non-pharmacologic interventions that emphasize well-being and quality of life as defined by the individual are important to preserve personhood. Non-pharmacologic, person-centered interventions have been shown to effectively address various neuropsychiatric symptoms, commonly known as behavioral and psychological symptoms in dementia (BPSD), which include a wide range of behaviors such as verbal or physical aggression, agitation, wandering, and pacing. Interventions that are focused on an individual’s holistic needs and preferences can stimulate positive emotions and behavior regardless of the stage of dementia. Person-centered care emphasizes a social model of care, rather than a medical model, by focusing on an individual’s emotional needs and care preferences that are consistent with their previous lifestyle. This symposium explores four different non-pharmacologic interventions for individuals living with dementia and discusses challenges and best practices for implementation in long-term care settings. For example, a best practice includes “buy-in” from facility staff who ultimately are responsible for implementing interventions that follow a social care model. A challenge found includes creating consistency and adherence to non-pharmacologic interventions so they are sustained over time, potentially replacing additional doses of medication. Symposium presenters will discuss the Mason Music & Memory Initiative (M3I), the Alzheimer’s Poetry Project, Birdsong, and TimeSlips, which are all interventions that are relatively low-cost and easy to implement by non-specialists. Strategies for intergenerational programming and adaptability of these programs to different contexts will also be discussed.

CREATING STORIES USING TIMESLIPS WITH PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

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TimeSlips is an award-winning, non-pharmacologic, creative storytelling intervention designed specifically for individuals living with dementia by Anne Basting. As part of the NextGen pilot program, George Mason University implemented TimeSlips at a dementia-specific adult day health care center with undergraduate and graduate students trained as facilitators. They worked with two different populations living with ADRD—an early-stage group and a moderate- to late-stage group. Students who participated reflected upon their experiences and noted that they learned so much about the importance of open-ended questions and accepting even one-word answers. One student stated: “This makes so much sense, as I have noticed participants take these open-ended questions and deliver beautifully unexpected and clever responses.” The implementation was different for these two groups, and our analysis of the content and process indicate that consistency and person-centeredness are key to participants’ expression of pride and joy in their accomplishments.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MUSIC AND MEMORY INTERVENTION IN NURSING FACILITIES IN VIRGINIA

Megumi Inoue,1 Emily Ihara,1 Catherine Tompkins,1 Kristen Suthers Rumrill,1 Kendall Barrett,1 Kathryn McNeil,1 and Christi Clark,2 1. George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia, United States, 2. Harpeth Consultant Advisory Group, Franklin, Tennessee, United States

The Music & Memory intervention is a person-centered, non-pharmacologic intervention for people living with dementia. It is considered a personalized music intervention because the playlist comprises music genres that the individual prefers. Music has shown positive effects on behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia. However, the findings from previous studies are often based on small sample sizes, insufficient descriptions of treatment fidelity, and lack of randomization. To address these issues, we began a randomized controlled trial implementing the Music & Memory intervention in nursing facilities in Virginia with support from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) Civil Money Penalty. We will present our research strategies as well as preliminary results suggesting that nursing facilities with higher occupancy rates are more likely to participate in this type of a program. In addition, study participants with dementia show positive emotional and behavioral reactions when listening to their favorite music.

POETRY BRINGS OUT THE BEST IN US: STRUCTURED POETRY-BASED GROUP ACTIVITY IN LONG-TERM CARE

Daniel Kaplan,1 and Gary Glazner,2 1. Adelphi University, Cortlandt Manor, New York, United States, 2. The Alzheimer’s Poetry Project, New York, New York, United States

The Alzheimer’s Poetry Project has a proven track record at over 500 facilities in 35 states and six countries, serving over 50,000 people worldwide, and has the ability to bring high-quality creative arts programming to people living with dementia in long-term care. We describe how volunteers and recreation and care staff can be trained to deliver the intervention, offering direct benefits for participants and indirect benefits when modeled in the presence of providers and family members. Basic validation techniques are easily learned and incorporated into diverse dementia care strategies. As activity programs based in creative arts help to support self-expression among participants and serve as a vehicle for generating feelings of self-efficacy, we explain how such activities are well suited to fostering the person-centered goals of dementia care programming. Clinicians and other transdisciplinary care providers are encouraged to use and teach validation-focused arts interventions with persons living with dementia.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF BIRDSONG: A NON-PHARMACOLOGICAL INTERVENTION FOR PERSONS WITH DEMENTIA

Catherine Tompkins,1 Joan Thomas,2 Christina Cole,2 and Mei Qiu,1 1. George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia, United States, 2. Birmingham Green, Manassas, Virginia, United States

Birdsong is a person-centered, nonpharmacological intervention for people with dementia. Using a touch-screen tablet, residents with dementia are stimulated with content customized based on individual interests such as sports, videos, music or brain games. The increased stimulation is expected to

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redirect negative behaviors, decrease the use of anti-psychotic medications and increase positive emotions. Birdsong is being implemented in a 100% Medicaid funded, long-term care facility. Two 10-week experimental design studies were implemented with 39 residents. Preliminary findings suggest a lack of independence with the tablets among the residents, but positive stimulation of emotions and redirection of negative behaviors with assistance of staff or volunteers. A team of practitioners, faculty and student researchers continue to examine the intervention, its implementation and effects on this population by examining the Minimum Data Set (MDS data) and observations of the residents as they utilize Birdsong.

SESSION 6135 (SYMPOSIUM)

IMPROVING COMMUNICATION FOR OLDER ADULTS DURING DISASTER EVENTS
Chair: Allison Gibson
Co-Chair: Nancy Kusmaul
Discussant: Lisa Brown

Management of any disaster event (i.e., hurricanes, flooding, wildfires, viral pandemic) is a complicated task. An important and frequently overlooked aspect of efficient disaster response is effective information exchange among emergency managers, aging and social service providers, and those impacted by the disaster. Breakdowns in communication are regularly cited as failures in actual emergency situations. Older adults have unique challenges to effective communication during a disaster event. Further, messaging platforms may be inaccessible to older adults. Given the lack of data collected on the role of effective communication for older adults in a disaster event, we developed this symposium to highlight lessons learned for facilitating disaster communication among older community members and discuss how policy can further disaster communication efforts. The first presentation highlights the advantages of using targeted marketing communication channels to encourage older adults to prepare and recover from a disaster, as well as the value of collaborative partnerships in this communication. The second presentation introduces results from research collected from older adults on their use of social media to stay informed before and after Hurricane Matthew. The third presentation explores whether assisted living communities in Florida’s affected counties evacuated or sheltered in place in the context of emergency management communications concerning evacuation. The fourth presentation highlights the experiences of older persons in Houston’s communication post-Hurricane Harvey from an aging service provider’s perspective. The final presentation discusses disaster literacy and how this model can be used to enhance outcomes at all phases of a disaster. Disasters and Older Adults Interest Group Sponsored Symposium.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS TECHNIQUES FOR COMMUNITIES TO REACH OLDER ADULTS IN A NATURAL DISASTER
Patricia Fletcher, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Washington, District of Columbia, United States

Framing timely messages during an emergency is often underestimated but is vitally essential and necessary, especially for the older population. While there is existing research on disaster and older adults, there is a gap in the literature that focuses on a 21st-century communication model that reaches at-risk populations. This presentation explores how practitioners can inspire change in the delivery of an emergency message to communities. Appropriately designed health communications will provide extensive knowledge about the health crisis and improve public health literacy among older adults in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery, creating messages that influence necessary behavior change during the emergency. Additionally, recognizing how collaborative partnerships with Federal, Local, State government, trusted relief agencies, and community groups benefit from designing an organizational structure to disseminate information to the community. Part of a symposium sponsored by Disasters and Older Adults Interest Group.

OLDER PERSONS’ USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR COMMUNICATION DURING HURRICANE MATTHEW
Allison Gibson,1 Nancy Kusmaul,2 and Ethan Engelhardt,1
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Older persons are frequently identified as more vulnerable during natural disasters due to age-related changes and chronic conditions. Over the last decade, the use of social media has grown, even among the older adult population. While many communities and organizations have utilized social media as a platform to communicate news and information about natural disasters among the public, little is known regarding how older adults utilize social media to plan, evacuate, and recovery from natural disaster events. This study examined the experiences of 23 older adults (n=23) use of social media following Hurricane Matthew. Individuals were able to speak about what they perceived as helpful in the information communicated, and recommendations they had for how such communications could be improved. The presentation will conclude with recommendations on how individuals helping with evacuation and recovery can utilize social media as a communication resource for older adults during disasters. Part of a symposium sponsored by Disasters and Older Adults Interest Group.

EVACUATION OR SHELTER IN PLACE IN ASSISTED LIVING: ADHERENCE TO EMERGENCY EVACUATION ORDERS FOR HURRICANE DORIAN
Lindsay Peterson,1 Joseph June,2 Nazmus Sakib,1 and Kathryn Hyer,1 1. University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida, United States. 2. School of Aging Studies, University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida, United States

Hurricane Dorian devastated parts of the Bahamas in 2019 with 185-mph winds. As it moved toward Florida, the state went on alert. This paper examines whether assisted living communities (ALCs) in affected counties evacuated or sheltered in place in the context of emergency management communications concerning evacuation. In 16 coastal counties, 66 ALCs were under mandatory evacuation orders, but 12 sheltered in place. Of 603 ALCs not under orders, 17 evacuated. Seven ALCs evacuated contrary to orders in one county, which issued a mandatory order Sept. 1, delayed it to Sept. 2 as Dorian weakened, and lifted it Sept. 4. Interviews