



Centered News

Family Caregivers Center of Mercy • Mercy Center for Memory Health
Community Connections Program • Age and Dementia Friendly Smart Showroom
Caregivers Center of Mercy

November 2024



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Your investment propels the DeWolf Innovation Center and its programs forward. It is an opportunity to change the way we serve older adults, caregivers, and volunteers in our community and beyond. To give, please call Mercy's Foundation at (319) 398-6206 or scan the QR code below to be directed to the Foundation's website. Thank you to all our wonderful donors!



Caregiver Appreciation Month

November is National Family Caregiver Month! It is a time to celebrate the impact and dedication of family caregivers across the nation. November is also a season of gratitude where we reflect on what and for whom we are thankful. If you are a caregiver, we want you to know we celebrate you and are grateful for all you do. The time, money, energy, and care you give to another in need should be celebrated daily. You are the reason someone is able to: stay at home, access needed services, have a trusted resource looking after their finances, get to their appointments, and have a friend or support in an emergency. These are just a few of the things caregivers do. Whatever your caregiving role, big or small, please know you are making a difference.



Caregiving can bring joy, but also can be overwhelming. It can be a thankless job at times. The person you are caring for or others around you may not recognize all you do each day. You may not get a thank you for your efforts. And while you might not be looking for a thank you, sometimes recognition is appreciated. We want you to know that we appreciate you and see you and all that you are doing. You matter. Thank you!

-Your Friends at the Family Caregivers Center



Mercy Center for Memory Health News



AD-Detect: New blood test for Alzheimer's disease

Lindsay Ehlers, ARNP, Mercy Center for Memory Health

It has been estimated that 25% to 30% of patients who are clinically diagnosed with Alzheimer's in a specialty clinic are misdiagnosed. This percentage increases to 50% to 70% when diagnosis is provided in a primary care setting. A clinical diagnosis means a physician or other provider gives a diagnosis based on a patient's symptoms and presentation. Other forms of dementia are also often misdiagnosed. Some forms of dementia (ie. Lewy body dementia or behavioral variant frontotemporal dementia) may initially be identified as a psychiatric illness.

Recently, the ability to test one's blood for biomarkers has become available and can be a key step in accurately diagnosing Alzheimer's disease. This test is known as the AD-Detect lab. Prior to the availability of this blood test, patients could have a lumbar puncture (LP) to have their cerebrospinal fluid tested or have positron emission tomography (PET) scan to assess for amyloid pathology. An LP is considered rather invasive, and there may be contraindications for some patients (including anticoagulation therapy). A PET scan requires a tracer to be administered and causes exposure to radiation. Blood tests are much less invasive, and results are available within 3 to 10 days of having the lab drawn.

Having an accurate diagnosis for patients is important, especially in the early stages of a subjective or mild cognitive impairment, as this may change the treatment options. For example, if a person is evaluated at the Mercy Center for Memory Health, and their cognitive testing comes back in the normal range, they may receive a diagnosis of a subjective cognitive impairment, which means they are experiencing more changes than what their testing reflects, and historically no pharmacological treatment would be indicated or offered. However, if this patient was found to have positive blood biomarkers, it could be beneficial to start utilizing specific medications.

If you or your loved one are interested in testing for Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia, please contact the Mercy Center for Memory Health at 319-398-6435. Current patients may call their designated nurse navigator directly to discuss further.



Reflection: Being Present as a Dementia Caregiver

I was listening to an interview with Demi Moore about Bruce Willis and it really brightened my morning. In the interview she stated, "The important thing is to meet him where he is at as opposed to being attached to who he was, how he was, because again, that only puts you in a place of loss versus being in the present. Meeting him where he's at and finding the joy and the loving of just all that is, where he is."

When caregivers are present with their loved ones, many times it is grief and coping that takes place with the transition to a new diagnosis. The words she spoke are so important for caregivers, so they continue to live, laugh and love their loved ones.

-Megan Wullner, Manager, Mercy Center for Memory Health



"Take a Moment" Podcast

"Take a Moment" Caregiving Podcast is a podcast with reflections, tips and inspiration for family caregivers. Each episode is three to five minutes long and produced by our very own volunteer Dr. Peg O'Rourke, retired counselor and caregiver to her husband, David.

"Take a Moment" Podcast:

[Click here](#) or go to <https://www.buzzsprout.com/1855120/> to listen. Enjoy!

Family Caregivers Center of Mercy News



"Ask Abby" is a column dedicated to answering caregiver questions. If you would like to submit a question, email fcgc@mercyare.org.

How do I best advocate for my loved one need's in a care center?

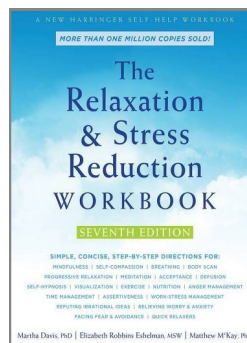
Our hope is when a loved one moves into a care setting that all their needs will be managed and provided for in the way they are accustomed. No matter how good the care setting, often family caregivers continue to be needed to share care preferences, goals and advocate when things may not be going to plan. When things are not going to plan or you have a concern in a care setting, there are a couple steps you can take to advocate for your loved one.

- **Visit regularly**- if you are able, visit your loved one regularly and at different times of day to notice changes or concerns.
- **Get to know the staff**- become familiar with staff members so you know who to talk to when you have a need and who follows up when you have a concern.
- **Report concerns**- if you have a concern, do not hesitate to report it to the charge nurse, director of nursing, administrator or doctor.
- **Attend care conferences**- care conferences bring your loved one's care team together to review their care plan and discuss questions or concerns.
- **Attend family/resident council meetings**- if the facility has a family or resident council, try attending to get to know other families and hear their questions or concerns.
- **Contact the Ombudsman**- if you do not feel your concerns are not addressed after reporting to the facility, your local long-term care Ombudsman can assist in advocating for your loved one's needs.

You are an important part of your loved one's care team and as so, have a right to advocate for your loved one's needs. If you need assistance in doing so, call the Family Caregivers Center at (319) 221-8866.

- Abby Weirather, Manager, Family Caregivers Center

Book Review



The Relaxation & Stress Reduction Workbook, 7th edition,

by Martha Davis, PhD, Elizabeth Robbins Eshelman, MSW, Matthew McKay, PhD

This book, with over a million copies sold and 7 editions, is a classic and with good reason. The techniques for relaxation and reducing stress are each covered in enough detail, with lots of exercises to follow through to make the most reluctant feel comfortable and knowledgeable as well as less stressful and anxious. This truly is a workbook, helping readers become proficient at techniques that provide the stress relief they need.

The latest edition includes new sections on self compassion, coping with anxiety, fear and panic as well as expanding the basic techniques. Most helpful is an initial chapter that allows someone to find which techniques and exercises can be most helpful for particular problems.

If you have trouble relaxing, need help in stress reduction, or are spending too much time worrying, take time now to read this highly recommended book. Copies are available in the Family Caregivers Center Library or perhaps you might want to purchase a copy for yourself to reference again and again.

- Dot Hinman, Content Writer

The Caregivers Center at Mercy News

Celebrating the Opening of the Caregivers Center at Mercy



I'm excited to share with you that the Caregivers Center at Mercy is now open! After extensive research and years of engaging with the community to understand the needs of caregivers in the healthcare setting, our vision has finally become a reality. The Caregivers Center, located within Mercy Medical Center, is a welcoming and relaxing space. It features comfortable seating areas, a private relaxation room, a meeting space, and a library of trusted resources.

The caregiver program at Mercy is designed to care for caregivers by providing them with trusted resources, healthcare navigation assistance, and one-on-one support. We understand that both formal and informal caregivers play a crucial role in the care journey, often encountering emotional, physical, and financial challenges. With this in mind, we've created a comprehensive program and a supportive environment focusing on the wellbeing of caregivers within the hospital setting.

I remember the day I met with Tim Charles, who was the CEO of Mercy then, to talk about the idea of a caregivers center in the hospital. During our conversation, I felt an overwhelming sense of gratitude. Here was a leader who truly cared, not just about our patients but also about their families and support systems. I was filled with excitement about being part of such an important initiative. It was clear that we were paving the way for meaningful caregiver support in healthcare, much like Kathy Good and the Family Caregivers Center had done in our community, touching the lives of so many. I'm proud to say that we're the only hospital in the Midwest, as far as we know, with a program and center like the one we've built. It's a journey that continues to inspire me! My hope is that the space becomes a place of comfort and support for all caregivers at Mercy!

- Kindel Dillon, Operations Director, DeWolf Innovation Center

Community Connections Program News

Connections Club Update

Sixteen people became volunteers for the Connection Club being held at the DeWolf Innovation Center since April 2024. The inaugural Connections Club started in April on Thursdays. As more people became volunteers, it was possible to offer Connections Club on Wednesdays.

There are currently ten individuals living with early stage dementia who attend on Thursdays and six who attend on Wednesdays. Since the Connection Clubs are dependent on volunteers and having enough volunteers to support the members, more members will not be able to be added on Wednesdays until more volunteers are added. If you are interested in volunteering or know someone who is, please contact the DeWolf Innovation Center at 319-784-9200.



Club members and volunteers engaging in a presentation on "Milkshake Day" from Dan & Debbie's Creamery

As the Community Connections Facilitator, in working with the volunteers, we have developed themes for each week that help us create engaging activities. We have had fun with the themes of "Back to School" and reminiscing about school experiences; Labor Day and learning about the origins of that national holiday; and tailgating with fun tailgate type snacks. We have also encouraged members to feel meaningful and have purpose by packaging buttons for the Freedom Festival and baking cookies for the meetings held at the Innovation Center. Members enjoy gentle yoga, dancing, interacting with pets, and playing bingo.

It is wonderful to hear members laughing and having a good time and to see friendships being formed.

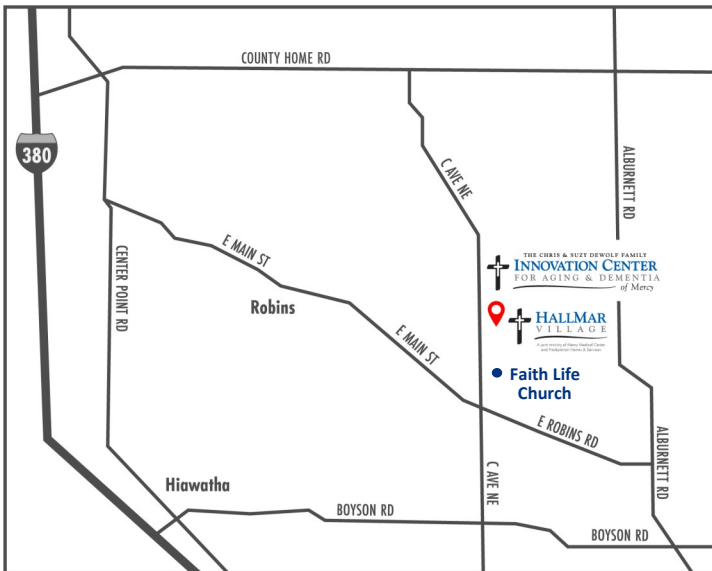
- Melissa McClure, Community Connections Facilitator

It's Time to Think Differently About Aging & Dementia



At The Chris & Suzy DeWolf Family Innovation Center for Aging & Dementia of Mercy, older adults and those living with chronic conditions are empowered to lead satisfying and fulfilling lives. Family caregivers receive support to make caregiving easier. And our volunteers – often older adults with lived experience – find meaning and purpose in helping others.

Our future-focused philosophy exists throughout the entire DeWolf Innovation Center. From our programs to the décor, each element of our environment is intentional. The plaques in our atrium and Cambridge Auditorium showcase these details for visitors. It's important that age and dementia-friendly insights continue to be a driving force behind our decisions.



The Chris & Suzy DeWolf Family Innovation Center for Aging & Dementia of Mercy

9000 C Ave NE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52402

(319) 784-9200

Directions: Take C Avenue NE. Heading north, go past Faith Life Church to HallMar Village Senior Living Community and the DeWolf Innovation Center entrance. Turn right into the drive and proceed to the main parking lot directly in front of Innovation Center.

Family Caregivers Center of Mercy

Providing resources
and support to family
caregivers

(319) 221-8866
fcgc@mercy.org

Mercy Center for Memory Health

Evaluating and
diagnosing memory
concerns

(319) 398-6435

Caregivers Center at Mercy

Providing resources
and support to
caregivers at Mercy
Medical Center

(319) 369-4749

