

2012

Neighborhood Memory Café Tool Kit



Developed by: Sydney Farrier, LCSW; Pam Kovacs; Carole Larkin, MA, CMC; Pat Sneller

Neighborhood Memory Café

Tool Kit to Start One in Your Neighborhood

Mission: To provide a safe, comfortable, engaging environment where people with memory loss and their care partners can laugh, learn, and remain socially engaged with others traveling the same journey.

History

The concept of memory cafes began in the UK, where government provides funding. Although the U.S. government does not provide funding, grass roots efforts have prompted the development of memory cafes in the U.S. with the first being J. Arthur's Memory Café in Minnesota which launched in June 2011. Due to the advocacy of Pat Sneller and her husband, Lee, the Richardson Neighborhood Memory Café was begun a year later with the first meeting in June of 2012.

Pat and Lee knew that three elements of healthy living, regular exercise, a heart healthy diet, and continued social engagement, contribute to both the quality of life and the maintenance functional abilities for a person diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia. They could see that the first two happened, but Pat wanted a regular opportunity for enjoyable social interaction for her husband and for herself. She organized a committee of several professionals in the Dallas area who shared her vision, and after several months of planning, the first Neighborhood Memory Café in the Dallas area was launched with a great turn out for the first meeting and every monthly meeting since June.

What Is A Memory Café?

The Neighborhood Memory Cafe is a place where individuals with memory loss and their caregivers can get together in a safe, supportive, and engaging environment. It is a time and place where people can interact, laugh, cry, find support, share concerns and celebrate without feeling embarrassed or misunderstood. The Neighborhood Memory Café encourages friendship and acceptance.

It is the goal for Neighborhood Memory Cafes to continue to be grassroots efforts, organized, maintained, and self sustained by the people that attend them. Each Café may have the same mission but develop its own "personality" based on the preferences and needs of its participants. Some cafes may want to be only a place of conversation and fun activities, while another may want to include elements of education. The participants will determine for themselves what they want, the time, day, and location of the Café.

Each meeting of the Neighborhood Memory Café should have a designated host or hostess that greets everyone, ensures they sign-in, and get a name tag. The host or hostess will initiate a time for introductions after participants have gathered, and make or ask for any announcements. The role of the host or hostess can be assumed by one person or rotated among the care partner participants.

Who Is the Neighborhood Memory Café For?

- Those persons with a diagnosis of a dementia related diagnosis
- Those persons with mild cognitive impairment
- People who are concerned about their memory loss
- Family members and care partners of a person with a diagnosis

Those with dementia or memory worries may attend unaccompanied where appropriate, or with family, friends or care partners. It should be made clear to family, friends and care partners that the service is not suitable for people with dementia to attend alone if they have specific care needs such as:

- Problems with continence
- Mobility issues that require aid
- High levels of anxiety
- Disorientation/history of wandering

The Neighborhood Memory Café is open to anyone without formal referral or assessment. A person with a history of disruptive and/or aggressive behavior is not appropriate for the group.

Why Is a Memory Café Needed?

There are 5.4 million people in the U.S. with a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease and this is expected to increase significantly with the aging of the baby boomers. This diagnosis impacts not only the individual, but their care partners and other family members as well.

Unfortunately it continues to be a misunderstood disease and people with the diagnosis often experience that even long time friends pull away. There is "still a lot of living to do" after diagnosis and the Neighborhood Memory Café hope to promote this and restore a sense of "normalcy" for both the person with the diagnosis and those that love them, a place to have fun and laugh once again.

I. Nuts and Bolts of a Starting a Neighborhood Memory Café

1. Identify people willing to be involved in starting a memory café and identify their role.
2. List each task that needs to be done with a date/deadline for completion
3. Find a location for the meeting that meets the following needs:
 - a. Easy and adequate parking
 - b. Accessible by public transportation whenever possible
 - c. Accessible by wheelchair
 - d. Adequate bathroom facilities that are accessible by those with disabilities
 - e. Safe and good fire escape facility
 - f. First floor seating for up to 40 in a café style seating arrangement
 - g. Adequate heating and air-conditioning
 - h. Separate area with low noise and ability to maintain confidentiality is preferable
 - i. Adequate furniture of tables and chairs
 - j. Maintains a first aid kit, or provide this
4. Recruit volunteers for host/ hostess duties, provide snacks and drinks, donate games, activity items, lead an activity, play an instrument (music is very important), assist with

marketing, develop a webpage, etc.

5. Market the group-(see the marketing section)
6. Decide on a launch date
7. Maintain a roster of names, addresses, phone, email, emergency contacts. Develop monthly sign-in sheet, provide name tags, markers, pens
8. First meeting should explain purpose, mission, discuss confidentiality, define who is appropriate, and encourage input and ownership by the participants.
9. Acquire needed activity items, such as games, puzzles, word games, and a storage box for these items- (see Activity section)
10. Develop a resource list and resource library. Be prepared to refer people for additional services and assistance.
11. Continue to find ways to get the word out- word of mouth, develop flyer for participants to give friends, physicians, etc.
12. Consider conducting a short satisfaction survey to evaluate memory café (after several groups), solicit ideas, etc.

II. Budget

- Will there be any costs involved in getting the NMC started, such as printing of the flyer, purchase of games, puzzles, name tags, etc.
- If so, could one of the entities in the target market provide these things?
- Once started, there should be no cost for the participants, other than perhaps putting money in a jar for coffee.

III. Marketing the Memory Café

Marketing Goals:

- Create awareness of the need for the Neighborhood Memory Café (hereafter referred to as **NMC**)
- Increase understanding of the benefit of social engagement for those with cognitive loss and their care partners

Target Audiences: Participants and Professionals

- People with a diagnosis of Alzheimer's or other dementia, including MCI
- Care partners of people with the diagnosis
(We want these two groups to do the following: 1) Become aware of the NMC 2) Decide that the NMC will benefit them 3) Attend on a regular basis 4) Spread the word among their friends and acquaintances)
- Neurologists who diagnose and treat people with cognitive loss
- Independent and/or assisted living communities in which certain residents may be showing signs of cognitive loss
- Senior centers whose members might benefit from attending a Memory Cafe
- Churches and other places of worship whose members might benefit
- YMCAs with programs for aging adults who might have members who would benefit
- Local chapter(s) of the Alzheimer's Association
- Local university-based Alzheimer's Disease Centers or other brain research entities

- Home Care Agencies who provide in-home help to seniors
- Geriatric care managers and their local/regional professional association
- Area Agency on Aging
- Local AARP chapter
- Senior Source (Dallas area) or other non-profit serving the seniors in your county
- Any other organization remotely connected with seniors and older adults
(We want these groups to 1) Become aware of the NMC; 2) Help them to see the benefit to their respective members/partners/clients 3) Assist by actively promoting the NMC through communications in their respective publications or other channels of communication)

Strategies: What are the best ways to motivate our various target audiences to act?

- Personal networking is key to reaching our target audience; leverage all of our contacts
- Ask interested parties/prospective members to contact anyone in the target audience with whom they have had previous contact
- Contact local media, i.e., community newspapers, NPR stations, etc., to be included in their Community Calendar sections
- See if your employer will promote it in any company communications to employees
- Ask to attend health fairs to distribute information
- REMEMBER TO LET EACH ORGANIZATION KNOW HOW IT WILL BENEFIT THEM
- Be persistent
- Learn what you can about each organization you are approaching.

Tactics: How can we deliver the message to our audience via these strategies?

- Provide our NMC flyer to everyone with whom we come in contact, both electronically and in person (see example)
- Have a specific “ask”—what exactly do you need each member of each target audience to do? It will be different for each one.
- Tailor the request/message to the organization’s/individual’s goal or mission
- Make it personal; people relate more to individual stories than to numbers and statistics

IV. Activities for the Neighborhood Memory Café

Guiding concepts:

Participants are at memory cafes primarily to socialize. Socialization includes activities for both the person with the cognitive illness and their care partner. Because some of the persons with cognitive illnesses will have discomfort and difficulty in verbalizing thoughts some of the activities should not center on verbal communications. Activities chosen should be simple and straightforward in direction with adjustability in following the rules of the activity to allow deviation from standard play. The activities should not last longer than a half an hour in time each, but should be repeatable as desired. Participants should be asked for suggestions of activities on a regular basis (things they like to do). Any activity that may impact the environment where the memory café is held need to be cleared with the host facility before commencing the activity.

Icebreaker:

Each session should start with an icebreaker activity to re-introduce participants to each other and to allow persons with cognitive illnesses to feel comfortable amongst their peers. Sharing something about themselves, that others would find interesting, helps foster interaction among participants. Topics for statements should be varied from session to session. Examples of icebreaking topics are: favorite movies, favorite foods, best vacations, and where someone was born.

Suggested games and other activities:

Puzzles for cognitively impaired persons

Dominos for cognitively impaired persons

Games like UNO, checkers, simple card games

Watercolor or finger painting

Singing

Conversation starter books, magazines, cards

Bingo

Check these two sources for additional ideas: www.alzstore.com,

www.bestalzheimersproducts.com

Other possibilities:

If desired, outings to restaurants, visits to museums, concerts, other cultural venues as the opportunities arise.

Note:

Expect that it may take a while for the new Neighborhood Memory Café to build participation.

Prepare for sustaining the café even when leadership and participation changes.

Here is an example of a Memory Café flyer:

Neighborhood Memory Café



Share your stories and socialize with others who have worries about their memory.

When: Third Friday of each month beginning
January 18, 2013

Time: 10:00 to 11:15 a.m.

Where: Lewisville Senior Activity Center
1950-A South Valley Parkway, Lewisville TX

Phone: (XXX) XXX - XXXX

Who: Individuals with Early to Moderate Alzheimer's & their
Care Partners as well as those who worry about Memory
Problems

What: Socialization & Information
Networking for Care Partners

Why: Being active physically, socially, and mentally
is good for the brain

For additional information, contact: