatient Program for the Einstein Healthcare Network. Joe earned a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Temple University, a Master of Science in Counseling Psychology and Human Services from Chestnut Hill College, and a Gerontology Certification from St. Joseph's University.

Katharine Finlay, PMP, MPH, is a consultant for the City of Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services (DBHIDS) who combines her passion for improving healthcare access and quality with her 15 years of program management experience to lead teams of healthcare professionals through transformation efforts. In her career, Katie has reinvented herself a few times - starting as an elementary school teacher followed by a healthcare IT trainer and then a project manager for the Philadelphia Department of Public Health.

She eventually co-founded the Population Health Department at Drexel University where she found an interest in utilizing data to drive change and her "superpower" - organizing chaos. Katie started consulting with a variety of organizations in 2020 to develop innovative solutions to address complex public health and care delivery challenges through partnerships with private, public, and government organizations. She enjoys sharing her passion for the field and innovative spirit through volunteering her time presenting on topics at the collegiate and national levels.

Sandra Gomberg, DNP RN, is a consultant for the Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services. Dr. Gomberg is a healthcare executive whose career has focused on disruptive innovation in health care delivery and improving access to quality equitable healthcare for individuals, communities and populations. Dr. Gomberg holds both Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Nursing from the M. Louise Fitzpatrick College of Nursing at Villanova University and a Doctor of Nursing Practice, Executive Leadership from American Sentinel University.

Dr. Gomberg provides governance, leadership and operating consulting and advisory services to organizations and to companies at all levels of maturity embarking on the innovation within the greater healthcare and related industry segments. Previously, Dr. Gomberg served as President and Chief Operating Officer of Aria Jefferson Health System and community physician enterprise in Northeast

Philadelphia and Chief Executive Officer and President of Temple University Hospital Inc., the flagship academic hospital, community physician enterprise, psychiatric hospital, and air ambulance-transport company.

Dr. Gomberg has served as a clinical specialist for a multistate regional home care service and chief executive of an 800 bed, three-facility long-term care enterprise. Dr. Gomberg has held numerous board positions in non-profit and for-profit organizations. Dr. Gomberg served as the leader of the City of Philadelphia's COVID-19 response and Mass Vaccine Initiative where she led the City's multi-agency command structure with FEMA and the Department of Defense providing over 300,000 vaccines to vulnerable Philadelphia residents. She has served as a Consultant to the World Bank's team design of the Bank's global vaccine procurement and distribution model.

Following her work with the City of Philadelphia around the pandemic, she continues to advise the Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disabilities and Managing Director's Office focused on the complex intersection of serious mental illness, substance use disorder and homelessness. Dr. Gomberg is a member of the Board of Consultants of the M. Louise Fitzpatrick College of Nursing, Villanova University. She is an adjunct faculty member in the Doctor of Nursing Practice program at Villanova's M. Louise Fitzpatrick College of Nursing.

Kristin Long is Director of Marketing, Development & Communications for Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA). She provides leadership to broaden awareness of PCA programs and services to consumers, caregivers, providers, the aging network and the public. Kristin is responsible for corporate and community relationships with corporations, foundations and individual donors.

Prior, Kristin was Director of Sales & Philanthropy for The Philadelphia Citizen and Executive Director for Philly Ad Club. She was Vice President/Strategic Sales, Political & Issue Advocacy for Tribune Media Company and she had a longtime broadcast career at ABC Television (Disney) where she was a Senior Vice President. Kristin is a 2006 recipient of AWRP's '20 Women Who Rule' award.

Kristin earned a BA in Communications and American Studies at Douglass College and Rutgers University, and she has done post graduate work at Simmons School of Management. She has achieved Project Management Certification at Villanova University, and she holds IAB certification for Digital Media Sales. Kristin is a Gallup certified Strengths Coach, and a Myers-Briggs certified Strong Interest Inventory Administrator. It is her greatest to counsel both career newbies and the underemployed.

Melissa Rosenberg, NHA, MSS is a consultant for the Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disability Services (DBHIDS). Melissa is a senior healthcare executive with proven leadership, communication, relationship, and customer service skills, with over 35 years of experience in senior living. Melissa currently serves as the Operational Lead for The Philadelphia Model: Integrating Behavioral Health in Long-Term Care. Additionally, with the City of Philadelphia, Melissa designed and implemented work plans for approved strategic long-term care and personal care strategies and spearheaded and implemented the PEACE Program which transitioned vulnerable older adults experiencing homelessness to sustainable housing in long-term care housing, utilizing existing federal entitlement programs.

Prior work experience includes Melissa serving as Chief Operating Officer of a non-medical home care company, and as the Vice President of Health Center Operations for a leading not-for-profit, stand-alone senior living community. Her early career focused on Social Service positions for local government, hospital, and nursing home organizations.

Wednesday, October 28, 2026

9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

WE01 – Fostering Wellness Through Restorative Grieving in Older Adults

This session will begin with an overview of how restorative grief responses can support the natural process of adapting to loss, helping individuals regain a sense of well-being, purpose, and connection with others. We will discuss common healing milestones and practical approaches that can help restore and sustain wellness following the loss of a loved one, changes in health, or other significant transitions in later life. The session will conclude with an interactive discussion using clinical case examples to help participants recognize grief responses that may interfere with the natural healing process and identify opportunities to support older adults as they move toward restoration and wellness.

Learning Objectives

As a result of participation in this session, learners will be able to:

- Recognize attitudes and behaviors that derail the process of restorative grieving in response to losses that commonly occur in late life;
- Identify healthy grief coping responses that can foster the natural adaptation to loss and the promotion of wellness in older adults;
- Appreciate the importance of restoring and sustaining social role functioning, as well as the capacity to accomplish basic and instrumental activities of daily living, as a foundation for wellness in late life

Joel E. Streim, MD is a geriatric psychiatrist and Professor of Psychiatry in the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, where he served as Director of the Geriatric Psychiatry Fellowship Training Program for over 25 years. He is currently the Medical Director of the PENN-PACE geriatric collaborative care program, which supports geriatric patients and their primary care providers in the provision of mental health care within the primary care setting. The program has been continuously funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Aging since 2007. Dr. Streim's research, teaching and clinical activities have focused on older adult populations with medical and psychiatric comorbidities—and physical and cognitive disabilities—both in primary care and long-term care settings. He has served as a consultant to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and has testified in Congress and before the Senate Special Committee on Aging on topics related to quality of mental health care for geriatric populations. Dr. Streim is a Past President of the American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry.

Elizabeth Grecco, LCSW, holds a master's degree in clinical social work from Bryn Mawr College. She is a practicing social worker and psychotherapist in the Philadelphia area, specializing in geriatrics, grief, and collaborative mental health care. Elizabeth currently works in psychiatry at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, as a clinical research training specialist and behavioral health provider. She is the co-chair of the Pennsylvania Society for Clinical Social Work (PSCSW) Education Committee, and has made presentations to physician trainees and other mental health practitioners. Elizabeth also maintains a small psychotherapy practice with a focus on grief and relationship challenges.

Paula Defrancis, LCSW, holds a master's degree in clinical social work with a specialization in healthcare from the University of Pennsylvania's School of Social Policy & Practice. She is a practicing licensed social worker in the Philadelphia area, specializing in geriatrics and integrative behavioral healthcare. Paula currently works in psychiatry at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania as a behavioral health provider. She has prior internship experience at the Behavioral Health Lab at the VA Medical Center in Philadelphia, PA using the integrative healthcare model for veterans receiving mental health care within the primary care setting. Paula's areas of interest include mindfulness interventions, cognitive behavioral therapy, and creative arts therapies.

Brena Hong, LCSW is a licensed social worker providing behavioral health services to community-dwelling older adults across Pennsylvania. She graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a Bachelor of Arts in Health and Societies and later graduated from Penn's School of Social Policy and Practice with her master's in social work. Brena has prior experience in crisis work with victims and survivors of domestic violence, as well as internship experience as a medical social worker in an intensive care unit. She currently works at the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine's Department of Psychiatry as a behavioral health provider. Brena specializes in grief and loss, geriatrics, and the Whole Health Model with a particular interest in working with caregivers of those with dementia.

WE02 – Learning Has No Expiration Date

In this session, we will explore learning across the lifespan with a special focus on the unique aspects of older adult learning.

After we discuss inadequacies in many formal approaches to education, we will discuss educational best practices.

Then we will take a closer look at the unique aspects of older adult education covering such topics as:

- Interactive learning
- Experiential learning
- Individualized learning
- Project-based learning
- Peer-group learning

We will also discuss important accommodations (for impaired sight, hearing, and memory) in education of older adults.

And finally, we will discuss, perhaps one of the most important aspects of learning - Un-Learning.

Adam Brunner, PhD, earned his doctorate in Organizational Dynamics from Temple University in 2008 and has dedicated 38 years to the field of aging. He began his career at Temple University's *Center for Intergenerational Learning*, where he developed and directed programs connecting older adults and youth. Later, he served as the Director of a Technical Assistance Center for a national intergenerational volunteer program at the *National Council on Aging* in Washington, D.C. For the past 18 years, Adam has directed the *Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI)* at Temple University, a vibrant lifelong learning program for individuals aged 50 and older. Combining his professional leadership with a lifelong passion

for health and wellness, he also teaches a popular summer course at OLLI that shares the latest research in the field.

Janet Greenwood Gala serves as Executive Director of Mt. Airy Learning Tree (MALT). MALT is a nonprofit built on the philosophy of “Neighbors Teaching Neighbors.” It offers over 750 classes annually, with 160 instructors and 3,800 students. MALT brings adults of all ages together to learn, explore new interests, and share their talents. She believes lifelong learning is essential to social health as it creates opportunities to build relationships, share experiences, and find a sense of belonging. Janet previously served as Marketing Director at the Chestnut Hill Community Association and the Montgomery **County** Chamber of Commerce.

Ann Simanis is the leader of Road Scholar’s Office of Financial Assistance and Community Outreach, Ann Simanis works to expand access to lifelong learning opportunities for older adults through strategic partnerships and financial assistance initiatives. Ann has been with Road Scholar since 2000, serving in a variety of leadership roles across the organization.

Since 2011, Ann has focused on broadening access to educational experiences through Road Scholar's financial assistance programs and community outreach efforts. An advocate for aging well through lifelong learning and social connection, Ann is dedicated to helping older adults discover the many benefits of educational travel and lifelong learning—making these opportunities more accessible to individuals and the community organizations that serve them.

Wednesday, October 28, 2026

11:15 AM – 12:15 PM

WE03 – Contexts for Capacity: The Intersection of Psychology, Social Work and the Law

Panel discussion regarding how the concept of “capacity” differs across disciplines and how to work together to benefit of older adults.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Articulate the various definitions of capacity
2. Understand the perspectives of protective services, attorneys, the court, and social workers and how they fit together.

Jennifer “Jenimae” Almquist is General Counsel at Philadelphia Corporation for Aging, where she manages a broad legal portfolio, advises executive leadership, manages a team of attorneys, and provides guidance to PCA departments, including older adult protective services. She has an extensive background in complex litigation, healthcare related regulatory requirements, and civic engagement.

Blaine Cloud, Ph.D. is a licensed clinical neuropsychologist with decades of experience and independent practice in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania. Dr. Cloud has engaged in extensive research on neuropsychological and cognitive disorders, including numerous peer-reviewed articles on dementia. He provides evidence-based recommendations to help patients and their families, and engages in home visits for PCA to perform clinical assessments of older adults involved with protective services.

Charlene Lane, Ph.D., LCSW currently oversees protective services and elder justice initiatives across all Pennsylvania counties and helps combat elder abuse and neglect statewide at the Pennsylvania Department of Aging. Dr. Lane fosters inter-agency collaboration and innovative, equitable solutions for aging-related challenges. Dr. Lane is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in the states of Pennsylvania & New York and has taught on both the Undergraduate and Graduate levels for over 21 years.

The Honorable Sheila Woods-Skipper currently serves as the Administrative Judge of Orphans' Court Division of the Common Pleas Court and as a returning member of the Administrative Governing Board (AGB) for the Court in Philadelphia, which she previously chaired by appointment of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in January 2016 until November 2018. She successfully served as President Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for a 5-year term in 2013. Prior to that, she served as Supervising Judge of the Criminal Trial Division where she implemented innovative programs that fostered public safety and increased efficiency in the processing of criminal cases. She created the First Judicial District Mental Health Court over which she presided until December 2018.

Judge Woods-Skipper was appointed by the Supreme Court to the Advisory Council on Elder Justice, where she currently serves as Vice-Chair. She established an Elder Justice Committee to assist in identifying and providing resolutions surrounding elder justice issues in the court, opening an Elder Justice Resource Center in October 2016. It provides direct and referral services to seniors, and education to the public regarding issues impacting litigants in the justice system.

WE04 – Behavioral Health Wellness for Older Adults – Where to go to Get What You Need

The presentation is an education and awareness talk regarding the Behavioral Health services available for Older Philadelphians through Community Behavioral Health. It is a straightforward description of CBH and all the accessible resources and services we fund through Medicaid.

The presentation will also include a discussion on utilizing services through the eyes of a person in recovery. We will also have a resource table available for the attendees.

Learning Objectives

The purpose of this presentation is:

- To inform the audience on Community Behavioral Health (History, function, departments, services)
- To provide you with important phone numbers and resources

- To help develop an understanding of the Behavioral Health services available to our aging community.
- To present Behavioral Health training opportunities for all employees working with the ageing population
- To discuss life experiences with Behavioral Health.

Joseph DiMeo, MS is the Behavioral Health Coordinator for the Community Health Choices (CHC) initiative at Community Behavioral Health (CBH). In this role, Joe is responsible for helping to ensure CBH's provider network delivers quality care treatment to CBH members with physical challenges who are living at home, and CBH members residing in nursing facilities.

With more than 40 years of experience in the behavioral health field, Joe has a wealth of knowledge in provider networking, geriatric counseling, and supporting older adults with various challenges, including depression, grief, loss, substance use, gambling problems, anxiety, and complications from Dementia/Alzheimer Disease. As a Behavioral Health Coordinator, Joe created meaningful partnerships with the social service aging community, nursing facilities, home health care agencies, advocates, and Physical Health Managed Care Organizations (MCO).

Joe is a member of the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging Advisory Council and the Older Adult Committee for the PA Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) Mental Health Planning Council. Before joining CBH, Joe was the Director of an Older Adult Intensive Outpatient Program for the Einstein Healthcare Network. Joe earned a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Temple University, a Master of Science in Counseling Psychology and Human Services from Chestnut Hill College, and a Gerontology Certification from St. Joseph's University.

Robert Ximines, Public Health and Community Liaison - Community Behavioral Health

WE05 – The Future of Wellness in Aging Services: Mental Health, Connection and Community-Based Care

This session explores the growing mental health and wellness needs of older adults and the critical role community-based aging services play in supporting emotional, cognitive, social, and spiritual well-being. Participants will examine the intersection of aging, loneliness, chronic mental illness, trauma, stigma, and cognitive decline while learning practical, trauma-informed strategies to foster resilience, connection, and belonging.

Through real-world examples and interactive discussion, attendees will gain tools to recognize behavioral health concerns, support caregivers, implement wellness-focused programming, and build more inclusive, culturally responsive environments for older adults. The session emphasizes a whole-person approach to wellness that integrates mental health, community engagement, identity, and compassionate care into everyday aging services.

Learning Objectives

Participants in this program will:

- Examine the mental health and wellness needs of older adults and the systemic barriers impacting access to care.
- Identify practical, trauma-informed approaches that support emotional, cognitive, social, and spiritual well-being in community-based aging settings.
- Explore strategies to reduce loneliness, stigma, and isolation through inclusive programming, caregiver engagement, and community partnerships.
- Apply tools to support older adults living with chronic mental illness, dementia, grief, and complex psychosocial needs.

Joanna Mansfield, Chief Product Officer - SeniorVerse

With nearly 20 years of experience spanning geriatric care, clinical operations, and community-based aging services, Joanna is a passionate advocate for improving the lives of older adults. At SeniorVerse, she helps advance technology solutions that empower adult day centers to strengthen cognitive health support, address behavioral needs, enhance care coordination, and deepen family engagement.

In January 2026, Joanna was honored as one of CaringKind's 100 Women of Impact. Joanna's participation highlights SeniorVerse's inspiring mission to equip adult day centers—among the nation's most essential yet often overlooked brain health resources—with practical technology and digital tools. By reducing administrative burden, increasing visibility across care teams, and supporting more person-centered and sustainable care, she is helping these vital organizations expand their impact in the communities they serve.

WE06 – Thriving, Not Just Surviving: Self-Care Strategies for Personal and Professional Success

This presentation explores the importance of wellness and self-care for today's professionals by examining why many people struggle to maintain well-being amid the demands of work and life. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of what it means to be truly whole, learn the three essential keys to personal wellness, and discover practical strategies for building healthier habits that support both personal and professional success.

The session will also explore the ongoing work required to sustain wellness and introduce the SAMHSA 8 Dimensions of Wellness, offering a holistic framework for achieving balance, resilience, and sustainable performance. Attendees will leave with actionable tools to help them thrive, not just survive, in their careers and everyday lives.

Learning Objectives

Participants in this program will be able to:

- Analyze the factors that contribute to diminished well-being and burnout and their impact on professional performance, engagement, and overall quality of life.
- Evaluate wellness through a holistic lens by examining the 8 Dimensions of Wellness and their role in fostering personal and professional resilience.
- Assess the three essential keys to sustainable wellness and identify opportunities to strengthen self-care practices that support long-term success.
- Develop actionable wellness strategies that enhance well-being, optimize performance, and promote greater balance in both professional and personal domains.

Sharon D. White, MSS, LCSW, is a psychotherapist with over 30 years of experience in the field of aging and 27 in community behavioral health. She has over 20 years as director of community based mental health services for Delaware County Services to the Aging (COSA). She is a well-respected, highly regarded presenter, having presented numerous workshops at the American Society on Aging as well as regional, and local conferences. She has presented various aging and mental health topics such as mental health and aging, depression, dementia, hoarding, grief and loss.

She has also facilitated workshops for professionals on topics such as self-care, wellness, and diversity. Sharon joined PCA as an Assistant Director in the OPTIONS Program in January 2026. She received her BSW in Social Work from Eastern College in 1983, her Master of Social Science (MSS) in 1997 from Bryn Mawr College and a Certificate in the Fundamentals of Gerontology in 2016 from the Davis School of Gerontology.

WE07 – Calm in Chaos: Cognitive Behavioral Strategies for Managing Stress, Burnout, and Emotional Well-Being in Older Adults

As older adults navigate retirement, caregiving responsibilities, health challenges, grief and loss, changing family dynamics, and evolving social roles, they may experience increased stress, anxiety, and emotional distress. This presentation explores how Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) can be utilized to promote resilience, emotional well-being, and healthy aging. Participants will learn practical, evidence-based strategies to identify unhelpful thinking patterns, improve coping skills, increase behavioral activation, and foster psychological flexibility. Through case examples and interactive discussion, attendees will gain tools they can apply personally or professionally to support wellness among older adults. This presentation aligns with the conference theme, *The Future Belongs to Wellness*, by emphasizing proactive approaches to mental health and quality of life across the lifespan.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Identify common sources of stress and emotional distress experienced by older adults.
- Describe the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) model and its relevance to healthy aging.
- Recognize cognitive distortions and maladaptive thinking patterns that contribute to anxiety, depression, and stress in later life.
- Apply evidence-based CBT strategies to promote resilience, emotional well-being, and adaptive coping among older adults.
- Develop practical wellness-focused interventions that support successful aging and improved quality of life.

Ashley O. Poole, Psy.D, LPC, is a licensed mental health professional and educator with more than 15 years of experience in counseling, clinical assessment, behavioral health treatment, and student training. Her work spans outpatient therapy, integrated health care, pain management, risk assessment, crisis intervention, and clinical supervision. She has provided services to children, adolescents, adults, families, and court-involved populations across community, hospital, academic, and private practice settings. She is licensed as a Professional Counselor in Pennsylvania and as a Licensed Mental Health Counselor in North Carolina.

Dr. Poole's clinical expertise includes cognitive behavioral therapy, trauma-informed care, substance use and mental health assessment, treatment planning, relapse prevention, and interdisciplinary collaboration. She has worked in roles including Licensed Professional Counselor, outpatient therapist, group facilitator, team lead, clinical assessor, postdoctoral fellow, and doctoral psychology intern. Her experience includes supporting individuals with depression, anxiety, chronic pain, grief, ADHD, bipolar disorder, PTSD, severe mental illness, and co-occurring diagnoses. She also has extensive experience mentoring graduate-level trainees, facilitating clinical skills development, and supporting interprofessional education.

Wednesday, October 28, 2026

1:15 pm – 2:15 pm

WE08 – The Involuntary Commitment Process

In this session we will review the 302 commitment process.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Understanding the temporary nature of commitment
- Understanding what does and does not qualify for a 302 (legally, factually and from the mental health practitioner's perspective)
- Understanding the elements needed for a 302 petition

Lisa Colton, Ph.D., is Director of Crisis Related Systems, Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual DisAbility Services (DBHIDS). A licensed psychologist and behavioral health executive with more than 25 years of experience leading clinical operations, crisis services, and psychiatric programs, Lisa Colton serves as the Chief Clinical Officer for Philadelphia's Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disability Services. Dr. Colton currently oversees clinical operations, Guides programs to advance quality patient care and strengthen leadership alignment through cross-departmental collaboration.

Previously, Dr. Colton served as the Director of Crisis, led the development of Philadelphia's comprehensive, integrated behavioral health crisis system and coordinated policy, research, program evaluation, training, and workforce development across the department and community. Earlier leadership includes roles at Friends Hospital and Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center included directing 24/7 crisis and admissions services, implementing evidence-based practices, ensuring regulatory compliance, and improving care delivery. Dr. Colton holds a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from New York University and an M.Ed. from Harvard University.

WE09 – From Blood Work to Better Meals: AI as Your Everyday Health Ally

Most people leave a doctor's appointment more confused than when they walked in, holding lab results full of numbers they don't fully understand and no clear sense of what to eat differently because of them. This hands-on session shows attendees how to use AI tools they may already have on their phone to make sense of their own health information, prepare better questions for their next doctor's visit, and turn that understanding into real food choices.

Attendees will practice a simple prompt themselves, see a live demo of AI reviewing sample lab results, and get an introduction to Next, Made Simple, a condition-personalized recipe platform built specifically for adults managing chronic conditions.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Set up an AI account with privacy in mind, so personal health information and chats stay protected
- Use AI to translate lab results and medical language into plain terms, and generate questions to bring to a doctor's appointment
- Practice a simple, safe AI prompt live, on their own device
- Identify one food-related resource (Next, Made Simple) they can use immediately to turn health information into a weekly eating plan

Sherimane Johnson is CEO of Johnson AI Ops & Plant Powered Shift. She is an experienced Client Support Analyst with a strong background in healthcare technology, technical troubleshooting, and customer service. She has successfully supported clients and stakeholders across healthcare, enterprise technology, AI-driven platforms, and nonprofit organizations, serving as a trusted point of contact for resolving complex technical and workflow challenges.

Currently, Sherimane is the Founder and Client Support Lead for Next, Made Simple™, where she provides direct support to members on a subscription-based health technology platform, guiding issues from intake through resolution while improving support processes and documentation. She also serves as a Compliance & Program Coordinator with Philadelphia Family Voices, providing technical support and program coordination on HIPAA-compliant healthcare systems.

WE10 – The Case for Working in Retirement

The US labor participation rate has dropped to 61.9 %, the lowest since 1977, due to the aging baby boomer's retirement rate and decrease in population growth. This contraction tightens the labor market and threatens the long-term growth in the US." (WSJ April 7, 2026)

One of the means to address this shortage is to encourage older adults to recognize the advantages of continuing to work past the conventional retirement age. This presentation will discuss the advantages to organizations who employ older adults; aside from addressing the needs of the labor market. The beneficial effects of active employment for seniors including social engagement, cognitive, mental and physical health impacts will be reviewed.

Learning Objectives

Participants attending this session will:

- Discuss the policy and economic need for older adults to continue to work.
- Review the benefits for the workplace where seniors are employed.
- Discuss the physical and mental health benefits to older adults who continue to work.
- Elaborate on the positive social effects of employment for seniors.

Linda K Shumaker, RN, GERO-BC, MA, is a gerontological certified registered nurse who is a private consultant as well as currently in clinical practice in Harrisburg Pennsylvania. She previously served as Outreach Coordinator of the Pennsylvania Behavioral Health and Aging Coalition. In 2005, as founding Executive Director of the Coalition, she advocated for funding and received over \$325,000 to outreach and educate older adults regarding behavioral health issues. She introduced policies to encourage the Mental Health and Aging's "systems" of care to work cooperatively to serve older adults with behavioral health issues.

Ms. Shumaker has also served as the Executive Director of Prevent Suicide PA, a statewide nonprofit to support those affected by suicide, provide education, awareness and understanding by collaborating with the community to prevent suicide and reduce the stigma associated with suicide. She spearheaded Pennsylvania's Older Adult Suicide Prevention Plan, the first in the country, as well as advocating and obtaining a Mental Health Bulletin ensuring that adults with dementia and secondary psychiatric symptoms have access to mental health treatment. She also worked at the Central Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute, Penn State College of Medicine in Hershey, PA. She has extensive clinical experience working in community mental health, geriatric assessment teams and in long-term care.

WE11– What We Leave Behind: Helping Older Adults Plan Their Digital and Material Legacies

We spend a lifetime collecting things that matter — photographs, letters, recipes, the stories we tell at the dinner table, and increasingly, a sprawling digital trail of emails, photos, and accounts. But what happens to all of it, and how do we decide what's worth passing on?

Drawing on our ongoing research with older adults across several studies, this presentation explores how people think about the memories and belongings they want to leave behind, and the very human challenges of preserving them — both the boxes in the attic and the files in the cloud. In our research, we found very few people had any made plans for their digital belongings.

We also found that how one wants to be remembered after death often includes other people: a father's wartime films, a grandchild's drawings, notes kept for former students. We will discuss the challenge of planning for both physical and digital belongings and share practical, actionable ideas for anyone who wants to help an older adult begin this work — or begin it themselves — and close with the questions that remain.

Learning Objectives

Participants attending this session will:

- Understand the different roles that physical and digital belongings can play in remembrance — how a photograph, voice recording, recipe, document, or social media account can help loved ones remember someone, and why different kinds of belongings do this in different ways.
- Identify why the story behind an item can matter as much as the item itself, and how families may misunderstand what they inherit when that context is missing.
- Learn existing tools for planning digital legacies — such as Facebook’s Legacy Contact, Google’s Inactive Account Manager, and Apple’s Digital Legacy — including what they enable and where gaps remain.
- Know concrete small first steps and conversation starters that can help older adults begin curating their own legacy or help family members support them in doing so.

Alisha Pradhan, MS, PhD, is an Assistant Professor of Informatics and Graduate Faculty in Computer Science at the New Jersey Institute of Technology. With a Ph.D. and M.S. in Human-Computer Interaction from the University of Maryland and a background in industrial design, she brings interdisciplinary expertise spanning academic research, user experience, and technology design. Her experience includes roles as a user experience researcher at Meta Platforms and Facebook Research, as well as work with TIBCO Software and Newgen Software Technologies.

She has published extensively in leading HCI and accessibility venues and leads funded initiatives supported by the National Science Foundation, VentureWell, NJIT, and NSF I-Corps. At the heart of Pradhan’s work is a commitment to designing systems with—and not simply for—the people who use them. Her research in human-centered AI, aging, and accessibility advances personalized and inclusive technologies that protect agency, autonomy, and dignity, while challenging bias and representational harm in data and design.

She also develops participatory approaches that position older adults and marginalized communities as creators and decision-makers. Her contributions have earned the ACM CHI 2026 Best Paper Award, the ACM TOCHI 2020 Best Paper Award, an ACM CUI Honorable Mention, the Maryland Way Award for Research Excellence, and repeated special recognition from ACM CHI for continued outstanding work.

Ram Thangaraj, PhD Student
New Jersey Institute of Technology

WE12 – Guarding the Golden Years: Strategies to Prevent the Financial Exploitation of Older Adults

Older adults are increasingly targeted by individuals and organizations seeking to take advantage of their financial resources, personal information, trust, or dependency. This course explores the various forms of elder exploitation, including financial fraud, scams, caregiver abuse, neglect, and undue influence. Participants will learn to recognize warning signs, understand risk factors that increase vulnerability, and apply practical strategies to protect older adults from harm.

Through real-world examples and prevention techniques, learners will gain the knowledge and confidence needed to support the safety, dignity, and well-being of older adults in their communities.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, learners will be able to:

- Identify the current trends of different types of financial exploitation affecting older adults, including mortgage scams.
- Recognize common warning signs, risk factors, and vulnerabilities that may indicate an older adult is being exploited or is at increased risk.
- Apply effective prevention strategies to safeguard older adults from scams, fraud, abuse, and undue influence.
- Respond appropriately to suspected exploitation by documenting concerns, reporting incidents through the appropriate channels, and connecting older adults with available support resources.

Todd Hacker is a Community Mortgage Banker with Wells Fargo. His primary focus is working with the underserved community to obtain affordable mortgage options. In Todd's current role, he relies on building relationships with labor unions (with a particular focus on the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers), housing counseling agencies, Philadelphia Housing Authority and Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation. He is currently the Affordable Housing Chair of Wells Fargo's PA/DC Employee Impact Network. Todd was a Global Community Fellow with a team of colleagues from Wells Fargo to build a strategic plan for increasing investments benefiting LEAP Housing in Boise, Idaho.

Todd started his career in the housing industry as a HUD certified housing and credit counselor and tenant-landlord mediator. After the Great Recession in 2008, he pivoted and explored his passion for Jewish Education. While he still stays connected to Jewish Education as a bar/bat mitzvah tutor which he refers to as his "fun job", Todd eventually took an opportunity to go back to the mortgage

industry by working at Bank of America followed by Citizens Bank and later Wells Fargo where he has been since 2020. Todd is a Doctor in Business Administration candidate at Drexel University where his research will focus on the impact relationships between lenders and non-profits are having on Mayor Parker's H.O.M.E. Initiative.

David Ramirez is a Wells Fargo Branch Manager in the North Philadelphia District. David has been in the banking industry for the past 12 years. Throughout his banking career, David has helped customers and business owners accomplish their financial goals. Moreover, David provides development, coaching and support to team members so they can learn and apply their skills in their banking careers. During his down time, David enjoys travelling, watching soccer and football, go to stadiums and attend live music events.

WE13 – The Wellness Continuum: Wellness Through Serious Illness and End-of-Life

Wellness does not end with a diagnosis of serious illness, the decision to enter hospice, nor the recognition that a person is approaching the end of life. Rather, the meaning of wellness evolves as a person's health, needs, priorities, and goals change.

Even when cure or recovery is no longer possible, meaningful choices remain. Wellness may mean relief from pain and other symptoms, maintaining dignity and independence, spending meaningful time with loved ones, remaining in a preferred setting, receiving or choosing not to receive certain medical treatments, and having one's personal values and wishes respected.

Advance care planning is an essential part of this wellness continuum. Advance directives and thoughtful conversations about future care allow individuals to express what matters most to them before a medical crisis occurs or they are no longer able to speak for themselves. These discussions can help ensure that care decisions reflect the individual's values and preferences while also reducing uncertainty, fear, and difficult decision-making for families.

This presentation will explore how wellness can remain an active and meaningful process throughout serious illness and at the end of life. It will encourage participants to view advance directives, goals-of-care discussions, and ongoing communication not simply as preparation for death, but as important tools for living with greater autonomy, dignity, comfort, and peace of mind throughout every stage of life.

Learning Objectives

Participants attending this presentation will:

- Consider what wellness might mean to an older adult with advanced illness, and how a person's personal definition of wellness may change over time
- Review language/communication, and its impact on perception, for our elderly, as well as those who may be in a health crisis
- "Optimizing the Moment"—reflect on how to improve real-time process when meeting with patients, families, peers, and health professionals

Jennifer Lipski is a Registered Nurse with more than 25 years of experience. She holds a Master's degree in Transpersonal Psychology, is certified in Grief Support, completed her Chaplaincy Externship at Penn Medicine, and served as an Adjunct Chaplain at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania (HUP). She currently is the Community Educator for VITAS Healthcare in Philadelphia.

Early in her work as an Admissions Nurse with VITAS, Jennifer met with patients and families to explain the services and benefits of hospice care. She quickly realized that many people had never been given the opportunity or the tools to have meaningful conversations about end-of-life wishes before a crisis occurred.

Today, Jennifer's mission is to help normalize conversations about end-of-life care and to empower individuals and families to make informed, compassionate choices. She believes that wellness is found in honoring each person's values, preferences, and decisions—even during life's final chapter. To further that mission, she developed the free community workshop, "Your Life, Your Choice! Advance Care Planning," which is now presented throughout the Philadelphia region.

WE14 – The Eight Issues Impacting the Mental Health of New Retirees (And Those Approaching This Milestone)

Advances in medicine and technology now allow many adults to live 20-30 years beyond the traditional retirement ages of the past. Most retirees have considered the financial implications of retirement, but few are prepared for the psychological challenges occurring with this milestone. This session will explore the most common obstacles to a satisfying and meaningful retirement so we can help our older adult consumers prepare for this major life change (and maybe even ourselves since we are all inevitably headed towards retirement).

Learning Objectives

Participants attending this presentation will:

- Learn about the major psychological challenges impacting retirees.
- Identify their respective strengths and limitations for helping older adults process and resolve the most common retirement stressors.
- Consider their own psychological preparation for retirement.

Michael Shelton, LPC, CAADC is a Licensed Professional Counselor in Pennsylvania and a Certified Advanced Alcohol and Drug Counselor with more than 25 years of experience in behavioral health, addiction treatment, trauma recovery, and sexuality-related concerns. He provides outpatient counseling services through Equilibria Psychological and Consultation Services and Assessment and Treatment Alternatives Forensic Services, specializing in assessment, treatment planning, individual and group therapy, and aftercare planning.

His clinical approach integrates evidence-based modalities including Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), and positive psychology. In addition to his clinical work, Michael has served as a faculty member at Thomas Jefferson University since 2013, teaching courses in psychology, addiction, diversity, and trauma treatment at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. He holds a Master of Science in Clinical Health Psychology and a Bachelor of Science in Mental Health Counseling from Hahnemann University.

WE15 – How to Overcome Exhaustion and Discouragement as an Aging Network Professional

In an age of decreased resources and mounting job demands, aging network professionals are increasingly prone to exhaustion—physical, mental, and spiritual. Though they try the best they can, they often become discouraged that their efforts are just not enough to effectively help their clients.

In this two-hour workshop by clinical psychologists, Barry J. Jacobs, Psy.D. and Julia L. Mayer, Psy.D., co-authors of three AARP-branded books on aging, we'll define causes of exhaustion, means of preventing total depletion, and on-the-job and community-based sources of replenishment. We'll also teach easy-to-learn techniques from Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and other psychological theories for clarifying personal values, deriving positive meanings from work, and accepting one's own and others' limitations. Case illustrations will be used throughout.

Learning Objectives

Participants attending this session will:

- Define exhaustion and discouragement for aging network professionals
- Identify causes of exhaustion and means of replenishment
- Utilize techniques from Acceptance and Commitment Therapy to clarify personal values, derive positive meanings, and accept limitations

Barry Jacobs, PsyD, is a clinical psychologist, author, and Principal in the Philadelphia office of Health Management Associates, a national healthcare consulting and research firm. For over 30 years, he has specialized in providing psychotherapy for individuals with chronic and serious illnesses and education about caregivers for physicians, nurses, mental health, and social service professionals. He also provides consulting to states, health plans, and provider groups about creating optimal caregiver support services. A former magazine journalist, he is the author of *The Emotional Survival Guide for Caregivers* (Guilford, 2006), coauthor of *AARP Meditations for Caregivers* (Da Capo, 2016), and writes a monthly self-help column for family caregivers on AARP.org. He has given over 700 presentations on family caregiving regionally, nationally, and internationally.

Julie Mayer, PsyD, is a clinical psychologist with a private practice in Media, PA. She specializes in women's issues, including relationship problems and improving work- life balance. She is the co-author (with Barry Jacobs) of *AARP Love and Meaning After 50 - the 10 Challenges to Great Relationships* and

How to Overcome Them, as well as a self-help book for family caregivers. She is also the author of a novel, *A Fleeting State of Mind*.

Thursday, October 29, 2026

9:00 AM – Noon

TH-PLEN – The Future Direction of Senior Centers: Change is Coming!

The PCA Community Engagement staff along with Board representation will present an interactive exchange focused on the next generation of senior centers in Philadelphia and beyond. We will explore new models of connection, wellness, care, and community leadership.

Senior centers serve as vital community hubs where older adults connect and support their social, physical, emotional, and intellectual well-being. As the older adult population grows and becomes more diverse, these centers must adapt to meet the needs of an active, wellness-focused generation. Wellness—defined as the intentional pursuit of holistic health across physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, social, and environmental dimensions—should guide the future of the Senior Center Network. Through comprehensive programming, health education, community engagement, and strategic partnerships, senior centers are well positioned to advance this multidimensional approach.

Senior centers can promote physical wellness through accessible exercise classes, strength and balance training, nutrition education, health screenings, stress-management workshops, and fitness equipment. Their value, however, extends far beyond physical fitness.

As older adults' needs become more complex, many centers are moving toward integrated wellness models that include clinical supports such as on-site primary care, physical therapy, behavioral health consultations, and telehealth access. These approaches connect preventive wellness programming with medical care in a more coordinated way.

Mental health is another core pillar of wellness and is critical to older adults' ability to stay connected, engaged, and independent. Social and physical factors further shape emotional well-being. We'll discuss the important steps toward ensuring that Philadelphia's senior centers remain vibrant, responsive, and accessible community resources that enhance quality of life for older adults today and in the future.

Learning Objectives

Participants in this session will:

- Explore why senior centers must evolve to better meet future needs while remaining responsive to demographic shifts, changing community expectations, and emerging social and economic challenges.
- Review various senior center models across the country that provide innovative programming.
- Gain insights that will potentially shape the future: wellness, partnerships, social connection, and access to services
- Understand why senior centers serve as the gateway to essential supports

Louis G. Colbert has been retired for five years. Prior to his retirement, he was the Senior Vice President of Operations at the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging. He was responsible for all operational aspects of the agency including long term care, senior community centers and meal satellites, housing services, community outreach, information and assistance, transportation, legal, health insurance counseling, mental health, Ombudsman, and older adult protective services.

Prior to PCA, he was the Director at the Delaware County Area agency on Aging for 12 years. In that capacity he was responsible for administering an office of government and the Area Agency on Aging that provided direct and contracted community services to in excess of 15,000 elderly residents of Delaware County. The AAA offered a variety of programs and services to improve the social, health, nutritional, educational, emotional and recreational needs of seniors.

Louis is a graduate of Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia and Temple University's School of Social Administration. Active in the field for over 40 years, Louis is a graduate of American Society on Aging's New Ventures in Leadership program, and he was on the American Society on Aging national Board of Directors for 14 years. In addition, he chaired the Pennsylvania Department of Aging Cultural Diversity Advisory Committee.

Wanda Mitchell, MSW, has worked at PCA for 26 years and currently serves as the Director of Community Engagement, providing leadership and direction to multiple operations within the department; the Meal Distribution Center and two PCA-owned senior centers; Southwest Senior Center and Firehouse Active Adult Center.

She also provides guidance to the various teams within the department: Program Management, Health Promotion and Nutrition, Community Relations, Transportation, and the Volunteer Services' teams. Having served as a caregiver to her parents, caregiving is something Wanda holds near to her heart. She has served on several caregiving panels and recently as a panelist for the Alzheimer's Association Black/African American Caregiver Symposium.

Thursday, October 29, 2026

10:15 am – 12:15 pm

TH02 – Moving Towards Wellness: SenseAble Strategies to Connect and EngAge

Therapeutic movement and creative engagement offer so many benefits for our physical, emotional, and brain health, and for our overall wellness. As such, these complementary practices are often the most effective for aging adults, individuals experiencing cognitive and physical changes, and for their care supports, yet they still seem to be underutilized.

This psychoeducational and interactive workshop will explore how certain evidence-based, sensory, and movement-informed techniques may help promote healthy interpersonal engagement, brain-body-spirit wellness, and quality of life for aging adults, for individuals living with cognitive and physical changes, and for their care partners. SenseAble strategies and engagement practices will be explored, to help participants navigate everyday routines, and to support meaningful, in-the-moment exchange and the "dance" within their partnerships.

Learning Objectives

- Participants will be introduced to specific sensory and movement-informed strategies that they may use right away, to help decrease stress, to improve overall connection, and to support their care exchanges.
- Participants will gain a greater understanding of how and when certain creative and evidence-based interventions may be utilized within care relationships. Participants will have the opportunity to tap into their own strengths and creativity, and to explore these techniques together, during guided experientials.
- Participants will begin to create their self-care plans, which may be modified over time.
- Various applications for this work as complementary practice within healthcare, community, and in-home settings, will be discussed and explored.

Natasha Goldstein-Levitas is a Philadelphia based Aging, Dementia, Care Partner, and Community Wellness Specialist, and Board-Certified Dance/Movement Therapist with nearly twenty-five years of clinical experience, in multiple healthcare and community-based settings, and in various capacities. She also has several years of experience in both healthcare administration and higher education.

She has presented her work and approach at various health, aging, and dementia conferences and communities including: the Alzheimer's Association, Memory Care Forum, LeadingAge Meeting and EXPO, Drexel University's College of Nursing and Health Professions, the inaugural Expose Dementia Conference – "The A.R.T. of the Matter" and 2nd annual conference "Spring into Brain Health with the Arts", The UN General Assembly's Healing Arts Research Symposium – by the Jameel Arts and Health Lab and in collaboration with the World Health Organization, and Philadelphia Corporation for Aging.

Thursday, October 29, 2026

1:15 pm – 3:15 pm

TH03– Five Ways to Increase Client Engagement in Family Caregiver Support Services

Decades of programmatic experience have demonstrated that family caregivers are often reluctant to reach out for formal or informal support. That includes receiving help from agencies as varied as Area Agencies on Aging, the US Department of Veterans Affairs, non-profit caregiver advocacy groups, and local churches. Why?

In this two-hour workshop by psychologist Barry J. Jacobs, Psy.D., coauthor of *The AARP Caregiver Answer Book* and a board member of the Caregiver Action Network, we'll discuss such reasons as systemic impediments, cultural/racial barriers, and the psychological impact of guilt and shame. We'll also explore five possible means of increasing client engagement in caregiver support services through proactive educational programs, peer connectors, and psychological interventions for reducing shame. Case illustrations will be used throughout.

Learning Objectives

Participants in this program will:

- Review research on the low levels of family caregiver participation in formal caregiver support services
- Identify systemic and psychological barriers to lack of caregiver engagement
- Outline 5 ways programs can increase caregiver engagement in formal support services

Barry Jacobs, PsyD, is a clinical psychologist, author, and Principal in the Philadelphia office of Health Management Associates, a national healthcare consulting and research firm. For over 30 years, he has specialized in providing psychotherapy for individuals with chronic and serious illnesses and education about caregivers for physicians, nurses, mental health, and social service professionals. He also provides consulting to states, health plans, and provider groups about creating optimal caregiver support services. A former magazine journalist, he is the author of *The Emotional Survival Guide for Caregivers* (Guilford, 2006), coauthor of *AARP Meditations for Caregivers* (Da Capo, 2016), and writes a monthly self-help column for family caregivers on AARP.org. He has given over 700 presentations on family caregiving regionally, nationally, and internationally.

Thursday, October 29, 2026

1:15 pm – 2:15 pm

TH04 – Improving Access to Mental Health and SUD Services for Older Adults

This presentation provides an overview of the critical need to improve access to these vital services for older adults. It lays out the distinct groups of older adults we are trying to help access services. A brief overview of some of the many reasons access is limited and the consequences of no service.

It highlights the growing number of older adults and what we can do as a Commonwealth to improve access. Other updates include the OMHSAS Bulletin clarifying who is eligible for services, as well as other successes we have achieved as we work to improve access. Actionable steps will be offered, along with helpful hints for individuals in need of services.

Learning Objectives

Participants in this program will be able to:

- Explain the behavioral health needs of Pennsylvania's growing older adult population.
- Identify barriers that contribute to limited access to behavioral health services for older adults.
- Describe the impact of unmet behavioral health needs on older adults, caregivers, and communities.
- Interpret the OMHSAS Bulletin regarding eligibility for older adult behavioral health services.
- Implement practical strategies to improve access to behavioral health services and facilitate appropriate referrals for older adults.

Lynn Cooper is a Behavioral Health Policy Specialist for the PA Association of Area Agencies on Aging (P4A). She is Responsible for assisting P4A with coordinating and implementing Behavioral Health policy strategies and activities that achieve P4A's policy goals supporting accessible, affordable behavioral health services in Pennsylvania. Focuses on state and federal-level policy and a secondary focus on local/county policy. The work includes advocating, legislative tracking, research, administration, and communication.

She has forty successful years of experience leading high-impact public health non-profit organizations. Most recently served as a policy and regulatory lobbyist for mental health, substance use disorder, and related criminal justice programs.

TH05 – Healing Forward: Building Wellness Through Resilience and Purpose

Wellness is more than physical health; it is the foundation for emotional healing, personal resilience, and purposeful living. This session invites participants to explore how resilience and purpose can support healing, strengthen personal well-being, and create a path forward after stress, change, or adversity.

Through reflection and practical strategies, participants will identify ways to reconnect with their strengths, cultivate hope, and take intentional steps toward wellness in daily life.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- Define resilience and explain how it contributes to healing, emotional balance, and overall wellness.
- Identify personal sources of purpose, strength and support that can help guide recovery and growth.
- Apply practical strategies for moving forward with intention, hope, and sustainable self-care.

Angelic Bradley, BHS, is a dedicated human services professional with more than 13 years of experience in case management, crisis intervention, workforce development, family support, and community-based services. She has managed large client caseloads, supported individuals and families through complex social service systems, and provided trauma-informed care to gun violence victims and their families across Philadelphia.

Angelic's experience includes program operations, staff training, community outreach, juvenile advocacy, psychiatric support, transitional housing, employment readiness, and family stabilization services. She has collaborated with DHS, probation officers, community agencies, healthcare providers, law enforcement, and city leadership to connect clients with resources, promote safety, and strengthen pathways to self-sufficiency. Her skills include rapport building, client advocacy, crisis management, supervised visitation coordination, workforce coaching, documentation, program reporting, and team leadership.

She holds a Bachelor of Science in Human Services from Lincoln University and has earned certifications as a Direct Care Worker, Certified Life Coach, Triple P Practitioner, and in Adult and Child CPR. Through her broad professional background and commitment to service, Angelic brings compassion, practical problem-solving, and strong interpersonal skills to her work with individuals, families, and communities.

TH06 – Wellness from Within: How Positive Intelligence Transforms Personal and Organizational Health

The future of wellness depends on understanding the internal patterns - both protective and limiting - that shape how we show up in our work and lives. This interactive session introduces Positive Intelligence as a practical framework for recognizing and transforming the saboteurs that undermine wellness in healthcare, social services, and aging networks.

Participants will discover their personal saboteur patterns, understand how these impact organizational culture and client outcomes, and leave with immediate practices for building mental fitness and resilience.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Define Positive Intelligence and the 10 saboteurs as they relate to wellness
- Identify their top 2-3 saboteurs and understand how these patterns affect their work and wellbeing
- Recognize the relationship between personal mental fitness and organizational/client wellness
- Apply one practical PQ tool to their daily practice for sustained wellness

Booker Farrior, ACC

Drawing from three decades of corporate leadership across Fortune 500 companies, Booker transforms executives into extraordinary leaders who drive meaningful impact. As a trusted executive coach, he combines deep business acumen with mental fitness and leadership development expertise to help leaders confidently navigate pivotal career moments.

From the C-suite to emerging leaders, Booker's clients consistently break through obstacles to achieve their next level of success. Booker's unique approach, shaped by experience in logistics, professional services, energy, pharmaceutical, and finance sectors, empowers leaders to turn organizational complexity into strategic advantage. He has successfully coached and supported executives from a wide variety of industries, including professional sports, pharmaceutical, military, private equity, technology, education, manufacturing, financial services, non-profit, and investment management.

Grounded in industrial engineering and global supply chain expertise, Booker adopts a thorough, end-to-end coaching approach. Viewed as an engaging accountability partner, clients praise his ability to blend analytical thinking with supportive guidance, creating a coaching experience that delivers both strategic clarity and actionable outcomes.

Thursday, October 29, 2026

1:15 pm – 3:15 pm

TH07 – Finding Stillness in the Service: Mindfulness Tools for Those Who Care for Others

The people who care for older adults carry an extraordinary weight — the emotional demands of compassionate service, the administrative pressures of complex systems and the quiet toll of bearing witness to vulnerability and loss. This workshop is designed not just for the older adults we serve, but for the nurses, social workers, medical professionals, legal advocates and caregivers who show up every day to serve them.

Through accessible, evidence-based mindfulness and meditation practices, participants will be introduced to simple, sustainable tools for managing stress, preventing burnout and cultivating the kind of regulated, present-moment awareness that makes them more effective — and more human — in their professional roles. Drawing on the intersection of mindfulness, trauma awareness and social-emotional

wellness, this session offers both immediate relief and lasting strategies that participants can carry into their work and their lives.

The future of wellness belongs not only to those who receive care — it belongs just as much to those who give it.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- Recognize the Signs of Burnout and Compassion Fatigue: identify the physical, emotional, and behavioral indicators of chronic stress and compassion fatigue as they uniquely manifest in caregiving and service professions.
- Understand the Science of Stress and the Nervous System: describe in accessible terms how the body responds to prolonged stress and why mindfulness-based interventions are effective tools for regulation and recovery.
- Apply Immediate Mindfulness Techniques Practice at least three evidence-based mindfulness and breathing techniques that can be used in real time — between patients, before difficult conversations, or during moments of overwhelm.
- Build a Personal Micro-Practice Design: a simple, sustainable personal mindfulness routine that fits within the demands of a busy professional life and can be maintained beyond the workshop.
- Cultivate Present-Moment Awareness in Professional Settings: demonstrate how present-moment awareness improves the quality of care, communication, and decision-making in direct service roles with older adults.
- Shift from Surviving to Thriving: Articulate the connection between personal wellness and professional effectiveness and identify at least one concrete commitment to their own ongoing wellbeing.

Stacey Mandel is a Philadelphia-based educator, mindfulness practitioner, consultant, and community advocate with more than 25 years of experience supporting youth, adults, schools, organizations, and communities. She brings a strong background in elementary education, English Language Arts, social emotional learning, mindfulness instruction, trauma-informed practice, literacy development, and professional coaching. Known for her creativity, compassion, and ability to build meaningful learning environments, Stacey has designed and led mindfulness and social emotional learning programs across educational, corporate, nonprofit, and justice-related settings.

Her work includes facilitating workshops, coaching educators, developing professional learning communities, creating Mindful Moment Rooms, and helping schools integrate practices that support emotional regulation, focus, communication, academic growth, and overall well-being. As the founder of BIG Mindfulness & Meditation, Stacey collaborates with individuals, schools, organizations, and correctional settings to create customized mindfulness offerings that meet people where they are. She is deeply passionate about helping others, preventing harm, and being a steady source of support for those seeking greater awareness, resilience, and connection.

Registration Fees

The cost for a one-hour sessions will be **\$20.00**. The cost for two-hour sessions will be **\$40.00**.

Registration Deadlines

You must register ONLINE any time from August 30th through the day of your first session. Credit card payments may be made right on the registration site. If your agency historically pays by check, there is a place to do that on the registration site as well. Please contact Tom Shea to make arrangements.

thomas.shea@pcacares.org

To register on-line, please go to:

<https://cvent.me/3ZnkR9>

Cancellation Policy

Your registration fees, less a \$15.00 administrative fee, will be refunded for cancellation requests received in writing by **October 16, 2026**. Please send cancellation emails and questions to **thomas.shea@pcacares.org**. All requests must be in writing, without exception.

*If a session you have chosen is cancelled, you will be given your choice of another session or the equivalent refund. All refunds will be processed within thirty (30) days of the conclusion of the 2026 Regional Conference on Aging.