

LIFT OFF WITH MEMORY CAFES AND AUTISM EATS: *EXPLORING INNOVATIVE CAFÉ RESPITE MODELS*



Moderator: Emily Kearns

Presenters: Michael Bloom and Lenard Zohn



TODAY'S 3 OBJECTIVES

- ▶ Become familiar with two case studies of replicable, innovative respite café models implemented by Massachusetts Lifespan Respite Coalition grantees.
- ▶ Introduce the Memory Café toolkit that provides resources for starting and sustaining a café.
- ▶ Explore with others in the interactive session how these models might be replicated in their own communities.



LIGHT RESPITE VS. TRADITIONAL RESPITE

- ▶ care partners do not need to separate to enjoy a break.
- ▶ care partners find shared relief from their exhausting caregiving dynamic - too often centered on medical visits and support groups - in the normal community setting of the café.
- ▶ restorative aspect: care partners are able to be together to enjoy their relationship and their former, pre-caregiving roles – spouses, parent/child, etc.



TODAY'S SESSION PROCESS – DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY

- ▶ Dementia Action Alliance guidelines: hold questions to the end, if possible (write them down)
- ▶ Speak slowly
- ▶ Use the mics
- ▶ Minimize noise

Source: <http://daanow.org/dementia-action-alliance/white-paper/>



MEMORY CAFÉ MODEL –HAPPY 15TH ANNIVERSARY!

- ▶ On September 15, 1997, Bere Miesen started the very first Alzheimer Café in Leiden, in the Netherlands.
- ▶ Since then, cafés have popped up all over the world, including over 300 in the US.
- ▶ Massachusetts has more than 60!



GUIDING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS – (DON'T LIMIT YOURSELVES TO THESE)

- ▶ How might you see these models working in your community?
- ▶ What concrete steps might you take to explore implementing them in your community?
- ▶ How do these café models compare with what you've experienced in programming for care partners?
- ▶ What are the strengths of these models?



CONTACT INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Michael Bloom, LifeLinks, mbloom@lifelinksinc.net

Emily Kearns, Kearns Consulting, info@kearnsconsulting.org

Lenard Zohn, Autism Eats, Lzohn90@comcast.net

Resources:

Memory Café Toolkit: [Dementia Friendly America Toolkit](#)

Other Café directories:

- ▶ www.memorycafedirectory.com
- ▶ www.alzheimerscafe.com





Linking lives to opportunity since 1954

Case Study: LifeLinks Memory Café, an inclusive group respite model

Michael Bloom

Director of Strategy & Innovation

Coordinator, LifeLinks Memory
Café

An affiliated
chapter of



What is a Memory Café?

- An innovative group respite program that takes the form of a social gathering comprised of people with memory impairment, their family caregivers and professionals
- Usually includes a meal or snacks
- Originated in Holland in 1997 then spread to Australia and throughout Europe. Came to the United States in 2008 and dozens of new cafés opening each year.

Features of a Memory Café?

- Strive to be inclusive
- Free of charge or sliding scale
- Physically accessible
- Free of stigma, nobody asks for diagnosis
- Responsive to the different cultures and needs in the neighborhood
- A facilitated discussion or therapeutic program
- Build new friendships

Why LifeLinks Developed a Memory Café?



About LifeLinks

A private, non-profit human service agency headquartered in Chelmsford, MA. Also known as ARC of Greater Lowell.

Our services include:

- Residential care (group homes and shared living)
- Day habilitation
- Individual and family support services

Our vision is to build on the foundation laid by our founding families - to offer the best services in the most optimal manner for effective results, enhancing the lives of people with developmental or intellectual disabilities.

LifeLinks Memory Café Goals

- To offer stigma-free memory café group respite sessions in an accessible space for people with Alzheimer's or a related dementia and their family caregivers
- To provide support to employees and family members of people currently receiving supports who may be dealing with the challenges of supporting a loved one with memory impairment
- To reach more isolated and underserved community members (LGBTQ elders) who desire a warm, welcoming, and safe environment



Where to Begin?

Memory Café Toolkit

Download for free at

<http://bit.ly/memorycafetoolkit>

Please contact Beth Soltzberg
at memorycafe@jfcsboston.org with any
questions or for more information.

Marketing and Outreach

- Article writing – Op-ed for local papers, other publications like trade associations
- Press release
- Promotional items – drop at local library
- Presenting at local associations (Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, etc)
- Seek interviews on local cable and radio shows
- Inviting members of the Aging Services Access Point (ESMV) to help spread the word
- Attend LGBT elder dinner/support group meetings
- Social media posting
- Contact Meetup.com hosts
- Additional great ideas can be found in the Memory Café Toolkit

Considerations Beyond Marketing

- Have a motivated Memory Café coordinator
- Arrange for dynamic session facilitators – creative arts is popular
- Good food – personally check with all participants about dietary needs
- Make registration easy – phone call to a person or online
- Seek good volunteers – have a volunteer duty description so no surprises
- Seek participant feedback – Memory Café feedback form
- Call Memory Café participants once between sessions to check in and remind about next session



Challenges

- Selecting good day/time of the week
- New England weather
- Last minute cancellations with a free event
- Reaching isolated target groups such as LGBTQ elders

Successes

- Extremely high levels of satisfaction were shared by attendees for each and every Memory Café session. (share feedback form)
- Variety of therapeutic programming provided by expert facilitators.
- LifeLinks Memory Café articles were published in The Provider – February 2017 Newspaper of the Provider's Council, The Arc of Massachusetts Winter Newsletter, LifeLinks Winter 2017 newsletter, The Lowell Sun
- Positive press for Memory Café with pictures and description published in Lowell Sun.
- Lesbian couple (one partner has Alzheimer's) became regular attendees and expressed appreciation for the warm welcome and support. Even after they secured and moved to elder housing out of the area, they still continued to return for sessions.

Participant Feedback

"I wanted to thank you for the wonderful Memory Café session you held last week! You really did a great job and my Dad, Mom and I all enjoyed the session. I was very surprised that my Dad was ok with the visualization exercise - first time I ever did that with him - ha! Hope to see you at the next one." – Laura
Alzheimer's



LifeLinks Memory Café Stats

- Innovation grant (10K) acquired by Massachusetts Lifespan Respite Coalition and Federal Admin on Community Living
- Coordination of 5 live sessions with dinner February-June 2017 with 57 participants.
- Facilitated sessions – Mindfulness, Dancing for Wellness, Drum Circle, Emotional Release, Visual Journaling
- Secured private donation to sustain the Memory Café for fall 2017 and beyond. Doing fall and spring seasons with 4 monthly sessions each.

Please Stay in Touch

LifeLinks Memory Café at

<http://lifelinksinc.net/what-we-do/memory-cafe.html>

Michael's contact info

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978-349-3019



“Autism Eats”

National Lifespan Respite Conference

Huntsville, AL

October 13, 2017



Family Dinners





Overwhelmed: Strong Reactions to Environment





The Chase





Off the Roster

MONTH: _____

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

MyCalendarLand - www.mycalendarland.com



Two Worlds





That's When We Decided To Do Something About It!





Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide autism-friendly non-judgmental environments for family dining, socializing and connecting with others who share similar joys and challenges



Success!

- The right restaurant
- Buffet
- Pay in advance
- Sensory sensitive
- Welcome our guests



Happy Families

- Social time
- Respite
- A **REGULAR** night out
- Community
- Confidence





The Numbers

- Average 70-110 guests per dinner
- AE clubs in multiple communities in 15 states (and growing)
- 50 Events with over 4,000 guests



Survey Said...

- 82% Feel very welcomed at AE events
- 81% Feel their family was safe and the restaurant was accessible
- 75% Entire family enjoyed themselves
- 52+% Felt less isolated and more connected to community and social world after attending an AE dinner
- 76+% Said they experienced increased confidence to try different outings/activities after attending AE dinner



Guests Said...

- Felt accepted no matter what behaviors my child was experiencing
- ALL of my kids were happy-typical and non-typical. They could be themselves
- I connected with other families
- My son has difficulty making friends but we made play-dates with TWO new friends we met at the dinner
- Thank you for doing this, we haven't been to a restaurant as family in over 4 years
- This is the best night of my life!



What's Next?

- Adding more “clubs”
 - I provide the infrastructure and guidance
- Increase frequency of dinners
- Funding and partnerships





Support Autism Eats

Visit www.AutismEats.org for more information and to offer suggestions

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