

University of Georgia School of Social Work

Partners in Caregiver Respite Support: A Community-University Case Study

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Presentation Agenda

- **Dementia caregiving**
 - Background, impetus for partnership
- **Orientation to the Athens Community Council on Aging (ACCA)**
- **About Houseguest, an in-home respite program**
 - Pilot study results
 - Caregiver, care receiver, student outcomes
- **Reflections and conclusions**



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Background

Dementia

- 5.8 million adults aged 65+ in U.S.¹
- 6th leading cause of death¹

Caregiving

- More than 16 million family caregivers^{1,2}
- Care value = \$234 billion¹

Social Work Training

- Fewer than 3% of social workers undergo geriatrics/gerontology training^{3,4}

Community-Engaged Scholarship

- Integration of research, teaching, and service⁵



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Partnership Beginnings



The screenshot shows the University of Georgia Office of Service-Learning website. The header includes the university logo and name, and a navigation menu with links for Home, About the OSL, Courses, Faculty Resources, Student Programs, Community Engagement, Giving to OSL, and News and Events. The main content area is titled "Service-Learning Fellows Program" and features a sidebar with "Faculty Resources" and a main text area with an image of a meeting. The text describes the program as a year-long faculty development program that provides an opportunity for selected faculty members to integrate service-learning into their teaching, research, and public service work while becoming recognized campus leaders in service-learning pedagogy and community engagement. It also mentions a \$2500 fellowship award and that applications are generally due in March.

- **Community partners (e.g., businesses, government agencies, social service organizations) work collaboratively with universities to meet community needs⁶**
- **Educational opportunities for students**
- **“Community-engaged scholarship involves the faculty member in a mutually beneficial partnership with the community.”⁷**
- **Integration of teaching, research, and service**



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Athens Community Council on Aging

Get to know ACCA

Founded in 1967 by local citizens, the Athens Community Council on Aging, a non-profit organization, aims to maintain and enrich the lives of older persons in 27 counties of Northeast and Eastern Georgia. Our key service areas include providing meals, health and wellness programs, and caregiver support.



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Housequest

Respite visits

- Student pairs
- 90-minute visits
- 6 visits

**Informed by Families
Matter NIH trial^{8,9}*

Visit plan

- Caregiver's self-care plan
- Education workshop

Tailored activities

- Students engage person with dementia
- Person-centered activities



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Houseguest

Recruitment

- **Community partner**

Qualitative

- **Semi-structured interviews**
- **Thematic analysis**

University of Georgia Institutional Review Board



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Participants

| Age | Sex | Race | Health Status | Relationship to Care Recipient | Months Providing Care | Age of Care Recipient |
|-----|--------|------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 63 | Female | White | Good | Daughter | 65 | 88 |
| 73 | Female | African American | Very good | Daughter | 60 | 92 |
| 81 | Female | African American | Good | Spouse | 48 | 83 |
| 55 | Male | White | Very good | Son | 192 | 78 |
| 34 | Female | African American | Fair | Daughter | 48 | 70 |
| 30 | Male | White | Fair | Son | 80 | 62 |
| 63 | Female | African American | Fair | Daughter | 117 | 81 |



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Themes

Caregiver needs (CN), Care recipients needs (CRN), Perception of Program Materials (PPM)

- Respite from caregiving role (CN)
- Information on caregiving strategies (CN)
- No-cost support services (CN)
- Opportunity for care recipients to socialize (CRN)
- Tailored activities for care recipients (CRN)
- Rapport-building between students and family (PPM)
- Reciprocity between students and family (PPM)
- Program continuation (PPM)



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Caregiver Burden

“The whole week, everywhere I went, I was with my mother 24/7.”

“[What I need is] somebody to sit with her. Somebody you can just call and say, ‘Hey, I got to do this, and I need you to watch Mom.’ I don’t have that.”



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Caregivers' Experiences

“Having that extra time when the ladies were there working with her to relax. I enjoyed reading, and I would catch up on chores that I needed to do. She demands a lot of your attention. It was good to be able to do that while they were here.”



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Tailored Activities

“It seems like [the activities] made him more calm ... he was a little more cooperative. It kind of made him a little more focused.”



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Interaction with Students

“At the [adult day care center], she is not calm. She’s very combative, but I noticed how calm she was with them.”

“What impressed me was [the students] showed her love. The two young ladies were very humble kids.”



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News

New service-learning course connects students with families dealing with dementia

July 29, 2015

Marissa Jones holds up a flash card featuring a U.S. president.

“Do you recognize him?”

“Do you know his name?” she asks when he doesn’t respond.



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Discussion

Houseguest created an opportunity for students to serve families affected by dementia

Benefits of no-cost, in-home respite

Opportunities for community-university partnerships



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Reflection of First Implementation

- **Reflections from Community Partner**
 - **Strengths**
 - **Areas for improvement**
 - **Considerations**



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The Course Component

- **Rapid growth of the older population**
 - **Urgent need for social work preparations for working with persons with dementia and their family systems**
 - **Growth rate of persons with dementia outpaces graduates of Social Work programs**
 - **Hartford Partnership Program in Aging Education has implemented more than 70 programs to increase expertise in aging for social workers**



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The Courses

Dementia Caregiving - 2015

Course Goals:

- Identify psychosocial needs of persons with dementia and caregivers
- Assess current community, state, national resources
- Demonstrate understanding of dementia care with relevance to social work practice



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Social Work Practice with Older Adults- 2016

Course Goals:

- Understand the physical and psychosocial changes associated with normal aging
- Understand the bio-psycho-social-spiritual needs of older adults

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Courses' Components

| | Dementia Caregiving | Social Work with Older Adults |
|---|---------------------|--|
| Format | Hybrid | In-person |
| Student incentive | \$40.00 | None |
| Letter assignment | Yes | No |
| Action plan assignment | Yes | Yes |
| Targeted number of visits | 6 | 3 to 4 |
| Competing student demands | None | 1 st year field placement |
| Weekly reflection papers | Yes | No |
| Travel distance | Within city | Within and surrounding cities/counties |
| Visit labs were offered in lieu of in-person class sessions | None | Two |



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The Courses

Two graduate level courses on social work and dementia care

Survey of student to examine:

- Attitudes toward people with dementia (Dementia Attitudes Scale¹⁰)
- Attitudes toward civic engagement (Civic Attitudes Scale¹¹)
- Future workforce goals as influenced by the course (Open-Ended Questions)
 - How will this experience assist you in pursuing your future career?
 - What would you say is the greatest unmet need of dementia caregivers?
 - What misconception(s) did you have about people with dementia that was/were overturned by this course?



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Student Demographics

| | C1 (n = 14) | C2 (n = 16) |
|---|--------------------|-------------|
| | n (%) ^a | n (%) |
| Age, mean years (<i>SD</i>) | 28 (9) | 28 (8) |
| Sex | | |
| Males | 0(0) | 3(18.8) |
| Females | 14(100) | 13(81.3) |
| Race | | |
| Caucasian | 8(57.1) | 13(81.3) |
| African American | 6(42.9) | 2(12.5) |
| Hispanic | 0(0) | 1(6.3) |
| Marrital status | | |
| Single | 10(71.4) | 14(87.5) |
| Married | 2(14.3) | 1(6.3) |
| Divorced | 2(14.3) | 1(6.3) |
| Major | | |
| Social work | 10(71.4) | 13(81.3) |
| Social work and public health dual degree | 4(28.6) | 3(18.8) |
| Previous gerontology course | | |
| Yes | 7(50) | 4(25) |
| No | 7(50) | 12(75) |
| Previous dementia caregiving course | | |
| Yes | 0(0) | 0(0) |
| No | 14(0) | 16(100) |
| Employment status | | |
| Not working for pay | 5(35.7) | 5(31.3) |
| Working part-time for pay | 8(57.1) | 10(62.5) |
| Working full time for pay | 1(7.1) | 1(6.3) |
| Volunteer status | | |
| Not volunteering | 11(78.6) | 13(81.3) |
| Volunteering | 3(21.4) | 3(18.8) |

^aPercentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.



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Results

- Experienced an improvement in civic attitudes
- Experienced an improvement in attitudes toward people with dementia
- Identified the direct interaction with families as a meaningful component of the course
- Connected the course experience to future career goals through improved gerontology self-efficacy and increased knowledge about dementia



Results

| Question | 2015 | 2016 |
|--|------|------|
| What was the most meaningful experience you had while completing this course? | | |
| Direct interaction | 10 | 11 |
| Class materials/tools | 1 | 5 |
| Service-learning components | 0 | 4 |
| Tailored activities | 2 | 0 |
| Student-to-student partnering | 1 | 0 |
| How will this experience assist you in pursuing your future career? | | |
| Increased gerontology self-efficacy ^a | 6 | 5 |
| Increased knowledge about dementia | 5 | 8 |
| Improved skills | 0 | 5 |
| Greater marketability | 2 | 1 |
| More positive attitudes | 1 | 1 |

| Question | 2015 | 2016 |
|--|------|------|
| What would you say is the greatest unmet need of dementia caregivers? | | |
| Respite | 4 | 10 |
| Resources | 7 | 4 |
| Self-care | 4 | 5 |
| Social support | 4 | 3 |
| Limited dementia-trained professionals | 0 | 1 |
| What misconception(s) did you have about people with dementia that was later overturned by this course? | | |
| Behavioral/cognitive characteristics ^b | 6 | 7 |
| Inability to communicate | 0 | 5 |
| Causes of dementia ^c | 0 | 2 |
| Disease progression | 0 | 1 |
| Family systems dynamics | 0 | 1 |
| Dementia types | 0 | 1 |
| Dementia as a "lost cause" ^d | 1 | 0 |



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Lessons Learned

- **Lesson One**: Maintain a family waitlist.
- **Lesson Two**: Update caregivers' contact information regularly.
- **Lesson Three**: Be responsive to the community partner's needs.
- **Lesson Four**: Encourage student flexibility with the service activity.
- **Lesson Five**: Manage student-family introductions prior to the first visit.
- **Lesson Six**: Carefully consider the most appropriate course format and ideal semester offering.
- **Lesson Seven**: Match students to families based on transportation needs and interests.



Reflection of the Partnership

- **Reflections from community partner**
 - What makes an ideal partnership?
 - Engaging in research with university faculty
- **Reflections from researcher**
 - Nurturing and sustaining a partnership
 - Looking back



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Conclusions

- Where are we now?



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Questions?

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