

# USING IMPROVISATION TRAINING TO ENHANCE PROVIDER COMMUNICATION SKILLS WITH PATIENTS WITH DEMENTIA PRESENTATION

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STAKEHOLDER MEETING



# HRSA Acknowledgement and Disclaimer Statement

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# Introduction

- San Diego/Imperial Geriatric Education Center GWEP
  - Largely focused on addressing the need for enhanced geriatric education on Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD) and Age-Friendly Healthcare in both San Diego and Imperial Counties in Southern California
  - Training primary care providers, health profession trainees, patients, families, caregivers and direct care workers to provide value-based care and improve health outcomes for older adults
  - Fostered partnerships between academia, primary care delivery sites (including Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)), County Area Agencies on Aging, and community-based organizations
- Project partnership developed through GWEP - between academic institution (UC San Diego) & local dementia support organization (Alzheimer's San Diego)



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# Need/Rationale

- Increase of patients living with dementia (now ~100,00 in San Diego County; expected rise of 17% by 2030)
- Patients can experience memory loss, confusion, disorientation, and other behavioral and psychological symptoms (BPSD)
- **Physicians have expressed a need for additional education and training<sup>1</sup>**
- Providers at local FQHCs have expressed low confidence with behavioral management in dementia
- Need for advanced communication techniques
- Improvisational (Improv) Training
  - Technique used with increasing frequency in medical education
  - Can improve coping skills for family caregivers of people with dementia

<sup>1</sup>Alzheimer's Association (March 10, 2020). "Primary Care Physicians on the Front Lines of Diagnosing and Providing Alzheimer's and Dementia Care: Half Say Medical Profession Not Prepared to Meet Expected Increase in Demands." Retrieved from <https://www.alz.org/news/2020/primary-care-physicians-on-the-front-lines-of-diag>



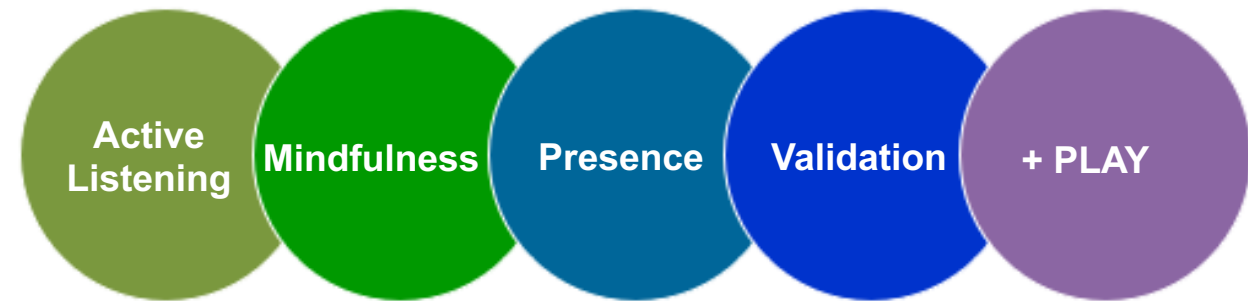
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# Training Overview

- Audience: Physicians receiving specialty training in geriatrics (Fellows) at UC San Diego
- Alzheimer's San Diego – prior improv work with caregivers; education team modified for fellows
- Developed 90-minute Workshop
- Part I:
  - Overview of common dementia symptoms and communication barriers
  - Group discussion of past interactions with patients
  - Communication strategies
  - Basic tenets of improvisation



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# Training Overview – *Continued*

- Part II – Participation in Improv “Games”
  - Instructor Demonstration
  - Activities completed in pairs or small groups
  - Trainees encouraged to reflect & discuss
  - Focus is on improving communications
- Workshop can be taught in-person or remotely

## **SAMPLE IMPROV GAMES**

Show Me What It Looks Like When....

Mirroring

Pass the Object

Word Association

Group Storytelling

No/Yes Storytelling

Words of Wisdom



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# Evaluation

- **Initial Survey - Written evaluation at conclusion of training (N=6 Respondents)**

- Acquisition of new techniques
- Increased understanding of challenges faced by caregivers
- Perceived effectiveness of improv as learning strategy

**Results:** All agreed/strongly agreed learned new techniques and gained deeper understanding of challenges faced by caregivers

- **Follow-up Survey Completed 14 Mos. Post-Training (N=3 Respondents)**

- Incorporation of strategies with patient communication
- Likelihood to recommend training to others

**Results:**

- All reported having incorporated improv techniques into clinical practice
- All would recommend training to others
- Additionally, one participant noted using skills regularly when educating family in memory clinic



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# Impact and Lessons Learned

- Training has now been incorporated in the geriatrics fellowship curriculum and offered annually.
- Next Steps: Could be expanded to additional levels of trainees and healthcare professionals.
- Overall strength in collaboration of organizations working toward common goal.
- Imperative we continue to develop innovative strategies for training our healthcare workforce to care for growing population of individuals living with dementia and supporting caregivers.



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